

A STUDY ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AMONG THE SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN GOLAGHAT DISTRICT OF ASSAM

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Abstract: The present study is an attempt to examine the Environmental Awareness among high school students of Golaghat district of Assam in relation to gender, locale and type of school. Descriptive survey method and simple random sampling technique was used for the present study. The sample consisted of 117 high school students out of which 62 were boys & 55 were girls. The Investigator has used self-structured standardized data gathering tools for collecting the data. To test the hypotheses, appropriate statistical technique has been used. The self structured questionnaire was used as a tool. Findings of the study reveal that there exists no significant difference in environmental awareness of boys and girls high school students. Similarly Government and private of secondary school students do not differ significantly on their attitude towards environmental awareness. It was further found that there exists significant difference in environmental awareness of urban and rural high school students.

Key words: Environmental Awareness, Secondary, Secondary School Students, Rural, Urban, Type of School.

1. Introduction:

For normal and healthy living a better environment is required by all living being including human, plants, micro-organism and wildlife. The world environment comes from the French word 'envirorner' which means 'to surround' and it actually means surrounding or something that surrounds. Environment is sum total of all conditions and influence of the development and life of human being and other organisms. It includes air, water and land and interrelationship that exist between these and human beings, other living organism, plants, micro-organisms.

The declaration and principles formulated at the UN conference on Human Environment held at Stockholm from 5-16th June, 1972 were mainly concerned with the need for a common outlook and values to inspire and guide the people of the world in the preservation and enhancement of our global environment of the 26 principles, No. 19 described the importance of environment as "Education in environmental matter, for the younger generations as well as adults, giving due consideration to the underprivileged, is essential in order to broaden the basis for an enlighten opinion and responsible conduct by individuals, enterprises and communities in protecting and improving the environment in its full dimension".

1. **Need of the Study:** Over recent decades, global problems relating to degradation of natural resources and pollution have increased dramatically. Environmentalist has repeatedly pointed out that a solution to environmental crisis will require an environmental awareness which should be deeply rooted in the education system at all levels of school education. Today, environmental awareness is very important issue and that's why research and seminars are being held world over. These issues cannot be resolved until and unless we make our students, who are the mature citizens of tomorrow, aware about the environmental issues. The present study for the first time is aimed at identifying the differentiation in the level of awareness between male and female secondary level students in relation to their location and type of school. Based on the findings of the study, the government can initiate different educational programme to make aware the people about the environmental problems.

2. Objectives of the Study:

The major objectives of the present study are:

- (i) To study the levels of environmental awareness of secondary school students of Golaghat district.
- (ii) To study the environmental awareness of male and female students of Golaghat district.
- (iii) To study the environmental awareness of rural and urban secondary school students of Golaghat district.
- (iv) To study the environmental awareness of students studying in English Government and Private Schools of Golaghat district.

3. Delimitation of the Study :

The study has to be delimited with the following limitations:

- (i) The present study is confined to the environmental awareness of secondary schools of Golaghat district only.
- (ii) The present study is confined to the class IX and X students studying in the year 2017 only.
- (iii) The present study was conducted on 117 numbers of high school (class IX and class X) students.

Though the study has been delimited in certain dimensions, it is expected that the findings of the study would not be bound to these limits and would be possible to extend in all the dimensions to certain extent beyond the limits.

4. Hypotheses Of the study:

- (i) There is no significant difference in the environmental awareness among the boys and girls Secondary School students in Golaghat district.
- (ii) There is no significant difference in the environmental awareness among the rural and urban Secondary School students in Golaghat district.
- (iii) There is no significant difference in the environmental awareness among the Government and Private Secondary School students in Golaghat district.

5. Methodology:

For the purpose of the present study the instrument used to collect the data was self-developed questionnaire on the environmental awareness consisting of 40 questions. The population of the present study comprises of all the secondary schools having classes IX and X. From these schools, all the class IX and X students studying in secondary schools of Golaghat district is considered as the population of the study.

6. Selection of sample: The researcher/investigator used “Purposive Sampling Technique” in order to select the five different high and higher secondary schools (two schools from rural area and three schools from urban area) of Golaghat district. Again “Simple Random Sampling Technique” was used to select the samples. The size of the samples against each selected schools are displayed in the following table.

Table-6.1: Name of the schools and sample sizes selected from each school

Sl.No.	Name of the Schools	No. of Students	Sample size
1	Sankardev Sishu Niketon, Dergaon	93	28
2	Dergaon Jatiya Vidyalaya	53	20
3	Indranee Devi Higher Secondary School	127	24
4	Kakodonga Higher Secondary School, Kakodonga	158	30
5	Kakodonga Tiniali High School, Kakodonga	51	15
Total		482	117

7. Statistical Techniques used:

(i) The Environmental Awareness scores of the various sub-samples were collected and their means and standard deviations were collected and their means, standard deviations and coefficient of variations were calculated.

(ii) The ‘Z’ test (test of significance for difference of means) was used to test the hypotheses.

8. Result and Discussion:

There were 40 questions in the questionnaire and each correct answer was given a weightage of one mark and each wrong answer or omitted received zero mark. Analysis was done separately for different categories based on gender and type of school (government and private). The range of the scores obtained by total 117 students is found to be 25. The mean score is 28.89 and standard deviation score is 5.71. The mean score and standard deviation of entire sample is given below in table 8.1.

Table 8.1: Mean and standard deviation of environmental awareness scores

Total Sample	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
117	28.89	5.71	25

From table 8.1 it has been observed that the mean score for 116 students is 28.89 with standard deviation 5.71 which is low while considering the overall maximum score of 38.00 for the highest level of awareness regarding the environment.

