



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AWARENESS AND PRACTICES AMONG YOUNG STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO VELLORE CITY (TAMILNADU)

Dr.V.Mahalakshmi

Dean (MBA) Department of Management Studies, Panimalar Engineering College, Chennai.

Abstract

The growing concern with environmental issues and their impact on general awareness is one of the most important phenomena. Increase in economic activities in developing countries results in more energy and consumption demand which leads to environmental degradation. This study mainly focused on environmental protection awareness and practices related to various factors like causes of pollution, conservation of soil, human health, wild life and animal husbandry, forest, air, energy conservation, etc., It also discusses on environmental practices among the students' communities with regard to the usage of plastic and its disposal, alternative for plastic, toilet usage, its use in the cultivation of saplings, rainwater harvesting and also their participation in environment and other related programs. The study is quantitative in nature. Descriptive research design was applied and structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data. It reveals that the level of awareness is high among the respondents irrespective of gender difference but in practice level there is difference between genders.

Key Words: *Environmental Protection Awareness, Environmental Law, Practice, Pollution, Conservation.*

INTRODUCTION

Increase in economic activities in developing countries results in more energy and consumption demand which leads to environmental degradation. There is a conventional belief that such environmental degradation would resolve as soon as these countries grow economically, since that would enable them to afford environmental friendly technology as well as pro-environmental regulations and policies. Various studies indicated that developing countries equipped with environmental policies, legal frameworks and economic instruments, which are highly sophisticated by international standards and face the worsening of environmental conditions.

Major difficulties the countries face are the lack of participation among general public in pro environmental behaviors. Some of the environmental problems which are critical at present are fairly known because of the growing awareness of all levels of society, including governments, general public and the scientific community. However, this study is about the environmental protection awareness and practice among young students in Vellore district (Tamilnadu). People from different cultures, act with a nationalistic awareness, which is seen as one of the biggest problems of globalization. It will be inevitable, to face the fact that it would not be easy to find a solution to environmental problems. India has more than 40% of young generation in the world population. The sensitizations and practice of environmental manner will improve the present environmental conditions.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nkosi (2002) Nkosi, Bonga S. 2002. Community education for biological diversity conservation in the Shiselweni Region of Swaziland. *Journal of Biological Education*, Vol. 36 Issue 3, and p113- carried out a community oriented education program on biological diversity, conservation and sustainability in Swaziland. It emphasized the need for a public education program. This program was intended to be seen as an investment in the people by teaching them a self-regulating culture that would help raise awareness of the role biodiversity and conservation can play in sustainable development among the most vulnerable communities in the developing world.

Castillo, Alicia, García-Ruvalcaba, Salvador and Martínez R., Luis M. 2002. Environmental education as facilitator of the use of ecological information: Mexico. *Environmental Education Research*, Vol. 8, No 4 -Environmental education should be used as a linkage system. In developing countries environmental organizations and institutions should include means that facilitate the practical use of knowledge and information. This only works by applying a systems (or cross-cutting) perspective that encourages collaborative perspectives among all the different stakeholders, including the use of well-designed awareness campaigns

Dunlap, R.E & Jones, R. 2002, "Environmental Concern: Conceptual & Measurement Issues". *Environmental Sociology* by Dunlap & Michelson. London: Greenwood press—Among other things, awareness encompasses incorporating knowledge of contemporary issues affecting nature locally and beyond, discovering which actions can make a difference in your surroundings, and self- awareness concerning personal environmental philosophies (W.Bocher, Personal Communications, 2005).



Environmental concern has been treated as an evaluation of, or an attitude towards fact, one's own behavior, or other's behavior with consequences for the environment (Weigel, 1983). Fundamental to environmental research is an individual's concern for the environment (Hines et.al., 1987). Gill & Taylor (1981) mentioned that environment concern is a strong attitude toward preserving the environment.

Hines, Hungerford & Tomera (1987) have argued that environmental concern has direct relationship with pro-environmental behavior. Another study by Fliegenschnee (1998) found that women usually have a lesser extensive environmental knowledge than men but they are emotionally engaged, more concern about environmental destruction, believe less in technological solutions, and more willing to change.

Owens, (2000) in his study stated that increases in knowledge and awareness did not lead to pro-environmental behavior. Abdo (2010) in his study reveals those male categories were shown to be more knowledgeable about environmental issues than female category.

Padia, R.G., 1996. 'Global Concern for Environmental Hazards and Remedial Measures', in R.B.Singh and S.Misra (eds.) Environmental Laws in India Issues and Responses, Concept Publishing House, New Delhi.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS IN INDIA

Various studies reveal that, India is one of the fastest progressing countries in the world, in addressing the environmental issues and improving its environmental quality. Pollution is a major challenge and opportunity for India. India has adopted various international and national strategies to solve and mitigate many environmental issues.

The Environment (Protection) Act was enacted in 1986 with the objective of providing for the protection and improvement of the environment. It empowers the Central Government to establish authorities under section 3(3)] charged with the mandate of preventing environmental pollution in all its forms and to tackle specific environmental problems that are peculiar to different parts of the country. The Act was last amended in 1991.

