



## **A Study of Attitude towards Environmental Awareness in Relation to Certain Variables Among Senior Secondary School Students**

**Shazli Hasan Khan**

Dept. of Education & Training, MANUU, Hyderabad

### ***Abstract***

*The present world is witnessing a number of environmental crises, which are the result of unmindful and thoughtless exploitation of resources by human beings. There is an urgent need to create environmental awareness among all human beings so as to conserve, protect and nurture our environmental resources. Consequently environmental education is being included in school curriculum right from the very beginning. The present study was conducted to study the environmental awareness among senior secondary school students of Aligarh city of Uttar Pradesh. In this study the investigator conducted the studies on class twelfth students of various schools of Aligarh city and a sample of 200 students was taken. The author found that there is no significant level of awareness among senior secondary school students, but they could be made aware if proper guidance and counselling is given to them about environment and environment related awareness programmes. It is however should be well realized that the key to successful implementation of any awareness programmes are the teachers and the teacher should also be themselves aware of the environment and the Environmental Education programmes being conducted in various senior secondary schools. Many studies have been done on measuring the attitude of the students towards environment and its awareness but, very few studies have been undertaken on the awareness aspect of senior secondary school students towards the environment. The present paper focuses its study on the need and importance of Environmental Education and its awareness among the Secondary School students. The results of the present study would have its positive implications on the environmental awareness of students' fraternity, not only for the senior secondary school students of Aligarh city, but also it would have its positive relevance and serious educational implications for the other senior secondary school students of India as well.*

**Keywords:** - Environmental Attitude, Environmental Awareness, Environmental Education, Gender, Environmental Pollution, Secondary Schools,

## **Introduction**

World educators and environmental specialists have repeatedly pointed out that a solution to environmental crises will require an environmental awareness which should be deeply rooted in the education system at all levels of school education. Today environmental awareness is a very important topic for discussion and lots of conferences and seminars are being held at various levels. The environment and energy related problems can not be solved unless students are aware of them, because the students are the future citizens of our country. It is an essential need for each individual to develop an awareness of protection and preservation of the environment.

In the modern era of technology and development and with the progress of industrialization, urbanization and adoption of modern technologies in agriculture, environmental problems have become a concerning issue for human society. By considering the importance of environmental conservation, most developed countries also have included the issue of environmental protection in their political agenda. It has been widely accepted that to conscientious the human society about the environmental issues and to make perspective plans for mitigation of environmental problems, Environmental Education is an important tool through which the goals for awareness can be achieved easily. Environmental Education is aimed at producing a citizenry that is knowledgeable concerning the biophysical environment and its associated problems, to aware of how to help solve these problems, and to motivate to work towards their solution (Stapp et al, 1969)<sup>15</sup>. Environmental Education acts as an indispensable tool in the battle against the degradation of living environment. It has an appeal to launch an International Environmental Education Program (United Nations, 1972).

Along with the adoption of modern eco-friendly technologies to minimize the stress of human activities on environment, for the protection and conservation of the environment of the globe, Environmental Education plays an important role. However, it plays a crucial role in the process of Sustainable Development also (Tbilisi Declaration, 1977, Rio, 1992, Montreal, 1997)<sup>18, 12, 7</sup>.

National Policy on Education (1986)<sup>8</sup> emphasizing the role of Environmental Education says that, "There is a paramount need to create a consciousness of the environment. It must permeate all ages and all sections of the society, beginning with the child. Environmental consciousness should be inculcated into teaching in schools and colleges".

Environmental Education is a key to the success of any overall environmental strategy, determined to help in the setting up of a Centre of Excellence in Environmental Education, to play the vital role of setting the pace and agenda for Environmental Education in the country (Kartikaya, 2000)<sup>4</sup>. In India, the Supreme Court in their judgments of writ petitions (M.C. Mehta Vs Union of India, 1991; M.C. Mehta Vs Union of India, 2003)<sup>5, 6</sup> has directed for the urgent need for Environmental Education. The Supreme Court bench had issued an order on November 22, 1991 to all states governments, and to State Education Boards, to make environmental education, a compulsory subject (India times, 2003)<sup>3</sup>. The Supreme Court issued notice to some of the country's key educational bodies and State Governments for negligence in the implementation process of environment as a compulsory subject. The Supreme Court *inter alia*, directed the NCERT to take appropriate steps to

prescribe a course on environment and to consider the feasibility of making environment a compulsory subject at the school level. In pursuance of this, the NCERT framed the syllabus and incorporated Environment Education as compulsory subject from IX<sup>th</sup> to XII<sup>th</sup> standards. Considering the work load for teaching this compulsory subject of Environment Education, prescribed qualifications for the teacher to teach the Environmental Education in school, two lectures per week for this subject and no need of a separate qualified teacher from the principle subject (i.e; Environmental Science) were adopted.

