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EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDES OF ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract:

In recent times, unprecedented population growth and intensified human activity, largely brought by scientific and technological advancements, have contributed to serious environmental crises. Rapid urbanization, modernization, and the expansion of scientific knowledge over the past century have further accelerated issues like resource depletion, ecosystem degradation, and pollution. Awareness of these problems has increased significantly in recent years (Larijani, 2010), but the excessive consumption of natural resources continues to deplete the resources. The aim of this study is to assess the relationship between environmental awareness and environmental attitudes among adolescents. The findings reveal a highly significant correlation between these factors in both male and female adolescents, as well as in the overall adolescent population. These results could inform educational strategies and policies, offering valuable insights for educators, policy makers, teachers, students, and parents seeking to promote environmental responsibility.

Keyword: *Environmental Awareness, Environmental Attitude, Adolescents.*

Introduction

From ancient times, humans have recognized the importance of the environment, which include the sum total of living and non-living elements. The Panchamahabhuta—Air, Water, Fire, Space, and Earth—have been considered the fundamental building blocks of the universe. These elements are interconnected, maintaining a natural balance in which any disturbance to one impacts the others. When such imbalances occur for a shorter period of time, nature has the ability to self-correct and restore equilibrium. However, prolonged or severe deterioration disrupts the entire system, affecting not only the environment but all life forms as well (Jain, 2008). In modern times, rapid population growth and intensified human activities, largely carried out by scientific advancements and technological applications, have further impacted the environment. The rapid expansion of scientific knowledge over the past century, along with advancements in

technology, modernization, and urbanization, has led to severe environmental crises. In recent years, awareness of issues such as resource depletion, ecosystem degradation, and the harmful impact of pollutants has increased significantly (Larijani, 2010).

In recent decades, global challenges related to natural resource depletion and pollution have intensified dramatically. Excessive consumption of resources has led to pressing environmental concerns, including freshwater scarcity, deforestation, soil degradation, the loss of biodiversity, and the deterioration of coastal and marine ecosystems. Air and water pollution have reached critical levels, causing serious health issues and adversely affecting the environment. These environmental crises also threaten long-term economic stability and growth (Reddy, 2005). In this context, fostering Environmental Awareness and promoting a positive Environmental Attitude are essential steps toward achieving sustainable development.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE-

Arshad et al. (2021) assessed the environmental awareness, concern, attitude, and behavior of university students across various academic disciplines, including Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Physical Sciences, Biological Sciences, and Environmental Sciences. The results indicated that while university students exhibited significantly high levels of environmental awareness, concern, and behavior, the group studying Biological and Physical Sciences demonstrated notably lower levels of environmental attitude. Singh & Prabhat (2019) conducted a study to examine the status of environmental awareness and environmental attitude among senior secondary students from Kendriya Vidyalayas. Their findings revealed no significant differences in environmental awareness or attitude based on gender or age. Similarly, Panth et al. (2015) explored environmental awareness and attitude among boys and girls at N.M.V. The study concluded that while boys and girls differed significantly in terms of environmental attitude, no significant difference was observed in their levels of environmental awareness. Sahu,et al. (2015) investigated the environmental awareness and attitude of undergraduate students in rural areas. The study found no significant differences in environmental awareness or attitude across students from different academic streams.

Ghosh (2014) conducted a study on the environmental awareness and attitude of secondary school students in the Golaghat district of Assam. The findings revealed no significant differences between male and female students in terms of environmental awareness and attitude. However, a significant difference was observed between rural and urban students on both variables. Kumari et al. (2012) examined the environmental awareness, attitude, and practices of junior and senior secondary school teachers in Bareilly city. The study concluded that differences in environmental awareness and attitude were influenced by factors such as gender, school board affiliation, and educational qualifications. Padnabhan, & Rao (2008) investigated the environmental

awareness and attitude of secondary school teachers in the Maldives, with a focus on gender and the relationship between the two variables. The results showed a moderate correlation between environmental awareness and environmental attitude, suggesting that environmental awareness served as a predictor of teachers' environmental attitudes.

Rout & Agarwal (2006) conducted a study in Moradabad city to examine the environmental attitude and awareness of boys and girls from science and non-science streams. Their research aimed to explore potential differences in environmental perspectives based on academic background. Dhawan et al (2005) investigated the environmental knowledge, awareness, and attitude of B.Ed. students at Garhwal University to assess the effectiveness of the environmental education syllabus in the B.Ed. curriculum. Their findings revealed a significant positive correlation between environmental knowledge and awareness, as well as a moderate correlation between environmental knowledge and environmental attitude among pupil teachers, both before and after completing their training. Shobeiri (2007), in a comparative study on the environmental awareness and attitude of teachers and students in Mysore and Tehran, found that females in both locations demonstrated a more positive environmental attitude than males. The study concluded that gender had a notable influence on environmental attitudes.

Chetna (2003) conducted a study in the Bangorpat and KGF areas to investigate the impact of background variables on the environmental attitude of 9th-grade students. The findings revealed a significant relationship between socioeconomic status and environmental attitude. However, no significant differences were observed in environmental attitude based on locality or gender. Dinakara (2000) examined the environmental awareness, attitude, and teaching practices of elementary school teachers in the Mysore district. The study found that urban school teachers exhibited higher levels of environmental awareness and attitude compared to their rural counterparts. Additionally, a considerable positive relationship was identified between environmental awareness and environmental attitude.