Indian Constitution – Article 51-A (G)

It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures (42nd amendment with effect from 3rd January 1977).

JURISDICTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION IN INDIA:

Central Government

- Ministry of Environment & Forest
- Regional offices
- Central Pollution Control Board
- Zonal offices

State Government

- State Department of Environment
- State Pollution control Board/Committee
- Regional offices

What are the provisions in the Indian Penal Code for environmental protection?

The Indian Penal Code has a chapter on offences affecting Public Health, Safety, Convenience (Chapter XIV). Sec. 268 provides that "a person is guilty of a public nuisance who does any act or is guilty of an illegal omission which causes any common injury, danger or annoyance to the public or to the people in general who dwell or occupy property in the vicinity, or which must necessarily cause injury, obstruction, danger, or annoyance to persons who may have occasion to use any public right." The section further explains that a common nuisance is not excusable on the ground that it causes some convenience or advantage. Other concerned provisions are: a "negligent act likely to spread infection or disease dangerous to life" (Sec. 269 IPC.), a "malignant act likely to spread infection or disease dangerous to life" (Sec. 270 IPC.), "making atmosphere noxious to health" (Sec. 278 IPC.).

But the essential requirement of the provision to punish a man is the guilty intention of the accused, i.e. either the act of the accused should be negligent, malignant or voluntary, which vitiates the atmosphere. In case of public nuisance, the Penal Code provides for fines up to Rs. 200/- by way of punishment (Sec. 290 IPC.) and for making the atmosphere noxious to health Rs. 500/- only (Sec. 278 IPC.).



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AWARENESS IN VELLORE (TAMILNADU)

Vellore district in Tamilnadu is one of the worst cases in dealing with environment related issues. According to the latest study, there are more than 3000 industrial units in Vellore, which have been classified under the highly polluting or 'red' category. The effluents have caused serious problems in the PalarRiver in Vellore district.

Hundreds of leather and tannery facilities are around Vellore and nearby towns, such as Ranipet, Ambur and Vaniyambadi. The Vellore district is the top exporter of finished leather goods in the country. Vellore leather accounts for more than 37% of the country's export of leather and leather-related products such as finished leathers, shoes, garments and gloves. Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited is one of the nine major government owned enterprises in the nation. The Boiler Auxiliaries Plant of BHEL in Ranipet is the industrial hub of Vellore. Chemical plants in the Ranipet-SIPCOT economic zone are a major source of income to the residents of Vellore. EID Parry is a sanitary-ware manufacturing company with 38% of the world's market share in bathroom accessories. Tirumalai Chemicals and Greaves are among the international brands that have their manufacturing units in the city. Automobile and mechanical companies of global Brands, including SAME Deutz-Fahr, TVS-Brakes India, Mitsubishi, Greaves Cotton and MRF have their manufacturing units in the area. Brakes India Sholingur's foundry division is located at Vellore-Sholingur and is a major employer in the area.

Asia's biggest explosives manufacturing company, Tamil Nadu Explosives Limited (TEL), is in Vellore at Katpadi. This is India's only government explosives company with more than a thousand employees. Kramski Stamping and Molding India Private Ltd, a German precision metal and plastic integrated-component manufacturing company with automotive, telecommunications, electronics and medical applications is in Erayankadu, near Vellore town.

Environment includes all living and non-living objects. The community lives in the environment and uses the environmental resources like air, land and water to meet our needs. Development means meeting the needs of the people. To meet the ever-growing needs, pressure is on the environment. When the pressure exceeds the carrying capacity of the environment to repair or replace itself, a serious problem of environmental degradation happens. If any environmental resource has been used such as ground water beyond its limit of replacement, it may be lost forever. Therefore, there is a need to create 'knowledge' about Environmental protection.

Since, Tamil Nadu government has incorporated environmental education as a part of their curriculum and it's mandatory for all the students to have awareness irrespective of their curriculum. Therefore, it is important to have the knowledge of environmental protection awareness among the future generation and their present practice towards environmental protection which leads for sustainable development. This present study is intended to understand the environmental awareness and status among the young students.

This study analyses the level of environmental awareness and habitual practices towards environment among young students with special reference to Vellore district.

OBJECTIVES

1. To measure the environmental protection awareness level among the young students.
2. To study the general environmental practices among the young students
3. To suggest few measures towards creating environmental protection awareness and environment friendly practice among the young students.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the objectives and answer the specific questions, descriptive design was adopted for the research. The methodologies explained in this section focus on the most important strategies applicable to environmental protection awareness research as evident from the literature. The primary data has been collected from the young students. The secondary data were collected from various sources such as books, reports, Journals and various legislations. For the purpose of collecting primary data, the researcher adopted Standardized scale on Environmental Awareness Ability Measure and questionnaire on environmental practices were used. In this research work multi stage sampling method was followed for selecting the respondents from study area. The samples taken from young students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The collected data has been analyzed with the help of statistical tools. This also intends to do appropriate statistical test over the data to validate the statistical hypothesis which helps in interpreting data, to explain the relationship between gender and environmental awareness as well as correlation between gender and practice which means friendly practice and unsociable practice.

