



Attitudes of adolescents towards various aspects of environment

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ABSTRACT

The present study is an attempt to investigate the attitude of adolescent boys and girls towards environmental issues. Taj Environmental Attitude Scale (Taj, 2001) was administered to 280 subjects (unevenly distributed over sexes) selected on the basis of random stratified sampling procedure. The subjects were 18-20 years old male and female undergraduate students from the constituent colleges of Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. The scale specifically studied the environmental attitude over the six dimensions viz., Health and hygiene, Wild life, Forests, Polluters, Population explosion and Environment concerns. Data were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. Results revealed that almost an equal number of adolescents possessed favourable and unfavourable attitude towards environmental issues (44.64% and 43.22%, respectively). Across the two sexes, majority of boys (62.22%) had unfavourable environmental attitude whereas, more number of girls (47.23%) had a favourable environmental attitude. In depth analysis across varying dimensions of environmental issues revealed that the adolescents were most aware regarding the causes and consequences of population explosion and environmental concerns. However, they had poor knowledge regarding the importance of afforestation and the harmful impact of various polluters.

INTRODUCTION

Educating the people of a nation on the issues of environmental concerns relating to depleting natural resources, eradication of many natural species, increasing pollution, global warming resulting in ecological imbalances and natural calamities, health concerns arising because of poor wastage management systems and other diverse issues appear to be vital for the sustenance of the globe in all its grandeur.

The sustained existence and survival of man in his environment is determined by the ways, manners and attitudes of man, as he strives to secure guarantee for himself, a continuous supply of his basic needs from his environment. But, through lack of appreciation/ favourable attitude towards environment, the main and perhaps the only source of livelihood, man has often created problems for himself through his direct or indirect destruction of his environment and its potential. It is therefore, eminent for a concentrated effort to be made to develop right attitudes towards environment which ensure responsible action towards environment and sustainable development (Udo Bude, 1992).

Thus, it is imperative to investigate the attitudes of adolescents, youths and adults towards environment and its allied aspects. It can be worthwhile not only to get an insight into the attitudes, but also for changing and modifying attitudes of youth/ adults through positive programmes such as outdoor visits, games, simulations, as well as socio-drama, street plays and awareness campaigns etc.

Effective environmental education programmes which build an appreciation of the natural world we are striving to protect, as well as, of the specific hazards threatening the world, should be incorporated in their curriculum. Environmental education enhances knowledge based awareness that will lead to cultivation of responsible attitude towards environment, without losing sight of value system of society and individual.

Environmental knowledge and awareness would be of no meaning without cultivation of right attitude towards environment. So, attitude is a pre-requisite for fostering valuing approach and responsible action which is the ultimate goal of environmental education.

The studies of environmental attitudes have special significance because it is assumed that attitudes influence