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REVIEW ARTICLE

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A Study of Environmental Awareness of High School Students

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INTRODUCTION

Environment refers to the sum total of condition and influence that affects the life and development of organism. The qualitative development and quantitative progress of mankind depends on the quality of environment. Therefore, there are no two views about the fact that , it is the primary responsibility of man not only to preserve the environment but also to improve it qualitatively.

Environment is the sum total of an aggregate of all the external condition forces and circumstances , objects or influences that act upon an organism which live by changing energy and matter with their environment with changing nature of human being environment is not static. It changes with corresponding change in time and conditions. It is varied in forms and physical environment, biological , Ecological , Physical and Biological Nature and Man Made like Physical , Biological , Social , Economics , Geography , Psychology , Education , Religious, Cultural and Political etc.

If we look back in the age of "Puranas" , we will find that the education was delivered to students at the residence of GURU. GURU's residence or 'ASHARAM' was located in a peaceful atmosphere because education is more effective in a good atmosphere . Environment is a multi dimensional system of complex interrelationship in a continuing state of change. The environment of an individual comprises the entire physical and social factor around him, which directly affect his living including the working conditions. The various environmental factors are interdependent and inter weaven with each other . The Physical Environment includes the living and Non – living , the geographical landmark , topography and climatic conditions , the manmade features like Buildings , Bridges , Roads , Transports & other Features like health , sanitations, nutrition aspects.

Environment is the sum of the substance and the forces externals to the organisms in such a way that it affects the organism existence. In relation to man, the environment constitutes of air, land, water flora and fauna because these regulates the man's life.

IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Studies have shown that environmental education can reduce discipline problems, increase attendance and develop leadership skills. Environmental Education is a means of learning whereby students engage in hands-on studies of local environments such as parks, bodies of water, and gardens. Although local ecosystems are particularly useful for teaching scientific content, creative educators are using them to teach a variety of additional subjects. EE programs have been found to increase standardization test scores among the majority of participating classrooms and schools, reduce behaviour problems, and provide opportunities to develop leadership capacity.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION REDUCES BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS

Educators have found that students in EE programs are usually better behaved and less likely to be absent than those in traditional programs. An additional benefit of EE is that it often includes after-school programs that constructively occupy students and involve parents and other members of the community. This reduces the likelihood of juvenile crime and violence, which occurs most frequentlybetween 2:00 pm and 8:00 pm, according to law enforcement officials.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ENHANCES LEADERSHIP ABILITY AMONG STUDENTS

EE programs are effective in developing character and leadership capacity because they lack the off – putting preachiness of so many other character-building efforts that have been attempted in schools. Certain features of EE are particularly used for building leadership skills, as well as the abilities

students will need to maintain lucrative employment within the modern information economy:

- **Social Skills** – Students must work together as a term to complete projects, which fosters inclusiveness, cooperation and diplomatic skills.

- **Critical Thinking and Decision Making** – Because EE encompasses issues-oriented instruction , students apply their knowledge to solve real – world problems and thus engage in higher – order thinking.

- **Active Participation** – EE offers opportunities to engage in the sort of hands – on learning that increase student motivation and engagement.

- **Community Orientation** – Students derive a sense of empowerment and connection to their communities through taking action to solve problems for the greater good , as well as learning about the roles and responsibilities related to citizenship , and the possibilities for and constraints upon citizen action.

- **Personal Responsibility** – Students take responsibility for devising strategies both for learning about the environment and for solving environmental and related problems. Rather than feeling that environmental problems are overwhelming and that the situation is hopeless, EE students tend to be optimistic about the future and the ability of their generation to solve such problems.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The effects of an environmental unit on upper elementary students concepts and knowledge about woodlands and associated environmental problems were studied by Gross and Pizzini (1979). The unit was presented for two months prior to a field trip to a preserve. Seventy – fifth grade students were randomly selected from a population of 295 for pre-testing. The remaining students received the post-test , along with 85 sixth grade students had received the treatment one year previously.

