

## AWARENESS AND ATTITUDE OF SCHOOL STUDENTS TOWARDS ENVIRONMENT

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### Abstract

Environment and the organisms are two dynamic and complex component of nature. Environment regulates the life of the organisms including human beings. Human beings interact with the environment more vigorously than other living beings. It is the sum total of conditions in which an organism has to survive or maintain its life process. It influences the growth and development of living forms. In this paper an attempt has been made to study the awareness and attitude of school students towards environment and related issues. To study this phenomena survey method has been used. The study was conducted on 160 students (girls and 80 boys). The students were randomly selected from different schools of Shimla. For the purpose of data collection environmental attitude scale and environmental awareness tests were administered on them. The data was collected personally from the schools. To analyze the data t-ratio was calculated. The results revealed that both male and female have equal awareness towards environment and female students are having better attitude towards environment than male students.

**Keywords:** Awareness, Environment, Global warming, flora and Fauna.



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### Introduction

The term environment has been derived from a French word “Environ” means to surround. It refers to both abiotic (physical or non-living) and biotic (living) environment. The word environment means surroundings, in which organisms live. Environment and the organisms are two dynamic and complex component of nature. Environment regulates the life of the organisms including human beings. Human beings interact with the environment more vigorously than other living beings. Ordinarily environment refers to the materials and forces that surround the living organism. Dum (1982), described environment as everything around us air, water, land, plants, animals and microorganisms. Everything that living and non-living constitutes forms environment. Environment includes biotic and abiotic factors. Abiotic factors are the non-living factors and humidity photoperiod topography etc. the chemical factors like chemical composition of atmosphere, water and land. Biotic factors are living factors and include species of animals and plants. The individual of some species and of different species are included in it. Environment is mainly of two types natural environment -

physical (Air, water, Soil), Biological and man-made environment -social,cultural and economic.To encourage meaningful public participation and environment, it is necessary to create awareness about environment pollution and related adverse effects. The United Nations conference on Environment and Development held in Rio-de-Janeiro, followed by Earth summit on sustainable Development have high-lighted the key issues of global environmental concern and have attracted the general public towards the deteriorating environment. Any Government at its own level can't achieve the goal of environment conservation, until the public has a participatory role in it. Public participatory role is possible only when the public was made aware about the ecological and environmental issues. In short, if we want to manage on planet earth, we would have to make the entire population, environment educated. The objectives of environmental awareness should be: improving the quality of environment, creating awareness among people on environmental problems and conservation, and creating such an atmosphere as people find themselves fit enough to participate in decision making process of environmental development programs.In India, the environmental awareness gained importance since 1970's after UN sponsored conference on environment in Stockholm (1972). Indian Government took many environment friendly activities. Ministry of environment and forest was established and laws were enacted on environment protection in 1986.

### **Concept of Attitude and Awareness**

An attitude is a particular feeling about something. It therefore, involves a tendency to behave in a certain way in situations which involves something. Attitude provides pattern of behavior. These are powerful source of motivation and are capable of arousing and sustaining concentration efforts towards protection of natural resources and reducing environmental pollution (Hooda, 2016). **Thurston's View**, 'Attitude denotes the sum total man's inclinations and feelings, prejudice or bias, pre-conceived notions, ideas, fears, threats about any specific topic'. **Allport's View**, "an attitude is a mental or neural set of readiness exerting direct dynamic influence upon the individual's to all objects and situation with it related". An attitude towards the environment means the behavior or concern or interest of the people towards the environment and its problems and development. From the awareness of something people make some beliefs and opinions towards it. In this way, after environmental awareness people make some opinions, ideas and interests towards the environment and its development, which is called their attitude towards the environment (Kaur, 2011). Attitude is