The UNESCO-UNEP International Environmental Education programme had emphatically pointed out that to improve the effectiveness of Environmental Education, Teacher Preparation is ranked as “the priority of priorities”. UGC has reconstructed the Teacher Education programmes in Universities by including Environmental Education in the curricula for Teacher Education. The major aim of these educational programmes is to provide scientific knowledge and insight into the real, nature, scope, importance and conceptual clarification of the issues involved, to prospective teachers and teacher educators, and developing skills to impart proper Environmental Education to school students in a natural but comprehensive way. A strong Environmental Education system which has its footings on strong environmental pedagogy is what is required at present at all levels of education. Teachers with the right attitude and a will to equip the future generations to enable them imbibe the virtues of Sustainable Development are to take lead.

Hence, by considering the vision of Honourable Supreme Court to make Environmental Education as a compulsory subject, and the lacunae in policy decisions during the implementation phase of this subject, the present study has been undertaken to study the environmental awareness level among students of some selected schools of Aligarh city.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Environmental Awareness is necessary to know the importance of keeping the environment clean and protecting the earth. So the study focuses on the topic entitled, “A study on Environmental Awareness among Senior Secondary School students in Aligarh district”.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives set for the present study undertaken are as following:

1. To find out the Environmental Awareness of Senior Secondary School students of Aligarh city.
2. To find out the significant difference in the environmental awareness of Boys and Girls of Senior Secondary Classes.
3. To find out the significant difference in the environmental awareness of government and private Senior Secondary School students.
4. To find out any significant difference in the environmental awareness between Senior Secondary School students residing in their own houses and those residing in the rental houses.

### **Hypotheses**

The Hypotheses formulated for the present study are as following:

1. There is no significant difference between the means scores of standard XII boys and girls on

environmental awareness.

2. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of Senior Secondary School students studying in government and private schools on environmental awareness
3. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of Senior Secondary School students studying residing in their own houses and those residing in rental houses.

### **Methodology of Study**

The method used for the study was survey and the type of sampling followed was Random purposive sampling. Data were collected from 200 students studying at senior secondary school level from six senior secondary schools of Aligarh city. Three government and three private senior secondary schools were taken for carrying out the present investigation. The investigator has taken three background variables for the present study. These are Gender, Type of School and Type of residence.

### **Tools used in the Study**

The investigator himself prepared a set of questionnaire containing questions from various dimensions of environment. A total of one hundred and fifty objective type questions were prepared, but after the standardization of the tool, finally, a set of eighty four questions pertaining to various dimensions of environment and its related problems were selected in the form of a set of questionnaire. The tool was then named as Environmental Awareness Attitude Scale (Hasan, Shazli, 2011).

### **Sample for the Present Study**

A sample of 200 students was taken for the present study. These 200 students were taken from the six senior secondary schools available from within the city limits. Three senior secondary schools taken were private and the rest three were government senior secondary schools. The distribution of the overall sample is shown in the table-1.

**Table-1: Distribution of Sample**

S.No.	Name of the School	No. of students
1.	Ayesha Tarin Modern Public School	20
2.	Aligarh Public Senior Secondary School	40
3.	Our Lady of Fatima Senior Secondary School	30
4.	S.T. High School (Mintoo Circle), AMU, Aligarh	40
5.	Qazi Para Senior Secondary School, Aligarh	30
6.	City High School AMU, Aligarh.	40

### **Statistical Techniques used in the Present Study**

The investigator himself constructed a well standardized tool for measuring the attitude of senior secondary school students towards environmental awareness. Mean, Standard deviation and 't' test were the statistical techniques used for carrying out the analysis and interpretation of the data collected.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

1.) Regarding the first null hypothesis, it was found after analysis of the data (Table-2) there is no significant difference between the mean scores on of senior secondary school boys and girls on environmental awareness. It was found that gender does not significantly contribute towards the environmental awareness of senior secondary school students.

