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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A STUDY ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS OF HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Normative survey was adopted for the study with a sample of 300 higher secondary students in Puducherry. A three point scale with 45 statements was used to access the Environmental Ethics of the higher secondary students. The collected data was statistically analysed using Statistical Package for Social Studies (version- 16) Differential analysis were carried out to study and to check the significant mean difference between variables. The results revealed that the Environmental Ethics of the higher secondary student's was average. It was concluded that the Environmental Ethics of the higher secondary students is at average level. It is recommended that the Environmental Ethics of the higher secondary students should be improved through their teaching.

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INTRODUCTION

Massive industrial scale exploitation and the concurrent destruction of nature entities, and ecosystem led to the awareness of people about, serious harmful effects of economic development of the environment. However, due to the warnings rounded by science about an impending ecological imbalance, philosophy became intensively aware of the environment we live in, and much attention has been paid on issues related to it. This emergence of awareness led to development of a new ethical philosophical discipline called 'Environmental Ethics'. Environmental Ethics is the discipline in philosophy that studies the moral relationship of human beings to, and also the value and moral status of the environment and its non-human contents. Environmental Ethics starts with human concern for a quality environment and, some think this shape the Ethics from start to finish. Our success depends on learning to cooperate with one another and with the rest of nature instead of trying to dominate and manage earth for our own use. Because nature is so incredibly complex and always changing, we will never have enough information and understanding to manage the planet. Although nature was the focus of much nineteenth and twentieth century philosophy, contemporary environmental Ethics emerged as an academic discipline in the 1970s. This emergence was no doubt due to the increasing awareness in the 1960s of the effects that technology, industry, economic expansion and population growth having on the environment. The behavior of entire society towards the biosphere must be transformed if the achievement of conservation objective is to be assured. A new ethic, embracing plants and animals as well as possible, is required for human societies to live in harmony with the natural world, on which they depend for survival and wellbeing. The long term task of Environmental education is to foster or reinforce attitudes and behavior compatible with this new Ethics.

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Significance of the study

This study will increase students' critical ecological awareness of both local and global environment. Environmental Ethics can also increase environmental literacy, foster and encourage responsible citizenship, develop and teach personal, civic and global responsibilities, and generally help to prepare students for adopting sustainable life styles.

Appreciation and concern for our Environment. Promote organic essence of refinement in the educational and home environment. Encourage Environmental Holism and Environmental Individualism. Develop the respect for life and environment. Foster in the minds of people, regarding participation towards reflective judgment in nature's sustainable development.

Method of study

Normative survey method was adopted to study the Environmental Ethics of the 300 higher secondary students. Environmental Ethics scale of Haseen Taj (2001) was used to study the Environmental Ethics of higher secondary students. The background variables namely Gender, Residence, Parental Income, Parental Qualification and Parental Occupation were also taken in order to find out the influence of these variables on Environmental Ethics of the higher secondary students.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the level of Environmental Ethics of the higher secondary students.
2. To find out the significance difference, if any, between the sub-samples of Gender, Residence, Parental qualification, Parental occupation and Parental Income of the higher secondary students in the Environmental Ethics.

Hypotheses of the study

1. The level of Environmental Ethics of the higher secondary students is not high.
2. There is no significant mean difference of higher secondary students in Environmental Ethics in the sub sample of Gender, Residence Parental Income, Parental Qualification and Parental Occupation.

Sampling procedure

The random sampling method was used by the researcher for the present study. The population of the study consists of higher secondary students studying in the schools of Puducherry. Five schools were selected through stratified random sampling from the list of school using nature and type of institution.300 higher secondary school students from five different schools were selected for the sample.

Tools and techniques

The normative survey method was used for the present investigation. Rating scale constructed by Dr. Haseen Taj named Environmental Ethics scale was used as the tool for collecting data. The tool consist of 45 test items (in which Eight are positive and Thirty seven are negative) in three point scale (namely I agree absolutely, I slightly agree, I don't agree, The range of the low, average and high levels lie 45 to 89, 90 and 91 to 135 respectively. The maximum score is 135 and the minimum score is 45.) the investigator administered the tool to the sample after getting prior permission from the concerned head of the institutions. The school students' were requested to give their free and honest response towards the test items.

Each positive item is assigned a weight ranging from 3 (I agree absolutely) to 1 (I don't agree) and for the remaining negative items in reverse. Dr.(Mrs) Haseen Taj found the Reliability and validity of Environmental Ethics Scale to be 0.63 and 0.60 respectively using Split-Half method.