acquired from parents, teachers and peer group members. We are born with certain dispositions. Then in our coming life we begin modeling our attitude after those to whom we admire, respect and ever fear. We observe the way our family and friends behave and we shape our attitude and behave to align with these, so attitude is a complex mental state involving beliefs, feelings, values and dispositions to act in a certain way. They reflect our thinking. So, the attitude towards environment the emotions and notions regarding environment (Kaur, 2011). Awareness attitude among the students is essential to solve the problem of environmental pollution as they are the future of our country, there is a necessity to incorporate not only knowledge about environment but also to acquaint and sensitize the minds to the problems of environment and concerns. Both Awareness and attitude are interrelated to each other. Awareness gives way to attitude, attitude waves pay for awareness. The more awareness people possess about an object, events or their environment, the more positive and negative.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Studies related to environmental awareness and attitude towards environment are discussed as, Sra (2003) showed that Environmental awareness and attitude towards environment are correlated to each other. The student who had higher environmental awareness had more favorable attitude towards environment. Choudary (2005) revealed that the girls have high level of awareness and attitude towards environmental education than boys. Ernesto (2010) found statistically significant differences among the groups regarding the levels of awareness, knowledge, and attitude towards environmental education. The sample for study comprised of students. He conducted a study on environment awareness among secondary school students of Golaghat district in the state of Assam and their attitude towards environmental education. Relationship between environmental awareness and attitude towards environmental education among secondary school male and female students was found not significant; but in case of rural and urban students the attitude towards environmental education was found significant. The relationship between environmental awareness and attitude towards environmental education among the students was found strong and positive. Lee (2013) revealed that integrated science teachers attitudes towards environmental education, skills of teaching environmental education, and intentions of teaching environmental education in integrated science classes were associated with their actual ways of teaching environmental education. Deopuria (2016) revealed that the experimental group

showed significant gains over the control group with respect to knowledge and environmental attitude. Aminrad (2013) found that there was no significant difference between groups of students based on gender while environmental awareness results indicated that there was significant difference among different levels of education. It was also found that the media positively affected the level of environmental awareness and attitude of students. The study concluded that increase on age and level of education would improve the level of awareness and attitude towards environmental issues. Kose (2015) revealed that undergraduate students had positive attitude towards the environment as regard to their gender and faculty types. It also made that female students were more sensitive towards than male students. Sarjou (2015) revealed that in three components of the study, only there is a meaningful difference between males and females points of views in attitude towards environmental issues. Kaur (2016) found that B.Ed. students possess fairly good level of environmental awareness of students when distributed gender wise and subject wise. It is suggested that curriculum of B.Ed. should be re-organized to meet the challenges. The more favorable attitude they have towards the environment, the more knowledge they would like to gain about nature. Thus the researcher feels that the environmental awareness and attitude towards environment are deeply correlated with each other.

### **Rationale of Study**

Environmental attitudes provide a good understanding of the set of beliefs, interests, or rules that influence environmentalism or pro-environmental action" (Femandez-Manzanal et al., 2007). This presumes that if schools inculcate in children positive values and attitudes towards environmental conservation they would take an active role in conserving the environment and its resources and hence preserve them for the future generation. There is no denying the fact that environment has to be protected and conserved so to make future life possible. Indeed, man's needs are increasing and accordingly the environment is also being altered, indeed, nature's capacity is too accommodating and too regenerative yet there is a limit to nature's capacity , especially when pressure of exploding population and technology keep mounting. What is required is the sustenance, conservation and improvement of the changing and fragile environment. As the environment is burning issue of the world, so it is very important to create the awareness and right attitude among students towards the environment. So the investigator proposed to study environmental awareness and attitude

towards environment of school students with regards to gender differences. If right attitude are induced in students of school, they will transmit the same later to next generation.

### **Objectives of Study**

The following objectives were framed in this study:

- To compare the environmental awareness of male and female students of class IX.
- To compare the environmental Attitude of male and female students of class IX.

### **Hypothesis of Study**

The following hypotheses were tested in this study:

- There is no significant difference between the environmental awareness of male and female students of class IX.
- There is no significant difference between the environmental Attitude of male and female students of class IX.