The Researchers reported that the treatment resulted in a more positive student orientation about use and abuse of wilderness. However, history and maturation effects were not controlled in this study. Also noted was a change in sensory and affective awareness of a natural community resulting from the one-day field trip. To maximize the effects of the limited time spent in the field, the authors recommended classroom instructional activities to facilitate concept formation prior to a field experience.

The effectiveness of a project designed to enhance awareness of environmental issues was researched by DeLuca , Kiser and Frazer (1978). Seventy five males and 75 females from each grade level , 10 through 12 , and 100 males and 100 females from each grade levels, 4 through 9 , were randomly selected to participate . A nearby school without a similar program served as the control group.

INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

The effects of using an interdisciplinary approach as opposed to a traditional approach for examining problems were addressed by Hepburn (1978). Her findings revealed differences in post- test scores between science/social studies modules of instruction involving ninth grade and slower tenth grade students. Comparisons were made at each grade level across four treatments: a science module, a social studies module, an interdisciplinary treatment groups attained the highest mean gain scores.

The effectiveness of a problem –solving module in aiding participants in understanding and solving environmental problems was examined by Andren (1979), who used community college students as the study sample. The problem – solving model consisted of 21 questions grouped into six areas of problem identification, historical context and proposing and testing solutions. An analysis of the contents of the students investigative reports indicated that the experimental group discussed economics, law, transportation issues, and population issues to a significantly greater extent than did the control group. It was concluded that this model was useful in systematically focusing students attention on some of the necessary components of environmental problem solving.

VALUES ORIENTATION

In a descriptive study by Supreka and Harms (1977) , two methods of presenting environmental education were compared to determine their effects on students knowledge and attitudes toward energy and environmental issues. Eight teachers used an inquiry approach, and eight others used a values oriented approach to teach a six – week environmental education unit to more than 600 high school students. Both treatments were found to produce significant cognitive gains, compared to the control classes. The authors suggested that there was no difference in students gains in knowledge between the two approaches and only a slight difference in attitudes toward environmental issues.

INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

Case's study (1979) to determine the effect of an integrated eight – week environmental education curriculum integrated into the regular school curriculum revealed opposite findings , however. In his study, sixth grade students of a seventh day

Adventist School were randomly selected and assigned to three groups.

Group A was treated with an integrated curriculum for five weeks , one week of a resident field experience , and an additional two weeks of integrated classroom curriculum .Group B was treated with only the integrated curriculum for eight weeks ; Group C acted as a control; receiving no environmental curriculum activities . A test was conducted to measure environmental knowledge. On the knowledge test , statistically significant differences in favor of the B group were found in comparisons with Group A and Group C . No significant differences were found between Group A and C.

Studies that examined the effects of outdoor environmental programs found statistically significant changes in campers knowledge of environmental issues. Chitwood (1977) found changes in environmental knowledge resulting from a camping experience. In her study, the effects on 58 enrollees of an eight – week session at a Youth Conservation Camp (YCC) were measured to determine the relationship , if any, between and among environmental knowledge , locus of control, and environmental attitudes. Pre and post tests were administered to detect the extent of changes in the variables. Statistical analysis indicated that significant changes , in a positive direction, were attained in environmental knowledge and environmental attitudes, but not in locus of control.

A study of Davis , Doran and Farr (1980) supports Chitwood's findings : 14,796 YCC campers from 194b camps were sampled to assess their environmental awareness before and after their camp experience. Of the eleven domains of goals developed , six knowledge domains showed statistically significant gains , as did the attitudinal domain . Reliability of the tests and homogeneity of the domains were estimated.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

1. A study may be under taken in which Environmental Awareness may be compared to the tribal and urban area adults.

2. A study may be under taken in which Environmental Awareness among the college lecturers and professors.

3. A study may be under taken in which evaluating student out comes in Environmental Education teachers taught programmed text.

4. A study may be under taken in which Environmental Awareness among the higher secondary school teacher with the large sample.

5. A study may be under taken in which Environmental Awareness may be compared to the technical and non – technical people of Industry and General people.

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