

“Awareness towards Environmental Education and Sustainable Development: A case study of High School teachers of District Kupwara of Jammu and Kashmir State, India”.

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Abstract

This study provides a detailed description of the awareness of High School teachers towards environmental education and sustainable development. The study surveyed 600 teachers in 50 different high schools of the district and after the analysis of the collected data, it was found that majority of the teachers (93%) have awareness regarding environmental education and sustainable development.

Introduction

Environmental Education constitutes a comprehensive lifelong education, one responsive to changes in a rapidly changing world. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) states that environmental education is vital in imparting an inherent respect for nature amongst society and in enhancing public environmental awareness. UNESCO defines environmental education as a process of developing a world population that is aware of and concerned about the total environment and its associated problems, and which has the knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivations and commitment to work individually and collectively towards solutions of current problems and the prevention of new ones (UNESCO, 1976). UNESCO emphasizes the role of environmental education in safeguarding future global developments of societal quality of life (QOL), through the protection of the environment, eradication of poverty, minimization of inequalities and insurance of sustainable development (UNESCO, 2014 a).

Internationally, environmental education gained recognition when the UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1972, declared Environmental Education must be used as a tool to address global environmental problems. In 1977, the Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education in Tbilisi, Georgia emphasized the role of Environmental Education in preserving and improving the global environment and sought to provide the framework and guidelines for environmental education. The Conference laid out the role, objectives, and characteristics of environmental education, and provide several goals and principles for environmental education. After the 1970's, non-governmental organizations that focused on environmental education continued to form and grow, the number of teachers implementing environmental education in their classrooms increased, and the movement gained

stronger political backing. A critical move forward came when the United States Congress passed the National Environmental Education Act of 1990, which placed the office of Environmental Education in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and allowed the EPA to create environmental education initiatives at the federal level.

In India, to promote environmental awareness across the nation, the Centre for Environmental Education (CEE) was established in August 1984 with a support from the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India. One of the tasks of the CEE is to put efforts to give due recognition to the role of environmental education. The CEE runs many educational programs in this regard. The National Policy on Education 1986 has also given a special place of significance to education and environment. So, a great need is being felt to create awareness for the protection of the environment by redesigning the objectives, methods and curriculum in the field of education. In 1987, sustainable development became well known after the publication of "Our Common Future" (The Brundtland Report) by the UN. According to Banerjee (2003) and Pearce, Barbier and Markandya (1990), sustainable development emerged from a realization of the need to balance economic and social progress with environmental concerns. This means that the Environmental Education has been used in starting a dialogue between environmental, social and economic worlds. The importance of Education for Sustainable Development was emphasized by the Agenda 21, a document produced from the Rio Earth Summit. Education for Sustainable Development aims at raising public awareness of the concept of sustainable development so as to develop enlightened, active and responsible citizens locally, regionally and internationally (UNESCO, 2009). In December 2002, the UN General Assembly declared the year 2005 to 2014 as the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). This declaration calls for the integration of sustainable development aspects such as ecological, social and economic into educational plans across all sectors of education. Sustainable development is defined as "Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Kates et al, 2005).

Ban Ki-moon, the United Nations Secretary General from 2007 to 2016, has stated that "We don't have plan B because there is no planet B". This thought has guided the development of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda began in January 2015 and ended in August 2015. A final document was adopted at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015 in New York, USA. On 25 September 2015, the 193 countries of the UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Development Agenda titled "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". India has played an important role in shaping the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, it is no surprise that the country's national development goals are mirrored in the SDGs. As such, India has been effectively committed to achieving the SDGs even before they were fully crystallized. From India's point of view, Sustainable Development Goals need to bring together development and environment into a single set of targets.

The present study was done by the researcher to find out the awareness towards environmental education and sustainable development among the secondary school teachers. The researcher developed a tool for the purpose of collecting data regarding the awareness towards environmental education and sustainable development and applied the same on 600 secondary school teachers of Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir State, India. The researcher used the descriptive type of survey method and simple random sampling procedure to select the sample (participants) for data collection.

General Profile of the Study

The below mentioned section will study the general profile of the collected sample i.e., 600 secondary school teachers. Figure I indicate the gender distribution of the collected sample of teachers in which 70% teachers are male and 30% teachers are female.

