

STUDY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AMONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Dr. Surinder Kaur
Associate Professor, Khalsa College of Education
Ranjit Avenue, Amritsar

Environment is a multi dimensional system of complex relationship in a continuing state of change. By environment we mean not only our immediate surroundings but also a variety of issues connected with human activity, productivity, basic living and its impact on natural resources such as land, water, atmosphere, forests, dams habitat, health, energy resources etc.

According to derivative approach the word 'environment' originates from the word 'environ' which means 'around', 'round about', 'to surround'. The word environ and environer in turn are derived from old French words 'viren' and 'viron' which mean 'to circle', 'to run about', 'around'. From this etymology, we conclude that environment, means the things or events that surround something.

Environment operates at three distinct levels namely physical, social and biological level. The physical includes atmosphere, hydrosphere and lithosphere. Social level is made of human created world i.e. technosphere and sociosphere (society). The third level i.e. biological level comprises of all the living species i.e. both animals and plants. Environment covers all the extraneous factors that have been acting upon the individual ever since he began his life. The environment is everything that effects the individual except his genes.

Environment is a global concept today. It has become the concern of all academicians, intellectuals, scientists, policy makers and governments across the continents. Wide spread and systematic concern for environmental issues has grown over the world particularly after 1960's. People have become more concerned about the environment. The environmental movement has focused attention on the quality of air we breathe in and water we drink. People are beginning to realize that virtually all aspects around them can have profound potentially negative effects on their health and well being.

It will be right to say, 'Education' can play a vital role in this direction. 'Awareness' is essential for actions. Education can make students aware and conscious about environmental problems. Therefore if the students are enlightened about the environmental problems, then they will be in a better position to face and tackle the problems related with environment.

An awareness of one's own environment is the primary step towards understanding the ensuing ecological and environmental crisis and also towards its successful solution. It helps to understand the underlying causes and effects of these problems.

School is considered to be one of the most important agencies of environmental education. School children who are the future leaders of any country and who are under the age of fourteen years, specially elementary school children, constitutes approximately 42% of total population of India. If environmental education is imparted to this major group, this will be highly beneficial to society for environmental protection and conservation.

The knowledge, attitude and behaviour of the elementary school children can be influenced by the teacher and his/her methods of teaching. A child must be aware of his environment at the beginning i.e. at elementary stage. Different models of teaching environment can be adopted, like formal and non formal education, creative works, ecoclubs, developing education material for traditional and novel models of environmental teaching, celebration of environmental days, months, weeks at school level. Also the environmental education should be interdisciplinary drawn from biological, sociological, anthropological, political and human resources.

In the new millennium where environment consideration became the part of our daily decision making process, the elementary standards enjoys the special status of this effort. It is hoped that these environmentally educated students will form the top leadership in the year 2047, when India will celebrate 100 yrs of its independence. Thus by educating school students about environment we hope to educate and sensitize all the Indian citizens, young and old to continue towards Global Sustainable Environment Development.

EMERGENCE OF THE PROBLEM

Inspite of the fact environment has a great importance in modern times, the environmental education is not being given much importance in our school education as it should be given. Environmental education in its broader sense is not recognized as an effective instrument to motivate pupils in order to enable them to carry out such actions which can be helpful to preserve and protect environment.

The main reason for choosing the problem will be justified if we see the existing position of environmental education in our schools and evaluate them properly. Curriculum and teachers should provide knowledge regarding concepts, problem and protection of environment and it will be possible only if our teachers working in the schools are well aware of concept of environment and most important at the elementary level as this is the base of future citizens and it is education only which can make people aware about this bug and save earth from its major disease i.e. environmental pollution. Environmental education is a process which aims at developing knowledge, attitude, understanding and commitment among students about various environmental problems and their solutions. Therefore present among the elementary school teachers, as he is the pivot of whole educative process until the teacher himself is not aware about the environmental concepts and problems, he cannot do justice to create awakening about environment and its problem among students.

The findings of the study may be useful to teachers and authorities in a way to make them realize the value of educating the teachers about the various problems of environment with which we want our next generations should fight and overcome it.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

STUDY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AMONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

DELIMITATION

The present study is confined to the schools situated within the limits of Municipal Corporation, Amritsar, Punjab.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the level of environmental awareness among elementary school teachers.
2. To ascertain if there is any difference between P.S.E.B. and C.B.S.E. elementary school teachers with respect to their environmental awareness.
3. To know if there is any difference between Science and Arts teachers with respect to their environmental awareness.

HYPOTHESES

1. There is significant amount of environmental awareness amongst elementary school teachers.
2. There is no significant difference between P.S.E.B. and C.B.S.E. elementary school teachers with respect to their environmental awareness.
3. Significant difference exists between Science and Arts teachers with respect to their environmental awareness.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

This is basically a survey research. The information was collected with help of self constructed questionnaire, covering all the aspects and dimensions needed for environmental awareness. For this purpose data was collected from 10 schools out of which five schools were affiliated with C.B.S.E. and five schools were affiliated with P.S.E.B.