The review of findings from multiple studies examining environmental awareness, attitudes, and behaviors across different populations, investigated these environmental dimensions among various groups including university students, secondary school students, and teachers. The studies examined different factors like gender, academic discipline, rural-urban differences, and socioeconomic status. While findings varied, several studies found no significant gender differences in environmental awareness, though some noted differences in environmental attitudes between males and females. Some research indicated urban populations demonstrated higher environmental awareness than rural counterparts, and several studies found positive correlations between environmental awareness and attitudes. Academic background appeared to influence environmental perspectives in some studies but not in others.

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OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY-

1. To assess the relationship between Environmental Awareness and Environmental Attitude of male Adolescents.
2. To assess the relationship between Environmental Awareness and Environmental Attitude of female Adolescents.
3. To assess the relationship between Environmental Awareness and Environmental Attitude of Adolescents.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY-

1. There is no significant relationship between Environmental Awareness and Environmental Attitude of male Adolescents
2. There is no significant relationship between Environmental Awareness and Environmental Attitude of female Adolescents
3. There is no significant relationship between Environmental Awareness and Environmental Attitude of Adolescents.

TOOL-

To assess the environmental Awareness and Environmental Attitude of adolescents the following tools have been used-

1. Environmental Awareness Ability Measure, developed by Praveen Kumar Jha
2. Environmental Attitude Scale, developed by Dr. (Mrs.) Haseen Taj

METHODOLOGY-

Data has been collected through Stratified Random Sampling Technique and analyzed through SPSS software.

RESULTS :

Obtained results are shown in the tables as below-

1. Ho1 - There is no significant Relationship between Environmental Awareness and Environmental Attitude of male Adolescents.

Relationship between Environmental Awareness and Environmental Attitude of Male Adolescents

TABLE- 1

	N	r	Level of significance
Male Adolescents	**400**	**.456**	**0.01**

Careful analysis of the table-1 reveals that there exists a positive and highly significant relationship between Environmental Awareness and Environmental Attitude of Male Adolescents with coefficient of correlation, r =0.456 at 0.01 level of

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significance. It means that we can say with 99% confidence that there exists a positive and significant relationship between environmental awareness and environmental attitude in the case of Male Adolescents. Thus hypothesis 1 "There is no significant Relationship between Environmental Awareness and Environmental Attitude of male Adolescents" is not accepted.

2. H02- There is no significant relationship between Environmental Awareness and Environmental Attitude of female Adolescents.

Relationship between Environmental Awareness and Environmental Attitude of Female Adolescents

TABLE- 2

	N	r	Level of significance
Female Adolescents	**400**	**.513**	**0.01**

Perusal of the table-2 reveals that there exists a positive and highly significant relationship between Environmental Awareness and Environmental Attitude of Rural Male Adolescents with coefficient of correlation, r =0.513 at 0.01 level of significance. It means that we can say with 99% confidence that, there exists a positive and significant relationship between Environmental Awareness and Environmental Attitude in case of Total Female Adolescents. Thus the H02 "There is no significant relationship between Environmental Awareness and Environmental Attitude of female Adolescents" is not accepted.

3. H03- There is no significant relationship between Environmental Awareness and Environmental Attitude of Adolescents.

Relationship between Environmental Awareness and Environmental Attitude of Adolescents

TABLE- 3

Total Adolescents	N	r	Level of significance
	800	**.484**	**0.01**

The values of Pearson's Correlation (r = 0.484) shown in Table-3 indicates that there is a positive and highly significant (at 0.01 level of significance) relationship between Environmental Attitude and Environmental Awareness of Total Adolescents. It means that we can say with 99% confidence that there exists a positive and significant relationship between Environmental Awareness and Environmental Attitude in the case of Adolescents. Thus the H03 "There is no significant relationship between Environmental Awareness and Environmental Attitude of Adolescents." is not accepted.

The result of the study is in congruence with the study of **Padnabhan J. and Rao M.P. (2008), Chetna (2003), Dinakara(2000)** and **Sahu U et al. (2015),** that also revealed a significant relationship between environmental awareness and environmental attitude. The results of the study would be useful for educationists, policy makers, teachers, students as well as parents.

CONCLUSION:

The research reveals a clear connection between how much adolescents know about environmental issues and their attitudes toward the environment. For male adolescents, the study found a moderate positive correlation (r=0.456) between environmental awareness and attitude. This means that increasing awareness about environmental issues also increases positive attitudes towards the environment in case of male adolescents. The relationship was even stronger among female adolescents (r=0.513), suggesting that female adolescent's environmental attitudes may be more closely tied to their environmental knowledge than male adolescents. When looking at all adolescents together (both male and female), a significant positive relationship (r=0.484) was confirmed, indicating that across genders, greater environmental awareness correlates with more positive environmental attitudes.

These findings align with previous research and highlight an important insight: educating young people about environmental issues doesn't just increase their knowledge—it can actually help shape more positive attitudes toward environmental protection and sustainability. For parents, teachers, and policymakers, this suggests that environmental education programs could be valuable tools not just for increasing knowledge, but potentially for fostering the environmental attitudes needed to address today's ecological challenges.

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