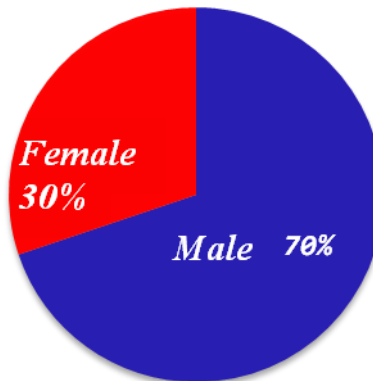


Fig: I Distribution of Teachers By Gender

According to the distribution of teachers by locality, the research findings shows that majority of the teachers (68%) are working in rural areas and only (32%) are working in urban areas of the district (Fig. II).

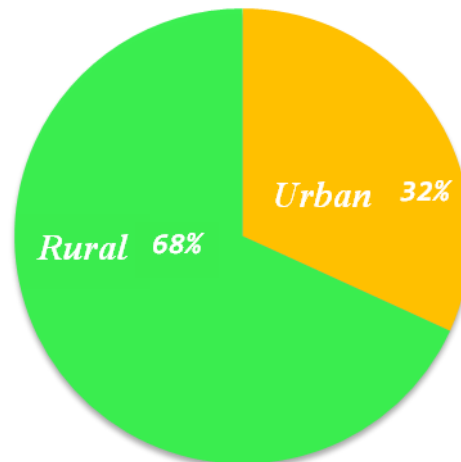


Fig: II Distribution of Teachers By Locality

Based on the teaching experience of the sampled teachers, they were categorized into five groups viz; 0-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, and 21 years and above. The research findings shows that 35% teachers belong to 0-5 years of teaching experience category , 32% belong to 6-10 years , 15% belong to 11-15 years , 12% belong to 16-20 years and only 6% belong to 21 and above years of teaching experience category (Fig III).

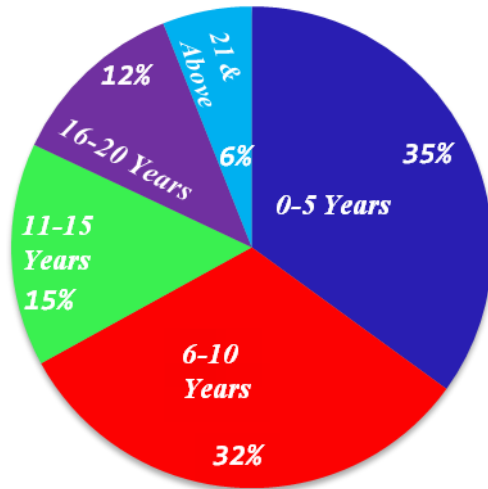


Fig: III. Distribution of Teachers by Teaching Experience

According to the teaching subject of the sampled teachers, the research shows that 60% belong to Arts category and only 40% belong to Science stream. (Fig IV).

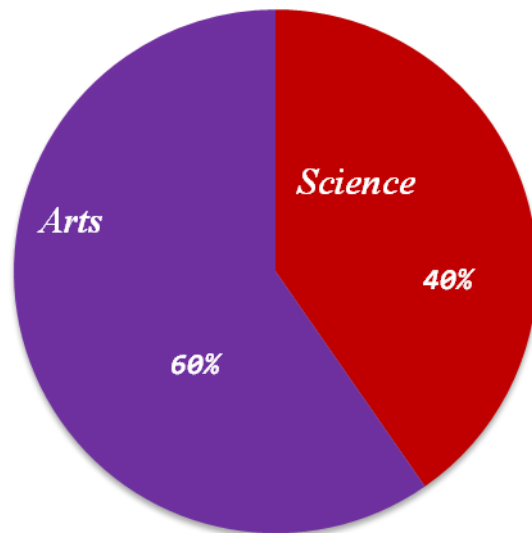


Fig: IV Distribution of Teachers by Teaching Subject

Fig: V represents the Marital Status of the sampled teachers which shows that 66% teachers are married and 34% teachers are unmarried.

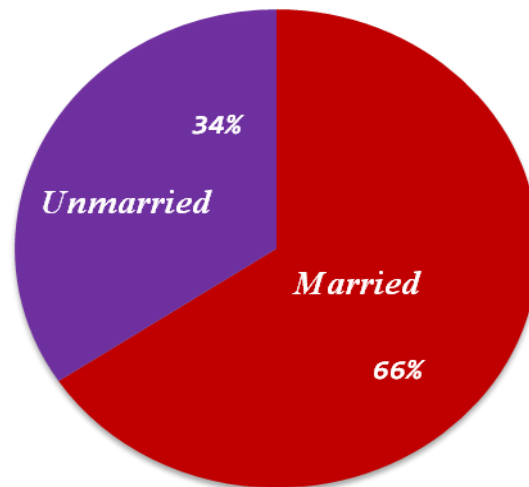


Fig: V Distribution of Teachers by Marital Status

Out of the total surveyed teachers, the type of management of the schools indicates that 52% teachers are working in private educational institutions and only 48% teachers are working in government schools.(Fig VI).

