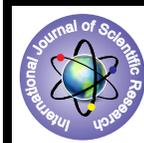


Precursors to Conceptual Awareness on Forest Among Students of Kerala: a Meta Analysis



Education

KEYWORDS : Forestry Education, Extension Research

A. V. Raghu

Scientist, Kerala Forest Research Institute, Peechi 680653, Thrissur, India

Mohamedunni Alias Musthafa

Assistant Professor, Department of Education, University of Calicut, Calicut University, Malappuram, 673 635

ABSTRACT

Classroom Communication plays a very important role in students' life. Some people learn best in the classroom, while others understand better through self-experiences. Communicating need not necessarily be verbal and is an essential part of any activity. Even in activities with very limited talk, students constantly experience different levels of communication. This paper presents the result of a survey examining the participants of conceptual awareness on forest among high school students. A constant comparison method was employed to analyze students' comments, and six categories of antecedent conditions emerged; lack of proper awareness, attitude of teachers, nature of the subject matter taught, lack of outdoor lesson, absence of proper guidance from the parents, conceptual ambiguity on functional role of forest.

Introduction

Environment protection requires education and discussion. Perhaps, a lot of parents do not consider environment issues significant enough to be taught because they think that the children themselves would know about it once they grow up. Or, they might think that it is the responsibility of schools and teachers to educate the children on these issues. The key to mitigating environmental crisis is to educate and reform the manners of human beings regarding its surroundings.

Although educational researchers have examined various issues related with teacher behavior and efficacy of teachers, little researches has looked at how the students perceive on their own learning experience. Moreover, Kerala education scholars have neglected to explore the vital area of schematization of forest by the learners and conceptual clarity further. The present study aimed at unraveling the behaviors that precipitate or promote conceptual awareness on forest among the students of Kerala, making this study a pioneering attempt to have a revisit to our educational system at least in conceptualization of vital topics in the curriculum.

Materials and Methods

Participants and procedures: Participants of this study were drawn from standard students of 20 schools (N=5000) of Kerala. Out of the total sample, 8 were urban and 12 were from the rural schools. Necessary weightage were given to the type of management of schools. The age range of participants was 10 to 16.

After a slide presentation on forests of Kerala, the students were given the opportunity to ask questions on any aspect of forest and forestry. The questions were recorded and analyzed. More than 5000 students were surveyed to assess students' perceptions of what constitutes a forest as well the role of forest in sustaining life on earth. A constant comparison method was employed to analyze students' comments, and six categories of antecedent conditions emerged viz lack of proper awareness, attitude of teachers, nature of the subject matter taught, lack of outdoor lesson, absence of proper guidance from the parents, conceptual ambiguity on functional role of forest.

Analytic induction (Robinson, 1951; Steven & Bogdan, 1998): Category construction of student responses was based up on inductive analysis. A constant comparison approach was employed, allowing for the comparison of one response to previous one, a new category was conceptualized. This process permitted an ongoing refinement and elimination of redundancies in categories. Great care was taken to ensure that category construction reflected the comprehensiveness of response and that the data were manageable.

Results and Conclusion

Responses to the questions were primarily analyzed: whether or not conceptual clarity on forest and the functional role of forest on sustaining life on earth. Six categories of antecedent conditions to conceptual awareness on forest emerged from the analysis. Table 1 shows the precursors of conceptual awareness on forest in frequencies and percentages.

Table 1 Precursors to conceptual awareness on forest

Conceptual awareness on forest	Frequency (%)
Lack of proper awareness about Forests	67%
Attitude of teachers	10%
Nature of the Subject Matter Taught	13%
Lack of outdoor lesson	10%
Lack of proper guidance from parents	3%
Conceptual ambiguity on the functional role of forest	5%
others	2%

Through this study we reached a conclusion that lack of proper awareness about our forests is a major lacuna among the students of Kerala to understand the nature around. This is critical owing to the reason that forests remain the only place where we can learn the way nature operates. To overcome this more emphasis on the science of forests should be given in our school syllabi and proper awareness camps should be arranged among the students, parents and teachers.

REFERENCE

Robinson, W.S. 1951. The logical structure of analytic induction. American Sociological Review, 16 (6): 812-818. Steven J. Taylor & Robert Bogdan 1998. Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods, John Wiley & Sons.