



A Study On Environmental Awareness Among Undergraduate Students

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Abstract

In the 21st century in the name of industrialization, urbanization and development people started exploiting the environment. This mistreatment on the environment has posed menace to man's existence on this earth. In India population growth became a threat for sustainable development. Therefore there is a strong need to aware all the citizens of India about the increasing threat of environmental degradation. In this process the students can play a major role. University students are regarded as future decision-makers in society in particular and in country in general. It is hardly possible to say that students receive a satisfactory environmental education that can raise their consciousness towards the problem even though the problems related to these issues are on the rise (Ercan, 2011). The present study was conducted on under graduate level students to know their awareness level towards environmental issues. In the present study, the investigator used the descriptive survey method. 100 samples had been selected using systematic sampling method. For the collection of data the investigator has used a self-structured questionnaire. From the findings it is comes to notice that there is still lack of awareness regarding environment among them. The government and policy makers need to take strong measures to aware the students about environmental degradation and its consequences.

Keywords: Study, Environment, Awareness, Undergraduate students

Introduction

Environment has influenced and shaped our lives since the time immemorial. Today environment become concern for all because it is degrading in an accelerating range which is not good for all the existence. However environment can be degraded naturally, anthropogenic impacts on the environment fast-track its degradation. Environmental degradation is a cycle of actions through which we deteriorate or harm the natural environment, decrease its biological diversity and intrude on the general health of the natural infrastructure (Times of India,2020). Therefore the term environment education becomes important for all. The term environment education is made up of two terms Environment and Education. Environment is defined as "The sum total of all conditions and influences affecting the life and development of organisms" (Boring). Education is describe

as forming desirable attitudes, values, skills, understanding and interest about the environment.

Unlike conventional forms of education, environmental education is a holistic, enduring learning method aimed at creating responsible individuals who investigate and identify environmental issues, engage in problem solving, and take action effectively to improve the environment. Environmental education is the systematic study of the environmental structure and the status of its natural and induced changes on organism. It includes not only the study of physical and biological characters of the environment but also social and cultural factors and the impact of men on environment.

Environmental education is neither environmental advocacy nor environmental information; rather environmental education is a varied and diverse field that focuses on the educational process that has to remain neutral by teaching individuals critical thinking and enhancing their own problem solving and decision-making skills in participatory approach (EcoMENA,2018). The guiding principles of environmental education comprise awareness, acquaintance, thoughts, skills and participation. Environmental education refers to structured efforts to instruct how natural environments function, and predominantly, how human beings can manage behavior and eco-systems to live sustainably.

Statement of the Problem

In today's world because of industrializations and increasing population the natural assets has been rapidly utilized and our environment is being progressively more degraded by human activities. People who are environmentally erudite understand the Earth's ability to sustain human and other life. They take action and are involved in their community to help sustain our natural resources so that people can create and enjoy a high quality life for themselves and the future generations. This can achieved through providing a balanced, academically based environmental education as part of the curriculum. Breaking down walls between academic disciplines and other areas of environmental study to allow for integration will be important to helping students became efficient, dynamic, accountable and environmentally literate 21st century citizens.

Education is the most significant factor in the development of the personality of an individual. Educational institutions not only build to made specialist but also to shape people to collaborate and complete one another when needed. There has been volatile population growth, bringing amplified demands for natural assets and struggle for clean water and food in many parts of the world. It is the crucial time for everyone, if we human want to maintain our existence in this world we need to take collective actions for the protection of environment.

The present study aimed to understand the student's knowledge with respect to environment. To protect our environment and for sustainable development students awareness towards environmental hazards is very significant. Because Kothari commission rightly mentioned that Destiny of a nation is being shaped in her classroom. There is a growing recognition that sustainable development policies, plans and actions have a better chance of being implemented when they are supported by an educated, informed public. Hence, environmental education became priority for everyone. And the goal for Environmental education can only be achieved if nations, governments, schools and teachers make it a precedence to create an environmental ethos within our educational institutions and community.

