

ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AMONG THE PEOPLE OF OIL TOWN DIGBOI

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ABSTRACT

Environmental awareness is an understanding of natural system combined with how interact with human social system. It implies not only knowledge about environment but also attitude, values and necessary skills to solve environment related problems. In developing countries approx. 80% of all diseases resulted from a combination of poor hygiene, contaminated water and poor sanitation. The present study was done for developing a clear understanding and perspective of the issues involved with the environment. The method used for the study was descriptive survey method. Data was collected by using environmental awareness scale and sample was selected randomly from the Digboi Town. The collected data was analysed by statistical package for social studies (SPSS), version 24 of IBM. On careful observation of the results, it was found that the adolescent people of Digboi are more aware about the environment than that of the adult people.

Keywords: Adolescent, Adults, Awareness, Environment, Protection etc.

INTRODUCTION

Environmental awareness is defined as an understanding of natural systems combined with how they interact with human social systems. It implies not only knowledge about environment but also attitude, values and necessary skills to solve environment related problems. Moreover, environmental awareness is the initial step ultimately leading to the ability to carry on responsible behaviour by the citizens. Madsen (1996) explained that environmental awareness is necessary to achieve environmental protection and restoration. Madsen emphasized that the public must have a basic grasp of environmental problems. Leaders in the field of environmental education should not only have extensive knowledge and understanding of environmental problems, but must also have environmental awareness to solve these problems. They must be

committed “to initiate action, based upon knowledge and understanding”. In the last decade of the 20th century, the environmental concerns grew much greater, not only among the developed countries, but also in some developing and underdeveloped nations. The common reason was that the consequences of environmental damages to some vital resources became horrifying. Ukpong (1991) emphasized the importance of environmental sanitation, attitudinal reorientation and behavioural change. People’s perception, their attitudes, their habits, values and believes, must change in order to fit into the new social order. The right to a healthful environment is akin to the constitutional right to life. This is because a poor, filthy and putrid environment can affect the health of the individual and result in subsequent death (Ugolo, 1998). It is therefore, a fundamental right of mankind to live in a clean, safe and healthy environment devoid of any hazards to life. Contrary to this, the physical environment in Digboi, in terms of the low level of sanitation and environmental indiscipline in our communities are quite worrisome. Environmental sanitation is characterized by inadequate waste management, breeding of pest and vectors of public. health importance, and poor food sanitation etc. is a very serious environmental problem, communicable but largely preventable diseases like guinea worm, diarrhoea, typhoid, cholera and dysentery are mostly prevalent in Digboi area. Indeed, in developing countries 80% of all diseases resulted from a combination of poor hygiene, contaminated water and poor sanitation. A number of research works have been taken up in this respect. But being a location specific issue, research on environmental education should be undertaken in different parts of the country for developing a clear understanding and perspective of the issues involved.

OBJECTIVE

There are following objective of the study:

- To assess the level of environmental awareness among adult people of Digboi.
- To assess the level of environmental awareness among adolescent people of Digboi.
- To suggest important measures to increase the environmental awareness among the people of Digboi.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The main problem stands as follows:

“ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AMONG THE PEOPLE OF OIL TOWN DIGBOI”

METHODOLOGY USED FOR THE STUDY

A. Method:

The present study has been done by descriptive survey method, which specifies the present status of the subjects used in the study in terms of conditions, practices, beliefs, attitudes, effects, trends etc.

B. Sampling:

It is very difficult rather impossible to conduct the investigation on a large population due to paucity of time, so we preferred a limited sample and a sample, if selected properly, is considered to be a representative of a large whole.

Keeping in view the time and financial constraints, the author have selected people from Digboi town. Sample is selected randomly from the Digboi town.

C. Selection of Tools:

In this study, environmental awareness scale is used for the collection of data. It is a sensitivity test to the total environment and its allied problems. the development of environmental awareness means to understand the environmental problems and to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills in the people. The researcher developed questionnaire of 45 questions in which three types of questions are included. These are of Likert type (4- point), agreement type and multiple choice questions.

