



RESEARCH ARTICLE

A STUDY ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDE 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 four point scale with 61 statements was used to access the Environmental Attitude 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 Attitude of the higher secondary student's was average. It was concluded that the Environmental Attitude of the higher secondary students is at average level. It is recommended that the Environmental Attitude of the higher secondary students must be developed through improvised curriculum of school activities.

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INTRODUCTION

Technological and scientific attainments have enabled mankind to control and transform the natural environment to suit his needs and demands. The life of man is closely associated with the environment, which influences man's activities and at the same time influenced by man. He is the creator and at the same time destroyer of the environment. It is because of man's ability to exploit the nature and its resources indiscriminately, environmental problems are posing a stiff challenge for physical, biological as well as social sciences. As such, excessive consumption of scarce resources, huge amounts of garbage, acid rain, deforestation, desertification, global warming, ozone layer depletion, various types of pollution, radiation and species extinction are some of the major environmental problems facing the world today. It is observed that degradation of environment mostly occurs due to destruction of natural environs. Now there is a cry all over for protection and preservation of such natural resources. This can only be possible if we have a right type of attitude towards such issues and if we have proper awareness in the related matters. It is widely accepted that the development of such attitude can be possible through environmental education.

Education is an important social instrument and means, which act as a catalyst in improvement of different aspects of life. Knowledge, awareness, skills, values and attitudes acquired through education help one to lead a desired quality of life. In order to protect and conserve the environment enabling people to lead quality life, emphasis has been given to environmental education in both formal and non-formal system of education. There is a need for clarifying the direction and pace of development on an endogenous basis taking into consideration the society's needs, socio-economic status, features of its environment and the impact of development on the biosphere. Environmental Education is the process of recognizing values and the clarifying concepts in order to develop the skills and attitudes necessary to understand and appreciate the interrelatedness among man, his culture and his biophysical surroundings. Allport (1935) has defined attitude as "a mental and neural state of readiness organised through experiences, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all subject with which it is related". An attitude is the degree of positive or negative feelings towards the object. It includes likes and dislikes which means favourable and unfavourable inclinations towards certain objects or situation. Thus, attitude can be defined as a determining acquired tendency which prepares a person to behave in a certain way toward a specific object or class of objects subjects to the conditions prevailing in the environment. Environmental attitude refers to the concern for the environment and the environmental problems and in addition concern for the

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conservation of nature and natural resources. Environmental Education and training should be an integral component of the educational process through formal and structured curricula as also through the non-formal media. This should aim at building professional manpower that comprises of literate and active citizens.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present study will help individuals and social groups acquire social values, strong feelings of concern for the environment and the motivation for actively participating in protection and improvement of environmental attitude and skills for solving environmental problems. The need of the hour, education for the people and reorientation of the people towards the desirable attitudes and values, especially those that will lead to a greater concern for preserving balance in the ecosystem and conservation of environment for the next generation. Perhaps a considerable emphasis will be put on aspects which relate to development of values, feelings, attitude, skills and evaluation abilities for the proper use and management of the environment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

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

Objectives of the Study

- To study the level of Environmental Attitude of the higher secondary students.
- To find out the significance difference, if any, between the sub-samples of Gender, medium of instruction, locality of school, nature of family, parental qualification, Parental occupation and Parental Income of the higher secondary students in the Environmental Attitude.

Hypotheses of the Study

- The level of Environmental Attitude of the higher secondary students is not high.
- There is no significant mean difference of higher secondary students in Environmental Attitude with respect to Gender, Medium of instruction, Locality of school, Nature of family and Parental income.
- There is no significant mean difference of higher secondary students in Environmental Attitude with respect to 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 Attitude scale was used as the tool for collecting data. The tool consists of 61 test items (in which 31 Favourable items, 30 Unfavourable items) in four point scale (namely strongly agree, I agree, Disagree and strongly disagree) 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 (31) is assigned a weight ranging from 4 (Strongly agree) to 1 (Strongly disagree) and for the remaining negative items (30) in reverse. The reliability coefficient of the total used for the present investigation was found to be 0.79 by Split – half method. The high reliability value ensures high face and content validity.