SAMPLE

The sample consisted of 200 teachers drawn from various P.S.E.B. and C.B.S.E. schools.

TOOLS

The information was collected with the help of self constructed questionnaire called Environmental Awareness Test (EAT).

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

The investigator adopted suitable statistical procedure to analyse the data i.e. mean, standard deviation and t test for significance was employed for analysis of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

HYPOTHESIS I

“There is significant amount of environmental awareness amongst elementary school teachers”

TABLE I

Showing percentage distribution of elementary teachers classified according to their level of environmental awareness

Level of environmental awareness	Percentage of elementary school teachers
Below Average	17
Average	65
Above Average	18

It is quite clear from the table I that 83% of elementary school teachers have average and above average environmental awareness out of which 65% of elementary school teachers have average environmental awareness and 18% of elementary school teachers have above average environmental awareness. Only 17% of elementary school teachers have below average environmental awareness.

From the discussion, we can conclude that the hypothesis that there is significant amount of environmental awareness amongst elementary school teachers is accepted.

HYPOTHESIS II

“There is no significant difference between P.S.E.B. and C.B.S.E. elementary school teachers with respect to their environment awareness”.

TABLE II

Mean, Standard Deviation and ‘t’ value of P.S.E.B. and C.B.S.E. Elementary School Teachers

Types of Elementary School	Number of Teachers	Mean	Standard Deviation (S.D)	Degree of Freedom	‘t’ value	Limit
Affiliated P.S.E.B.	N1=100	M1=41.10	SD1=4.25	df=198	t=1.78	1.78<1.97 and 2.60
Affiliated C.B.S.E.	N2=100	M1=42.10	SD2=3.83			

Computation of ‘t’ value from the scoring of P.S.E.B and C.B.S.E elementary school teachers was done. From the statistical computation it is clear that mean scores of P.S.E.B. elementary school teachers is 41.10 and the standard

deviation comes out to be 4.25, on the other hand the mean scores of C.B.S.E. elementary school teachers is 42.10 and the standard deviation value comes out to be 3.83. The 't' value calculated is 1.78 which is less than both the table values i.e. 1.97 and 2.60 at .05 and .01 level of significance respectively. This means the difference is not significant at both the levels of significance. From above discussion it can be concluded that the hypothesis that "There is no significant difference between P.S.E.B. and C.B.S.E. elementary school teachers with respect to their environmental awareness" is accepted.

HYPOTHESIS II

"Significance difference exists between Science and Arts teachers with respect to their environmental awareness".

TABLE III

Mean, Standard Deviation and 't' value of Elementary Science and Arts School Teachers

Types of Elementary	Number of Teachers	Mean	Standard Deviation (S.D)	Degree of Freedom	't' value	Limit
Science Teachers	N3=100	M3=43.68	SD3=3.0	df=198	t=8.71	8.71<1.97 and 2.60
Arts Teachers	N4=100	M3=39.50	SD4=3.91			

From results shown in table III and statistical computation, it is clear that the mean scores of science and arts elementary school teachers shows significant difference. The mean of scores of arts teachers is 39.50 and standard deviation comes out to be 3.91. On the other hand the mean of scores of science teachers comes out to be 43.68 and its standard deviation is 3.0.

That 't' value calculated from the mean and standard deviation of science and arts teachers teaching in elementary schools comes out to be 8.71 which is more than 1.97 (at 0.05 level) and 2.60 (at 0.01 level). So, the difference obtained is significant. Thus our hypothesis that significant difference exists between science and arts teachers with respect to their environmental awareness is accepted.

FINDINGS

The conclusion has been drawn after calculating the mean score and standard deviation of both groups the 't' value comes out to be 1.78 which was significant at 1.96 and 2.58 i.e. at 0.05 level and 0.01 level.

The present study reveals that the difference between the P.S.E.B. and C.B.S.E. elementary school teachers about the awareness of the environment is not glaring teachers about the awareness of their environment.

The present study reveals that science elementary school teachers are more aware about their environment than the arts teachers.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of the present study are given below:

- 1.The present study was confined only to Amritsar city.
- 2.The data was collected only from public and government elementary school teachers while teachers teaching in semi aided school were not covered in this study.
- 3.Due to overburden and lack of interest the school teachers did not show much enthusiasm in giving response to the questionnaire.
- 4.The study was limited only to urban population
- 5.There could be significant difference among rural and urban teachers.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

On the basis of present investigation some research avenues have been proposed underneath for future researchers.

The present study is confined only to Amritsar city. The larger area or comparative study of two districts can be undertaken.

The school taken were public and government elementary schools while semi aided schools, and public and government high school can also be taken.

The comparison regarding environmental awareness can be made among teachers of public and semi aided schools.

The sample can be increased.

The comparison regarding environmental awareness among teachers teaching in degree colleges can also be made.

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