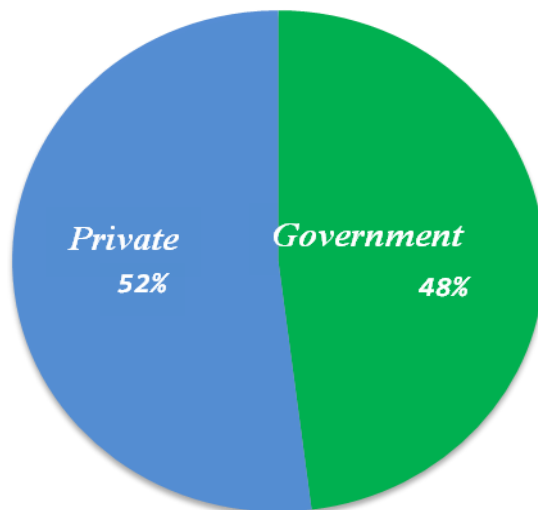


Fig: VI Distribution of Teachers by Type of Management

Discussion and Results

An awareness inventory was prepared by the researcher to collect the data regarding the awareness of high school teachers towards environmental education and sustainable development. The inventory consisted of 30 items in which both positive and negative items were selected and was administered to 600 secondary school teachers of district Kupwara of Jammu and Kashmir State. After the statistical analysis of the collected data, the results reveal that majority of the teachers (93%) have awareness regarding environmental education and sustainable development.

Fig: VII shows the distribution of all teachers (600) responses for awareness assessment test on environmental education and sustainable development.

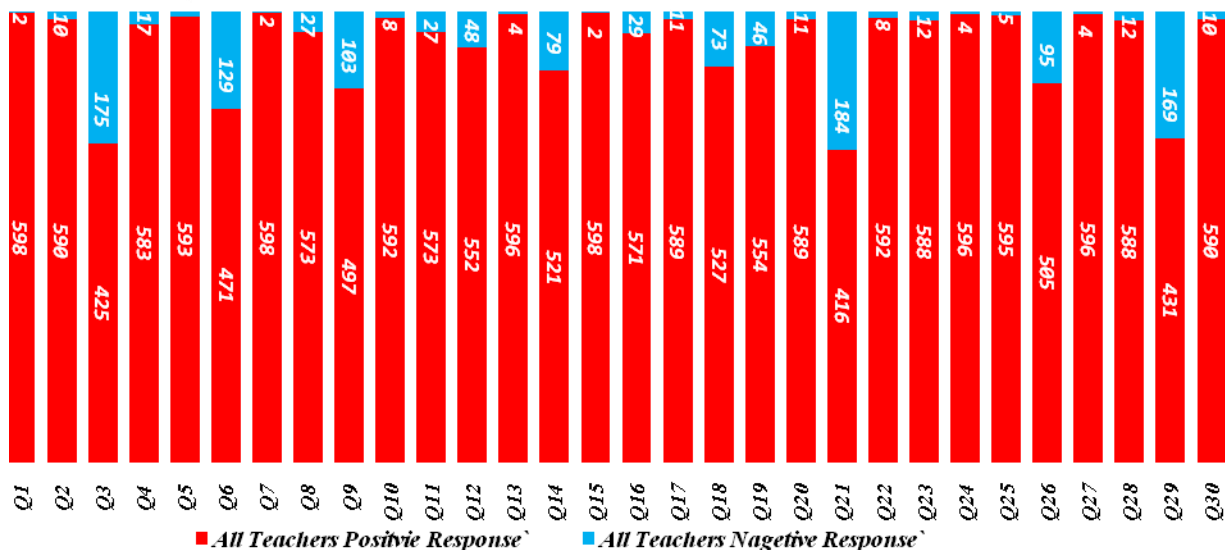


Fig:VII Distribution of all teachers (600) responses for awareness assessment test on Environmental Education and Sustainable Development

Fig VIII & IX shows the distribution of percentage correct vs. incorrect teachers responses to all questions for awareness assessment test on Environmental education and sustainable development.