Review of Literature

The accomplishment of environmental security depends on shared efforts. Every member of the society should share the responsibility. If we talk about college students the locality of students has significant influence on the environment (Kaur, 2019). Student communities of the undergraduate level need lot of direction and other forms of inputs to develop awareness about the environment stipulation (Ed, 2018). The college students feel that protecting the environment from damage is important and should be performed in their daily activities. The college students show actions to protect the environment by turning off computers after being as a form of energy saving, reducing single-use-plastic use, using alternatives for plastic such as paper/cloth bag, and participating in environmental programs (Ningrum & Herdiansyah, 2018). The achievement of the students in Environmental awareness is not of higher order. The cause may be that they have not been exposed to scientific literature at concrete stage at lower level and suddenly they find it difficult to cope with the scientific literature at the higher level which involves abstract thinking (Denielraja, 2019). There exists a considerable difference between government and private secondary school students on environmental consciousness and its components (Poonam, 2013).

Methods and procedure: In the present study, the investigator used the descriptive survey method. 100 samples had been selected from undergraduate students using systematic sampling method. For the collection of data the investigator has used a self-structured questionnaire.

Data Analysis: Data has been analyzed using simple percentage method.

Questions	Yes	No	Known Percentage
Do you have knowledge regarding Biodiversity?	68	32	68%

Do you know what are Flora and Fauna?	75	25	75%
Do you know what green house effect is?	70	30	60%
Do you know NGO's which are related to environment?	65	35	65%
Do you have knowledge of environmental pollution?	85	15	85%
Do you think that environmental education is important?	100	0	100%
Do you think every educational institution should have environmental studies as a departmental study section?	90	10	90%
Do you think field works are useful for environmental awareness?	95	5	95%

Findings and Discussion: The present study has been conducted on undergraduate level students viz, 1st, 2nd and 3rd semester student to know their knowledge about environment. As in the review mentioned earlier kaur (2019) found that there is a significant effect of locality on environmental awareness of students, in this given study also the researcher found that the students has lack of awareness towards environmental issues in rural areas. The major findings of the study are mentioned below-

1. From the study, it has been found that about 68% students have a clear idea regarding biodiversity.
2. 75% students know about Flora and fauna. And moreover 55% of them explained about Flora and Fauna properly.

3. 70% of students have a fair idea about green house effect but 30% of the students heard about green house effect; however they don't have proper idea about green house effect.
4. 65% of students were able to cite a name of Non Governmental Organization of Assam related to environment. Most of them mention the name of Aaranyak, which is a leading wildlife NGO for preservation and restoration of environment related issues.
5. 85% of the students said that man made pollution through industrialization, over population, deforestation etc. are more hazardous towards biodiversity in comparison with natural pollutants.
6. 100% of the students think that environmental education is very helpful to know more about our biodiversity. As they studied environmental studies as a compulsory subject in high school, higher secondary and studying the same in degree level, it has proved as useful to enhance knowledge and understanding regarding biodiversity.
7. 90% of the students think that every educational institution should have environmental studies as a departmental study section. Because, the ever increasing environmental threats will destroy the whole world if necessary measures should not be taken in due time. Only through education, it has been possible.
8. Practical knowledge is more efficient than that of theoretical knowledge, and especially in case of environmental studies 95% students prefer to go for a field study.
9. From the study, it has found that 100% of students are fond of preserving biodiversity.
10. Every student showed a positive response to the World Environment Day observation.

Suggestions

1. Environmental Study should be a compulsory subject in Secondary level of Education.
2. There should be a different department in colleges and universities for environmental studies.
3. Seminars and exhibitions should be arranged in the schools, colleges and other academic institutions related to local environmental issues and problems.
4. Students and teachers should visit places of ecological importance.
5. The national and international days of ecological importance should be observed in schools and colleges.
6. Sufficient funds should be provided to schools and colleges, arranging environmental programs and activities like planting trees etc.
7. Audio-visual aids should be used by teachers to teach the topics under environmental science areas.

8. The reasons behind natural calamities like flood, drought, global-warming, Ozone layer depletion, Earthquake, lake of biodiversity should be taught to the students. This would help them to change their attitude towards environment and develop an environmental sensitivity.

Conclusion

Environmental education is a method that creates awareness and understanding of the connection between humans and environment. It is concerned with knowledge, values and attitudes, and its aim is accountable environmental behavior. According to Belgrade Charter 1875, the objective of environmental education is to develop a world population that is responsive of and concerned about, the environment and its associated problems, and which has the knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivations and obligation to work individually and collectively toward solution of current problems and obstacle of new ones. Today more than ever, society needs high quality environmental education programs that succeed in moving values and changing behaviors in the direction of sustainability and environmental conservation.

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