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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AMONG SECONDARY STUDENTS, RAE BARELI DISTRICT, UTTAR PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

The present communication deals with environmental awareness among the students of secondary schools. The four schools were selected for the study from Rae Bareli District, one central government, another one public school, third a convent school and last was a state government school. The schools selected having different infrastructures and with differences in the curriculum which severely affected their awareness about the environmental studies.

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INTRODUCTION

In past few years, there is increased in pollution by consumption of resources, in the present century in terms of development we are exploiting the environment. It is being degraded in such a way that in the coming years the future generation will not be able to see and use such resources (Sharma, 1997). Therefore, to maintain sustainability conservation of such resources is needed and it can be achieved by providing environmental education at an elementary level (Shanawaj, 1990). As per UNESCO 1978, Environmental Education is defined as the learning process which built the people knowledge and awareness regarding the environment and associated problems and develop the necessary skills, expertise and attitude, motivations, to make informed decisions and take responsible actions (Mondal and Mete, 2010). Several countries of the world are taking initiatives to conserve their flora and fauna along with the resources (both renewable and non-renewable) after thinking the hazardous consequences of the vanishing of such resources (Sampth and Sundaramoorthy, 2014). Similarly, in our country (India), in spite of the long tradition of environment friendly society, environmental issues have been received serious attention with the global context (Sarkar, 2015). Before Bhopal Gas Tragedy in 1984 there was no commission in India regarding Environmental Protection. After this incident intellectuals of the country observed its serious affects and that leads to the formulation of Environmental Education at the schools, colleges and even seriously while formatting question papers for different competitive examination (Stevenson, 2007; Tripathi, 2000). Environmental awareness is a significant component to control pollution problems that can be get over through environmental education. Taking all these prospects in mind the present study has been carried out to examine the level of environmental education at the grass root level/ initial temperament i.e. among the secondary

school students (IX and X standards) from four different schools at Rae Bareli District, Uttar Pradesh. The main objectives of the study were:

- To spared awareness regarding environment conservation among students.
- To make them aware about the conservation strategies
- To find out how many students are aware to their environment.
- To throw light on salient features of environmental education.

Environmental awareness is important because earth provides many resources that are essential for our livelihood and quality of life. These resources include clean air, water, soil as well as a wide range of different kinds of plants and animals that contribute to the richness and diversity of our earth (Dutta *et al.*, 1999).

MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

The present study had been carried out in four different schools of Rae Bareli, District, Uttar Pradesh. The schools mainly comprised of one central government school (K.V. MCF); another a public school (Bakshi Memorial Public School); third was a convent school (A.G. Convent School) and last was a state government school (Shri Barati Lal Ganga Ram Sarwati Vidya Mandir Inter College). To conduct the study and to examine the environmental awareness, questionnaires were prepared (20 questions in each questionnaire and time allotted about half hour) as per the understanding/ IQ level of secondary school students. Visits of the schools on different days and with questionnaires, their distribution among students (50 students from each school in the equal ratio of boys and girls) and on the basis of

their answers and their evaluation secondary data had been done. The secondary data had been generated to correlate awareness level in the different school's students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study the level of environmental awareness has been identified on the basis of their scores on the environment awareness ability. The responses collected from four different schools have shown significant differences. Public and convent schools have led (with mean average correct responses 16.28 and 15.26 respectively) in the responses while central and state government schools were lagging (with 14.26 and 11.66 mean average correct responses), it could be because of teacher specification according to the subject. It had been seen during the study that in convent and public schools there are different teachers for a particular part of science like there are different teachers for Physics, Chemistry and Biology on the other hand in the central and state government schools' specification had not been seen.

There exists a considerable difference between government and private secondary school students on environmental consciousness and its components (Astalin, 2011; Poonam, 2013; Katoch, 2016). Several studies at secondary school level had been conducted on environmental awareness namely Guntur, Mysore, Shillong, Madurai, Assam, Gujarat (Ghosh, 2014; Barman, 2018; Sahidullah, 2020) etc. However, such study has not been done yet from Rae Bareli District of Uttar Pradesh. Therefore, it is the first record of examining environmental awareness among Secondary class students of different boards. This study reveals that a very few students possess a fair knowledge on environmental education. Above all these it was revealed that though the students were unaware of some environmental issues, but they possess a positive attitude towards environmental education. A higher percentage of students thought that the environmental education should find place in the curriculum.

Here we have tried to find out the factors that have acted as resistance to make the students environmentally aware one such factor was the pandemic COVID-19, which restricted people to visualise their surroundings, limited their environmental awareness and get much familiarised with the diversity of plants as well as animals. Therefore, we have selected secondary classes (IX and X) students from different schools because this group had suffered a lot in terms of widening their persona about environmental awareness. It had happened with them at such an important part of their lives when they just stepped in their adolescence stage. We all are familiar that this stage correlates with curiosity and which is the originator of discoveries and researches.

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