HYPOTHESIS FORMULATED

- Gender influences environmental awareness among young students
- Gender has no influence on environmental awareness among young students.
- Girls have better practices on environment than boys.
- There is no difference between Gender and environmental practice
- Higher the environmental awareness among the respondents higher will be the environmental practice
- There is no significant relationship between environmental awareness and environmental practice.

Table No -1 Cross Tabulation between Gender and Environmental Awareness.

	Gender	Environmental awareness			Total
		Low	Moderate	High	
1.	Male	0	12(12.76%)	82(87.24%)	94(100%)
2.	Female	0	8(6.89%)	108(93.10%)	116(100%)
	Total	0	20(9.52%)	190(90.47%)	210(100%)

Chi square	Value	df	Significant
	2.076	2	5.99

The table no: 1. exhibits that the associations between gender and environmental awareness among respondents have been analyzed through Chi-square. The p value is 2.076. The calculated value 2.076 is lesser than the table value 5.99 at 2 degrees of freedom, hence the Cross table Value (CV) is lesser than Table Value (TV), where null hypothesis (H₀) is accepted. There is no association between gender and environmental awareness. This statistical data is evident that irrespective of gender, young students are aware about the environmental protection.

Table No - 2.Group Statistics between Gender and Environmental Practice.

	Gender	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std Error Mean
Environmental Practice level	Male	94	9.39	2.14	0.22
	Female	116	8.78	2.32	0.22

Independent sample t- test

		Levene's test for equality of variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig	T	Df	Sig(2-tailed)
Environmental practice level	Equal variances assumed	0.37	0.54	1.98	208	0.049
		6		4		

The Table No: 2. Explains about Independent sample t-test applied to check the difference between gender and environment practice. The p value (0.049) is lesser than significant level ($P < 0.05$), hence, the null hypothesis rejected. It is observed that there is a significant difference between gender and environment practice. The environmental practice is much high among the girls than the boys.

The Table No: 3. describes that the correlations between environmental awareness and environmental friendly practices among respondents the r value i.e. ($r = 0.116$) is positive number as an indication that both variables, environmental awareness and friendly environmental practice are related in the same direction from each other but it should be noted that there does not appear to exist to any correlation between the correlated variable.

Table No: 3. Correlations between Environmental awareness and Environmental friendly practice.

		Total Rank	Positive
Total rank	Pearson Correlation	1	0.116
	Sig.(2-tailed)	-	0.095
	N	210	210
Positive	Pearson Correlation	0.116	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.095	-
	N	210	210

The significant Value $p = 0.095$ shows there exist no significant correlation between environmental awareness and environmental practice. Though, environmental education is part of curriculum but students are not practicing commonly in the study area.

Table No: 4 Correlations between Environmental Awareness and Unsociable Environmental Practice.

		Total Rank	Negative
Total rank	Pearson Correlation	1	0.028
	Sig.(2-tailed)	-	0.689
	N	210	210
Negative	Pearson Correlation	0.028	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.689	-
	N	210	210

Table no: 4. Equals that the correlation between environmental awareness and unsociable environmental behavior. The r value i.e. ($r = 0.028$) is negative number as an indication that both variables, environmental awareness and unsociable environmental practice are related in the same direction from each other but it is noted that there is no correlation between the variables. The significant value $p = 0.689$ shows there exist no significant correlation between environmental awareness and environmental practice.

From the analysis it is observed that gender does not influence environmental awareness which means that irrespective of gender, students are aware of environmental issues, at same time When we look into the practice level, gender is influencing as the result of present study shows that the environmental practice is much high among the girls than boys. Next is whether there is any correlation between environmental awareness and environmental practice thought by the research, but the results shows that no significant correlation exists between environmental awareness and environmental practice. It is implied that students are aware of the environmental issues but when they are going to practice it, they will fail. It was pointed out that common sense tells us that changing behavior is very difficult. Anyone who has ever tried to change a habit will have discovered how difficult it is, even if new behavior has distinct advantages over the old one.

RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSIONS

The analysis is concluded with the following recommendations. This study can be further extended to do research on developing and employing special contemporary environment awareness packages for the young students (or) by forming separate department for conserving environment. The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 which was amended in 1991, with the objective of providing for the protection and improvement of the environment and the punishments imparted for not following the regulations shall be given wide publicity among the students. The young students can be sensitized by celebrating as world environmental day, wildlife day; world water day, forest conservation day etc., and also knowledge about alternatives for plastic should be imparted and promoted among students. It shall become a part of their life. It can be achieved through the help of NGOs who are working on environmental issues, social activists, government and environment consultants. Young students from various disciplines have to work together to create better environment.

Social workers in collaboration with other disciplines can undertake scientific researches to explore unexplored aspects of environments. This study attempted to describe how environmental awareness and practices can be utilized as a tool for sensitizing the young students about environmental protection. The review of literature highlights the need for Social work research on environmental awareness and practices among college students. All these findings provide the necessary facilities for promoting environment awareness and friendly approach to safeguard the environment. This study concludes with relationship between gender and environmental level of awareness and practice level, level of awareness is high but practice level is moderate and there are some differences between gender and practice level among young students.

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