Testing of Hypothesis 1 (H_{01}): There is no significant difference in the environmental awareness among the boys and girls Secondary School students in Golaghat district.

For comparison of means of environmental scores of boys and girls secondary school students, Table 8.2 is prepared.

Table 8.2: Data and result of test of significant difference between the boys and girls students regarding their environmental awareness.

Groups	Sample size	Mean	S.D	C.V (%)	Z (calculated)	Z (tabulated, at 5% level of significance)	Remark
Boys	62	28.05	5.76	20.50	1.72	1.96	insignificant
Girls	55	29.85	5.49	18.41			

A close scrutiny of table 8.2 reveals that 'Z' value for testing the significance of difference is insignificant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there exist no significant difference between environmental awareness of boys and girls of secondary schools is accepted and it can be concluded that boys and girls of secondary schools do not differ significantly on their attitude towards environmental awareness. The mean score of girl students (29.85) is found to be greater than the mean score (28.05) of boy students. Therefore it can be inferred that girl students have higher awareness regarding the environment though their difference is insignificant. The Coefficient of Variation (C.V) for boys and girls were also calculated. The C.V for girls (18.41%) is lower than the boys (20.50%) which reveal that the environmental awareness in case of girl students is more uniform than the boy students.

Testing of Hypothesis 2 (H_{02}): There is no significant difference in the environmental awareness among the rural and urban Secondary School students in Golaghat district.

For comparison of mean and standard deviation of environmental awareness scores of rural and urban students, the following table (Table 8.3) is prepared.

Table 8.3: Data and result of test of significant difference between the rural and urban students regarding their environmental awareness.

Groups	Sample size	Mean	S.D	C.V (%)	Z (calculated)	Z (tabulated, at 5% level of significance)	Remark
Rural	45	27.52	5.84	21.24	2.10	1.96	significant
Urban	72	29.82	5.53	18.54			

From table 8.3 it has been observed that the mean score of urban students (29.82) is greater than the mean score of rural Students (27.52) regarding environmental awareness which indicates that the environmental awareness of urban secondary school students is higher than the rural students. Again the 'Z' value for testing the significance of difference between rural and urban secondary school students is found to be significant. As such the hypothesis that there exists no significant difference between environmental awareness of rural and urban of secondary school students is rejected and hence it can be inferred that rural and urban secondary school students differ significantly on their attitude towards environmental awareness. The C.V for rural students is 21.24% while for the urban students it is 18.54%. Comparing the variability between the rural and urban secondary school students, it is observed that urban students are more uniform than the rural students.

Testing of Hypothesis 3 (H_{03}): There is no significant difference in the environmental awareness among the Government and Private Secondary School students in Golaghat district.

A comparison of the means and standard deviations of environmental awareness scores of government and private school students is shown in table 8.4 as given below.

Table 8.4: Data and result of test of significant difference between the government and private secondary school students regarding their environmental awareness.

Groups	Sample size	Mean	S.D	C.V (%)	Z (calculated)	Z (tabulated, at 5% level of significance)	Remark
Government	68	28.43	5.53	19.45	1.03	1.96	insignificant
Private	49	29.54	5.89	19.93			

The mean and standard deviation of environmental awareness scores of government and private secondary school students are displayed in table 8.4. The mean score of government school students (28.43) is found to be lower than mean score of private school students (29.54) which implies that the environmental awareness of private school students is higher than the government school students. Observing the C.V values for government and private school students, which are 19.45% and 19.93% respectively, it can be inferred that the environmental awareness in case of government school students is more uniform than the private school students. The 'Z' statistic for testing the significance of difference of the mean scores obtained by schools under the two categories is found to be insignificant. Therefore it can be inferred that there is no significant difference in the environmental scores of the government and private secondary school students.

9. Findings of the study:

After careful analysis of the obtained data and interpretation of the result with regard to the objectives and hypotheses of the study, the investigator reached at the following findings:

- Boys and girls of secondary school students do not differ significantly on their attitude towards environmental awareness.
- Urban and rural secondary school students differ significantly on their attitude towards environmental awareness.
- Government and private of secondary school students do not differ significantly on their attitude towards environmental awareness.
- Environmental awareness in case of girl students is more uniform than the boy students.
- Environmental awareness in case of urban students is more uniform than the rural students.
- Environmental awareness in case of government school students is more uniform than the private school students.

10. Suggestions for further research:

On the basis of experience of the present investigation the following suggestions may be offered to conduct further research.

- (i) Similar study can be conducted on college level students also.
- (ii) The study can be extended over more number of samples including various levels of education.
- (iii) A comparative study may be conducted including different areas of Assam such as tribal and non-tribal, general caste and scheduled caste, general caste and scheduled tribes etc.
- (iv) This study may be extended to a large sample taking some more variables.

11. Conclusion:

Environmental awareness is a critical area which can be ignored or neglected only at our own peril. We are already witnessing the effects of global warming on the one side, depletion of natural forests and wild life on the other side. In addition, high incidence of diseases like cancer that is playing havoc with human lives due to pollution and unregulated use of pesticides is the preventable tragedy of humanity. Water contamination is making it impossible to drink even well water, which itself has its table level reduced. Environmental education is a learning process that increases people's knowledge and awareness about the environment and associated challenges, develops the necessary skills and expertise to address the challenges, and fosters attitudes, motivations, and commitments to make informed decisions and the responsible action (UNESCO, Tbilisi Declaration, 1978). It is this educational process which will ensure continued environmental protection and sustenance.

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