### **Method and Procedure**

Descriptive method has been used to find the gender differences in environmental awareness and attitude towards environment. The study was conducted on 160 class IX Students, 80 girls and 80 boys. The students were randomly selected from different schools of Shimla. For the purpose of collection and interpretation of the data Environmental Attitude Scale (TEAS) developed by Dr. Haseen (2001) was used to study the attitude of student-teachers and teacher-educators towards environment. An Environmental Awareness Scale (EAS) was developed by the Chopra (2005) to study environmental awareness among students. The Taj Environmental Attitude Scale (TEAS) was developed by Haseen in 2001 used in this study. The investigator administered the scale of environmental awareness and attitude towards environment to male and female students. The statistical techniques were employed to analyze the data in order to test the hypothesis Mean, Standard deviation, t-ratio.

### **Analysis and Interpretation of Data**

Under this heading analysis is done under two headings. It deals with the testing of following hypothesis, "There is no significant difference in environmental awareness of male and female students". The Mean, S.D. and t-test of male and female for environmental awareness have been given in table

**Table 1: The mean, S.D and t-ratio of male, female students of class IX for Environmental Awareness.**

Gender	Male	Female
Mean	41.3875	41.2125
Standard Deviation	3.598	3.957
t-ratio	0.2926	

Table 1 shows the value of t with difference of 0.2926. The critical value of t at 0.05 level is 1.98 and 0.01 level is 2.63 and the obtained value is 0.2926 which is less than the table value, this indicates that male and female students don't differ in mean on environmental awareness. The hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference between the environmental awareness of male and female students.

It deals with the testing of following hypothesis, "There is no significant difference in attitude towards environment of male and female students". The Mean, S.D. and t-test of male and female for attitude towards environment have been given in table 2.

**Table 2: The mean, S.D and t-ratio of male female students of class IX for attitude towards Environment**

Gender	Male	Female
Mean	42.67	39.8
Standard deviation	3.38	3.75
t-ratio	5.089	

Table 2 shows the value of t with difference of 5.089. The critical value of t at 0.05 level is 1.98 and 0.01 level is 2.63 and the obtained value is 5.089 which is greater than the table value, this indicates that male and female students differ in mean on attitude towards environment. The hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant difference between the attitude towards environment of male and female students. Girls are having better attitude towards environment than male students. This result is supported by studies of different researchers; Kumari and Surrender (2002), Kaur (2003); Yousuf and Bhutta (2012), Manjengma (1998), conducted a study on environment education for sustainable development in secondary school in Zimbabwe found that the girls have better attitude towards environmental issues than boys. Shobeiri (2005), conducted comparative study on environmental awareness and attitude of teachers and students of secondary school in India and Iran. His study revealed that the female teachers showed better environmental attitude than male teachers although they have same qualification. Mukesh et al. (2015), conducted study on 100 students both

girls and boys and found that there is a significant difference in attitude among female and male students but there is no significant difference related to environmental awareness.

### **Findings**

The findings of the present study are under;

1. There is no difference in the environmental awareness between male and female school students. Both male and female have equal awareness towards environment.
2. There is significant difference in attitude towards environment of male and female school students. Female students are having better attitude towards environment than male students.

### **Educational Implications**

1. This shows that environmental education has to be made a compulsory subject at all levels of education, especially at B.Ed. level in order to achieve grand success if we want to save our natural environment, the main thing is to educate the masses and the right criteria for this is through channels of education students in school and colleges.
2. Over the course of primary year students should become knowledgeable about a large array of environmental issues. Ideally these issues would be local in nature at early year and expand into more regional, national and international concerns at succeeding level.
3. More and more activities like environmental visits should be involved in environment education and B.Ed. level in order to make prospective teachers knowledge towards environment which will further enhance their environment knowledge and sensitivity.
4. Emphasis on interaction with natural environment during individual's early life is important in developing environment knowledge and sensitivity.

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