**Table-2: Environmental Awareness (EA) of Senior Secondary School students and Gender**

S.No.	Variable	N	Mean	SD	't' value	Confidence Interval (CI)
1.	Boys	91	14.61	3.47	1.34*	*Not Significant
2.	Girls	109	16.71	3.94		

\*Not Significant at 0.05 level.

From, table-2 it can be seen that the calculated 't' value of 1.34 at 0.05 level is less than the table value 1.96. So, the null hypothesis is accepted.

2.) Regarding the second null hypothesis, it was found after analysis of the data (Table-3) there is significant difference between the mean scores of senior secondary school students studying in private and those studying in government senior secondary schools on environmental awareness.

**Table-3: EA of Senior Secondary School students and Type of School**

S.No.	Variable	N	Mean	SD	't' value	Confidence Interval (CI)
1.	Government	90	19.83	5.73	3.85*	*Significant
2.	Private	110	21.46	5.95		

\*Significant at 0.01 level.

From, table-3 it could be observed that the calculated 't' value of 3.85 at 0.01 level is more than the table value 1.96. So, the null hypothesis is rejected.

3.) Regarding the third null hypothesis, it was found after analysis of the data (Table-4) there is no significant difference between the mean scores on environmental awareness of senior secondary school students residing in their own houses and those residing in the rental houses.

**Table-4: EA of Senior Secondary School students and Type of Residence**

S.No.	Variable	N	Mean	SD	't' value	Confidence Interval (CI)
1.	Own House	132	28.9	2.49	1.68*	*Not significant
2.	Rental House	68	17.8	1.58		

\*Not Significant at 0.05 level.

From, table-4 it can be seen that the calculated 't' value of 1.68 at 0.05 level is less than the table value 1.96. So, the null hypothesis is accepted.

### Findings of the Study

From the table-2 it could be observed, that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the boys and girls studying in twelfth standard on the environmental awareness of Aligarh city. Further analysis of the data revealed that (table-3), that there is significant difference in the environmental awareness of the students studying in private and government senior secondary schools of the same city. Similarly, from the analysis of the table-4, it could be seen that there is no significant difference on environmental awareness of senior secondary school students residing in their own houses in comparison to those residing in rental houses.

### Conclusions of the Study

On the basis of the findings of this study, it could be seen that in total there is an influence of type of school on the level of student's environmental awareness. This finding of the present study corroborated with the previous findings of Rou (1995), Prajapat (1996)<sup>10</sup>, Kaur & Kaur, and Shobeiri et al (2007)<sup>14</sup>, who reported that there is significant difference between the government and private school students in the level of environmental awareness. Where as this contradicted with the finding of a study by Tripathi (2000)<sup>20</sup> who reported that type of school management has no effect on student's environmental awareness. From the above findings, it could be further be revealed that senior secondary school students of private schools have more environmental awareness than government aided senior secondary school students. The reason for higher environmental awareness among students of private senior secondary schools may be the family background and educational qualifications of parents. Parents of students studying in private senior secondary schools are graduates and are economically well of. Such parents are mainly concerned with inculcating environmental awareness to their children as they are aware of the dangers and consequences of environmental degradation at global level. On the other hand, senior secondary school students studying in government aided senior secondary schools come from poor families and have less educated or illiterate parents, whose main priority is to fulfil the needs of their family members. They are not aware of environmental issues, so they can't pass on these awareness measures to their children. Results of the findings also revealed that there is no significant difference on the environmental awareness between boys and girls. This finding contradicted with the previous findings of Shah Nawaj (1990)<sup>13</sup>, Patel (1995)<sup>9</sup>, Szagun and Pavlov (1995)<sup>17</sup> and Tripathi (2000)<sup>20</sup> who reported that gender has an effect on the level of students environmental awareness, but this finding corroborated with the findings of Shobeiri et.al (2007)<sup>14</sup>.

Further analysis of the results of the study revealed that there is no significant difference on the environmental awareness of those senior secondary school students living in their own houses in comparison to those living in rented residential houses. Thus, type of residence does not play any significant role in the environmental awareness of senior secondary school students.

All these findings suggest to us and to the government as well to make necessary efforts to provide proper classrooms, library facilities, environment related books in local language and necessary infrastructure in the form of computers and internet facilities not only for the students who are studying in senior secondary schools but also for the students who are studying in secondary and upper primary schools, especially in rural schools. These findings also indicate that if the senior secondary school students of government schools are given enough facilities and financial funds and grants, they can too become aware of the environment and its related issues and problems and can come at par with their counterparts in private senior secondary schools.

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