Statistical technique used

The collected data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively to fulfill the objectives of the study. The researcher used descriptive and differential analysis as a statistical technique for the present study.

Analysis and interpretation

1. The level of Environmental Ethics of the higher secondary students is not high.

Table 1. Level of Environmental Ethics among higher secondary students

N	MEAN	MEDIAN	SD
300	63.47	62.00	12.32

The mean of the total sample is found to be 63.47 for the sample (Male=150, Female= 150) with a standard deviation 12.32 which represents low level of Environmental Ethics. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

2. There is no significant mean difference of higher secondary students in Environmental Ethics with respect to Gender, Residence and Parental income.

The analyzed data collected from the sub samples revealed that significant difference exists in the level of Environmental Ethics with respect to Gender. Hence the null hypothesis stated on Gender is rejected and concluded that there is a significant mean difference in gender. On the other hand there found to be no significant difference in the level of Environmental Ethics with respect to Residence. Hence the null hypothesis stated on Residence is accepted and concluded that there is no significant mean difference in Residence. There is also no significant difference in the level of Environmental Ethics with respect to Parental Income. Hence the Null Hypotheses stated on Parental Income is accepted and concluded that there is no significant mean difference in Parental income.

3. There is no significant mean difference of higher secondary students in Environmental Ethics with respect to Parental Qualification and Parental Occupation.

As the calculated F-value 2.675 is less than the table F-value for the df (2,297) at 0.05 level, the null hypothesis is accepted and it is concluded that there exists no significant difference in the mean Environmental Ethics score of higher secondary students with respect to Parental Qualification.

4. There is no significant mean difference of higher secondary students in Environmental Ethics with respect to Parental Occupation.

As the calculated F-value 0.020 is less than the table F-value for the df (2,297) at 0.05 level, the null hypothesis is accepted and it is concluded that there exists no significant difference in the mean Environmental Ethics score of higher secondary students with respect to Parental Occupation.

Table 2. t-value of the variables Gender, Residence and Parental income of the higher secondary students in Environmental Ethics

Variables	Sub variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean difference	T-value	Level of significance at 0.05
Gender	Male	150	65.25	13.547	3.553	2.519	S
	Female	150	61.69	10.717			
Residence	Rural	55	62.76	11.545	0.865	0.494	NS
	Urban	245	63.63	12.508			
Parental	< 2 Lakhs	165	64.30	12.886	1.838	1.300	NS
Income	> 2 Lakhs	135	62.46	11.564			

Table 3. F-value of Parental Qualification of the higher secondary students in Environmental Ethics

Sub Variables	N	Mean	SD	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F-Value	Level of Significance at 0.05
High School	38	67.50	15.896	803.362	2	401.681	2.675	NS
Higher Secondary	79	63.81	11.620	44599.368	297	150.166		
Higher Education	183	62.49	11.654	45402.730	299			

Table 4. F-value of Parental Occupation of the higher secondary students in Environmental Ethics

Sub Variables	N	Mean	SD	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F-Value	Level of Significance at 0.05
Unemployed	30	63.10	16.268	5.981	2	2.990	0.020	NS
Private	197	63.47	12.031	45396.749	297	152.851		
Government	73	63.63	11.396	45402.730	299			

Findings

- The level of Environmental Ethics of the higher secondary students is not high.
- There exists a significant difference between the level of Environmental Ethics of Male and female higher secondary students.
- There is no significant difference between the level of Environmental Ethics of Rural and urban higher secondary students.
- There is no significant difference between the levels of Environmental Ethics of Parental Income of higher secondary students.
- There is no significant difference between the levels of Environmental Ethics of parental Qualification of higher secondary students.
- There is no significant difference between the levels of Environmental Ethics of parental Occupation of higher secondary students.

On the basis of the above findings from the study the female candidates are in need to be given guidance and counseling services for improving their Environmental ethics and moral value. A few life-related practical assignments can be given as a part of the Environmental Education curriculum in order to help the students gain firsthand knowledge of the phenomenon of the Environment.

Recommendations

Students must be enlightened with self-interest, the best means to motivate students to behave ethically. The students must be involved in rationalizing the day today Socio-Environmental activity for the better ethical values of the future. The study can be coupled with the personality trait of the sample, Environmental awareness and Environmental attitudes.

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