



ENVIRONMENT AWARENESS AMONG PUPIL TEACHERS: A CHALLENGE

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Abstract

Environment is one of the key areas of current human concern. It is utmost important part of our lives. It is concerned with the surroundings in which we live and cherish our life. Environment is essential for all life forms on the planet earth. The concept environment can be understood in totality of all components surrounding the man i.e. environment is the sum of all social, biological, physical and chemical factors which compose the surroundings of man. Each component of these surroundings constitutes a resource on which man draws with a view of promoting human welfare. It was found that level of Environmental Awareness was very high among pupil teachers.

Keywords: *Environmental Awareness, Pupil Teachers*

Introduction

Over recent decades, global problems relating to degradation of natural resources and pollution have increased dramatically. Natural resources are depleted by excessive use. Fresh water scarcity on a global scale, deforestation, degradation of coastal and marine areas, soil depletion and loss of biodiversity, are some of the problems that have become a major concern. Air and water pollution have reached such levels that have already resulted in serious health

problems, as well as negative impact on the environment, and inevitably influencing prospects for long-term economic growth. (Krishnamacharyulu and Reddy 2005)

As the solar flares are expected to be at their maximum intensity, there will be interruption of all the satellite services like mobile, telephone, television, radio, bank transactions, newspapers and credit cards due to solar radiation. There could be ‘telecommunication black out’ all over the globe, which will have serious impact on several domains of life.

In another startling revelation by the UN climate panel (2007), the melting of Himalayan glaciers could have serious consequences as more than 500 million residents, almost half of the Indian population, rely on the Indus, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra river basins for water supply. With Himalayan glaciers melting, its eastern islands sinking and freak rain flooding deserts, environmentalists opine global warming is already taking its toll on one of most populous Asian nation, India.

In order to protect and conserve the environment, enabling people to lead quality life, emphasis has been given to environmental education in both formal and non-formal system of education. In formal system of education, teachers can play an important role in educating their students about environment related issues, which is possible only when the teachers themselves have mastery over environmental awareness.

Teacher’s can play a pivotal role in transmitting knowledge and creating awareness about the environment and help to tackle the local and global environmental issues. The teacher’s community should be motivated and committed to the cause of realizing the goals of environment education and should take initiatives in designing the program of environment education. However for teachers to succeed in their enterprise and endeavor for spreading environmental awareness, it is important that the educational institutions should provide conditions conducive for it. It is essential that teachers should be properly trained themselves on environment concepts and skills to impart training to learners. Teachers should be well equipped with the knowledge method and teaching learning, material to inculcate the right understanding of and attitude towards environment in the learners.

The role of teacher is to make students aware and take active part in protecting the earth’s environment by making informed decisions and taking environmentally friendly actions. Protection of environment is everyone’s duty. The teachers are potential change agents and are capable of generating a workforce of enlightened, skilled and motivated learners. They can

empower the citizens with the ability attitude and values to protect the environment using formal and non formal channels of education. It is essential that teachers themselves need to be trained and equipped with the requisite knowledge skills and values to effect such a change.

Environment awareness parameters:

1. Attitude of students to the state of the environment
2. Attitude to environmental movements
3. Attitude to the nature
4. Opinions of possible actions of the respondents if he/she faces witnesses a case of environment pollution
5. Estimation of a respondent's personal ability to change environmental state.

McKeown and Hopkins (2002, cited in Yavetz et al., 2009) point at teachers as a key factor for effective environmental education, since they have the power to influence pupils' views, attitudes, and interaction related with the environment. Thus, teacher education process has increased value in providing trainers with the knowledge, skills and commitment to educate students in environmental education and to help them become environmentally literate citizens.

The following are the important roles played by teacher for environmental awareness. There are many lessons around us that can help connect children directly to the wonders of our planet. The teacher's role in creating environmental awareness is to model awe, respect, and wonder.