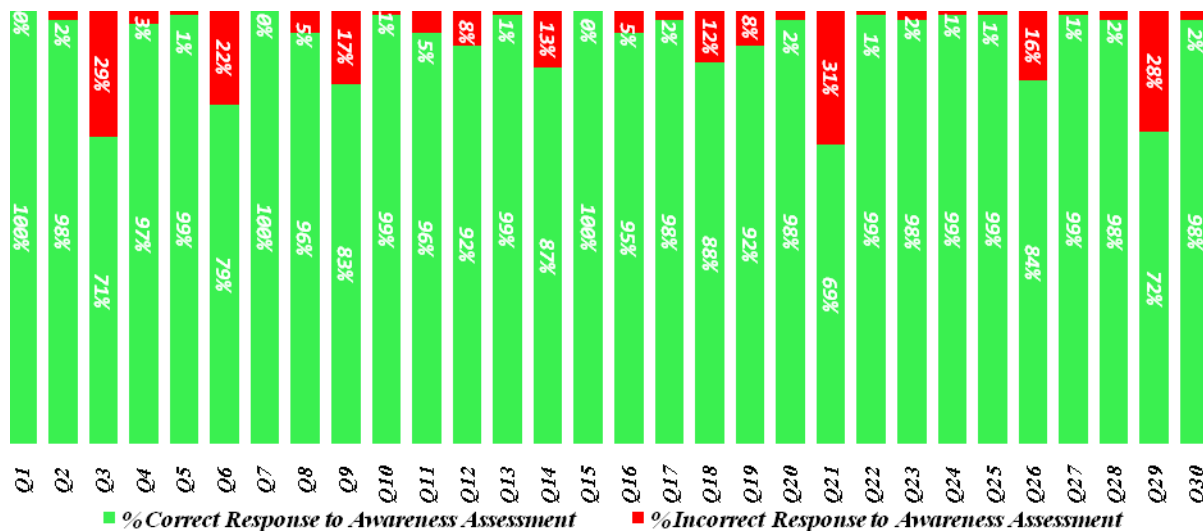


Fig:VIII

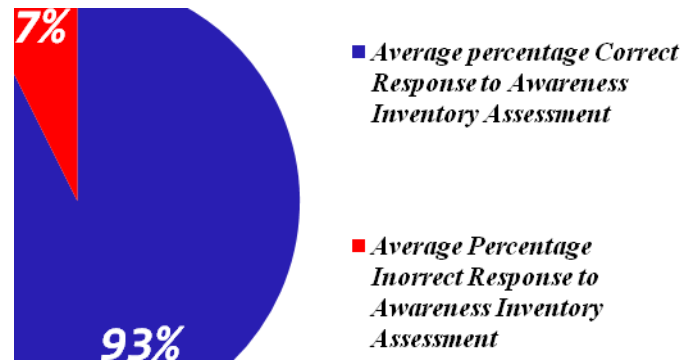


Fig: IX

The researcher has done the Chi Square Test of the awareness inventory for independent variables like gender, locality, type of management of the school , subject of specialization and teaching experience results of which are shown in the below mentioned table I.

Criteria	Test applied	Value	Df	P.value
Gender	Pearson Chi-Square	12.539541	1	0.00000
Locality	Pearson Chi-Square	47.50565	1	0.00000
Type of Management	Pearson Chi-Square	11.91654	1	0.01936
Subject	Pearson Chi-Square	6.347573	1	0.36011
Experience	Pearson Chi-Square	41.46807	4	0.00000

Table: I Chi Square Test

Conclusion

Education for sustainable development or environmental education for sustainable development is a concept encompassing a vision of education that seeks to empower people of all ages to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable future. Environmental education for sustainability acknowledges what has always been true, “ that how people perceive and interact with their environment (their worldviews) cannot be separated from the society and the culture they live in”. The teacher should be aware of the environmental education and sustainable development aspects, only then he can make the future generation aware of the environmental

problems and their solutions. Taking this into consideration, the researcher felt a need to conduct a study to know about the extent of awareness of high school teachers towards environmental education and sustainable development, with respect to gender, area, type of management, teaching experience, subject of specialization and marital status. The research tool administered by the researcher on 600 teachers of the district and the data collected and analyzed therefore reveals that majority of the teachers 93% have awareness regarding environmental education and sustainable development.

The analysis of the collected data indicates that 70% teachers are males and only 30% are females and majority (68%) of the sampled teachers are working in rural areas and 32% are working in the urban areas of the district. The data shows that 60% teachers belong to arts stream and only 40% belong to science stream, 66% teachers are married and only 34% are unmarried teachers. Similarly the data also shows that 52% teachers are working in Private schools and 48% teachers are working in Government schools whereas the data shows that majority of the teachers (35%) according to their teaching experience have 0-5 years of teaching experience.

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