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

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

Table 1. Level of Environmental Attitude among higher secondary students

N	MEAN	MEDIAN	SD
300	126.62	127.00	27.18

The mean of the total sample is found to be 126.62 for the sample (Male=150, Female= 150) with a standard deviation 27.18 which represents average level of Environmental Attitude. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant mean difference of higher secondary students in Environmental Attitude with respect to Gender, Medium of instruction, Locality of school, Nature of family and Parental income. The analyzed data collected from the sub samples revealed that significant difference exists in the level of Environmental Attitude with respect to Gender. Hence the null hypothesis stated on gender is rejected and concluded that there is a significant mean difference in gender. There is also a significant difference with respect to Medium of instruction. Hence the null hypothesis stated on Medium of instruction is rejected and concluded that there is a significant mean difference in Medium of instruction and with reference to Locality of school there also exists a significant difference. Hence the null hypothesis stated on Locality of school is rejected and concluded that there is a significant mean difference in Locality of school. On the other hand there found to be no significant difference in the level of Environmental Attitude with respect to Nature of family. Hence the null hypothesis stated on Nature of family is accepted and concluded that there is no significant mean difference in Nature of family.

Table 2. t-value of the variables Gender, Medium of instruction, Locality of school, Nature of family and Parental income of the higher secondary students in Environmental Attitude

Variables	Sub variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean difference	T-value	Level of significance at 0.05
Gender	Male	150	130.68	29.865	8.127	2.614	S
	Female	150	122.55	23.618			
Medium of instruction	Tamil	200	132.69	27.459	18.220	6.178	S
	English	100	114.47	22.197			
Locality of school	Rural	150	134.49	27.693	15.740	5.231	S
	Urban	150	118.75	24.317			
Nature of family	Nuclear	219	126.27	27.321	1.286	0.366	NS
	Joint	81	127.56	26.958			
Parental income	Less than two lakhs	92	128.02	28.380	2.027	0.581	NS
	More than two lakhs	208	126.00	26.685			

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

Sub Variables	N	Mean	SD	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F-Value	Level of Significance at 0.05
High School	149	122.17	26.277	5862.302	2	2931.151	4.047	S
Higher Secondary	96	130.72	27.419	215096.615	297	724.231		
Higher Education	55	131.49	27.718	220958.917	299			

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

Sub Variables	N	Mean	SD	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F-Value	Level of Significance at 0.05
Unemployed	177	130.78	27.413	9083.971	2	4541.985	6.367	S
Government sector	45	125.38	25.264	211874.946	297	713.384		
Private sector	78	117.88	25.870	220958.917	299			

There is also no significant difference in the level of Environmental Attitude 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. There is no significant mean difference of higher secondary students in Environmental Attitude with respect to Parental Qualification. As the calculated F-value 4.047 is greater than the table F-value for the df (2,297) at 0.05 level, the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there exists significant difference in the mean Environmental Attitude score of higher secondary students with respect to Parental Qualification. There is no significant mean difference of higher secondary students in Environmental Attitude with respect to Parental Occupation. As the calculated F-value 6.367 is greater than the table F-value for the df (2,297) at 0.05 level, the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there exists significant difference in the mean Environmental Attitude score of higher secondary students with respect to Parental Occupation.

RESULTS

- The level of Environmental Attitude of the higher secondary students is not high.
- There exists a significant difference between the level of Environmental Attitudes of Male and female higher secondary students.
- There exists a significant difference between the levels of Environmental Attitudes of medium of instruction of higher secondary students.
- There exists a significant difference between the levels of Environmental Attitudes of school locality of higher secondary students.
- There is no significant difference between the levels of Environmental Attitudes of Nature of family of higher secondary students.

- There is no significant difference between the levels of Environmental Attitudes of Parental Income of higher secondary students.
- There is significant difference between the levels of Environmental Attitudes of parental Qualification of higher secondary students.
- There is significant difference between the levels of Environmental Attitudes of parental Occupation of higher secondary students.

On the basis of the above findings from the study the female candidates are in much more need to be exposed to real time environmental situation so as to promote Environmental Attitudes in them. Knowledge on the changes of day to day Environmental activities in the society must be imparted to the students, which will help to rationalize in contributing their thoughts towards better environment.

Recommendation

Students are to be engaged in various curricular and co-curricular activities which are rich in practicing environmental attitudes. In accordance to this, teachers must compose as a role model in cognizance of the students, which will help the society and nation to have a better citizen with sustainable environmental attitude. The study can be coupled with the personality trait of the sample, Environmental awareness and Environmental sustainability.

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