- Teachers must show delight with each new discovery and teach respectful observation of the life around us. It is not required that the teacher have a broad base of knowledge in environmental education, or even a great curriculum. It requires only a shift in perspective coupled with a big dose of enthusiasm and sincerity.
- Teacher should organize awareness programmes against defecation in public places, pasting posters in public place and to propagate personal hygiene habits like washing hand before meal etc.
- There are many things that teacher can do to increase opportunities for observation in classrooms and in our playgrounds. The more things find to notice, the more children will begin to understand that they are part of a global community, and not the center of one.

- One way of helping children learn to be aware of their environment is to ask questions that require opinions and ideas, not facts, such as: Where do you think that insect is going? Have you ever seen one like this before? Isn't the sky beautiful today? Would you like to paint a picture of the sky? Talking with children is much more effective than talking to them. By involving them in discussions, they focus on what is being said.
- In his own day today teaching, the teacher can use various methods, like dramatization, observation method, story-telling excursions, project method etc. Apart from bookish interaction, teacher has give more importance to practical awareness about environment. Co-curricular activities are the best medium to provide factual knowledge to students.
- It is also important that we do not take our surroundings for granted. Taking time to watch the plants, animals, and weather around us is a great way of modeling respect for them. Celebrate the first buds of spring and the last leaf falling in winter. Keep a journal or calendar to record when *nature events* happen. Record the children's observations as well as your own. This encourages the children to be more *tuned in* to their environment.
- Young children are only aware of their own environments and lives. It's the only reference point they have. Showing them that the world is vast and different everywhere is another way to help them understand that they are only one part of a global community.
- Teacher should use globes and maps of the world that can easily become part of almost any group time or lesson. When you read a story that comes from or is about a place, find that place on a globe with the group.
- Teacher should talk about and imagine what places may be like — use *National Geographic* pictures to help children visualize and begin to understand that the earth has endless variations of landscapes, skin colors, languages, foods, wildlife, and cultures.
- Grow kitchen garden, maintain vermin-composting pit, construct water harvesting structures in schools, practice paper re-cycling etc.
- Action base activities like tree plantation, cleanliness drive both within and outside the schools campus should be done by teachers and school authorities.
- Teacher should prepare inventories of polluting source and forward it to enforcement agencies.

- Learning the basics about the planet is also easier using a globe to illustrate. The imaginary red line is the equator, which is the warmest place on the earth. Around the equatorial belt is where all rain forest and coral reefs are located. The weather never gets cold there. As one moves toward the poles, the weather gets colder, being coldest at the poles.
- Three-fourths of our planet is covered by water. Our atmosphere is what makes our planet capable of sustaining life. Using saran wrap around a globe will help illustrate how thin our layer of protection is, and that "outer space" is actually very close.
- Teacher should teach the students about Tree Plantation. Trees and forests are the lungs of our planet. We could not survive without them. Clear cutting of forests is a worldwide problem. Not only does it destroy habitats and oxygen-making trees, but it also loosens soils contributing to mud slides and massive flooding. In and out doors, one can plant almost anything: flowers, vegetables, bulbs, and trees.
- Teaching children about water conservation is very important. On a planet mostly covered by water, it's hard to believe that clean water is becoming scarce. Learning about the earth's water cycle can be fun and easy.
- Teaching children about "zoo animals" as a unit is one of my pet peeves. There really is no such thing as a "zoo animal." Zoos are places that have captive wild animals on exhibit for the public to view. They also educate visitors and sometimes breed endangered species. Teaching children that the animals come from all over the world is a giant step towards making a zoo visit educational.
- Endangered species are often discussed before a zoo visit. Today, species are disappearing more quickly than ever in history.
- Teacher should organize seminars, debates, lectures and popular talks on environmental issues in the schools.
- Teacher should plan fields' visits to environmentally important sites including polluted and degraded sites wildlife parks etc.
- The role of teacher is to organizing rallies, marches, human chains and street theater at public places with a view to spread environmental awareness.

Since the need of the hour is environmentally oriented citizens, the teachers being the national builders have the responsibility to produce such conscious citizens. If we want to secure the future of our environment; we have to create awareness about the environment and an attitude for caring and sharing of natural resources among children who are the future citizen of our nation as rightly said by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of Independent India that “Future of India is shaped in her classrooms” where students are the foundations and teachers are the pillars of development.

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