D. Administration of the Test:

Sample was selected from the Digboi town of Tinsukia district present in Assam (India). Total 350 copy of the test was distributed. Out of 300, 224 copy was returned with the responses of the responders. The returned copy of the test included 101 adolescent and 123 adult responders.

E. Difficulties encountered in collection of data

Following difficulties were encountered during the collection of the data:

- Many people not cooperated properly.
- Most of the people feared of leakage of their personal views. So they did not cooperate freely and frankly as needed.
- It was time consuming too and took much time in making people ready for the test.
- The presence of different language speaking people like Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, English etc. created some communication problems during the test.

- As felt by the investigator, there was a great manipulation in the answer given by the responder.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following tables shows the descriptive statistics for Environmental awareness in adult and adolescent people of Oil Town Digboi as calculated with the help of SPSS 24.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for Environmental awareness in Adolescent people of Digboi

Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Dev.	Skewness
65.78	65.60	58.70*	7.83	.598

*Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for Environmental awareness in Adultpeople of Digboi

Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Dev.	Skewness
61.97	61.80	63.12*	8.342	.169

*Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The mean and median of scores of adolescent people were 65.78 and 58.70 respectively. Mean and median of scores of adults are 61.97 and 61.80 respectively. From the above data it is clear that mean and median of scores of adolescent people are higher than those of adult people of Digboi. It means the adolescent people of Oil town Digboi are more aware about the environment and environment protection.

On observing the normal probability curve of scores of adolescent and adult people, it is found that the curve of adolescent people is more skewed (0.598) than that of adult people. It means more adolescent people have score higher than the mean score with respect to that of the adult people. It also clarified that adolescent people of Digboi were aware about the environment than that of the adult people of Digboi.

CONCLUSION

The adolescent people of Digboi are more aware about the environment with respect to the adult people of Digboi. The differences in the environmental awareness in adolescent and adult people maybe because of the recent introduction of the Environmental Education in the curriculum of High Schools and Higher Secondary Schools, the increase in the access of the media and the different programs and policies for the environment protection by the government.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- The study is limited only to some places because it is not possible to visit each and every place in limited time.
- As the study is done in Assam which is a multilingual state, the investigator faced a lot of communication problem with the responder.
- As the tool applied for data collection is questionnaire and study is conducted on both illiterate and educated people, so there is a great chance of manipulation by those who have marked on the response paper on behalf of the responder.
- Most of the data used is primary data so its authenticity depends upon the authenticity of responses of the responder.
- Most of responders were feared of leakage of their personal information so it is a great chance that they have manipulated their responses.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Environmental education is currently included in the curriculum of schools and educational institutions of all state in India. There is an interest among public policy makers in local communities, the private sector, and local governments to develop effective Environmental Education programs as related to local concerns such as smart growth development. An essential component of program development is a valid evaluation tool. So it is recommended that the study undergo a more rigorous statistical analysis beyond the scope of this investigation to determine relationships among the dependent factors and the participating groups.

Some of the findings in the present study give a good indication of environmental awareness and attitude among students which may come from the media or private interest in environmental issues. Media should, therefore be used more intensively to facilitate the transmission of environmental information and promote more positive environmental attitudes. The dangerous level of pollution and degradation of nature necessitates that environmental education at school level should be emphasized and its objectives must be achieved.

Environmental experts should be called on to the schools once in a while to mount workshops or seminars on school sanitation. This will equip the school community with the necessary information and knowledge in the maintenance of a healthy school environment.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDIES

There are following scope for the further studies:

- A comprehensive study can be done on the consciousness of people about hygiene of both rural and urban area.
- A separate study of quality of air and water of industrial area and non-industrial area can be done.
- A comprehensive study is required for suggesting the proper measures for maintaining health and hygiene of the people
- As there are some local problems specific for a particular area, so separate study can be done for each area so that problems of that particular area can be solved.

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