

## **An investigation into the awareness about environment and environmental education and the competence level among elementary school student of Darbhanga**

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### **Abstract**

This study examined the level of environmental awareness and competencies among government elementary school children of Darbhanga and about the factor which are the causes of the level of the awareness among the children. The literature on environmental awareness has clarified that these factors play an important role in the level of environmental awareness

This study aimed to know the level of environmental awareness among the elementary school's children of the District. The tool which was used in the study is self made tool. The present study aimed at investigating the understanding of environmental concepts and competencies. But, no tool was available for the aforesaid purpose. Therefore, it was felt necessary to develop an achievement test for measuring the understanding of environmental concepts among students studying in elementary schools of Darbhanga. Surpassing all other types of the standardized test in sheer numbers, achievements are designed to measure the effects of a specific programme of instruction or training. The tests represent a terminal evaluation of the individual's status on completion of a certain training or teaching. Out of which according to the level of awareness and competencies was calculated. The result showed that these was no difference in the level of environmental awareness due to type of school, but there was difference in the level of grade of students.

Thus the study is more important in increasing program to enhance environmental awareness in school syllabus which is very necessary for our life. This will increase zeal for success in the

environment clean. Today the need and lust for being successful is increasing hence for proper guidance and for fulfilling the demands of the time the concept of environmental awareness should be applied in all stages of education.

**Keywords:-** Environmental Education, Concept and Competencies, govt. school.

### **Introduction**

In India too, environmental issues attracted popular attention and it was felt that education had to respond appropriately to this crying need of the time. The *National Policy on Education* -1986 [renewed in 1992] stated: "There is a paramount need to create a consciousness of the environment. It must permeate all ages and all sections of society, beginning with the child. Environmental consciousness should inform teaching in schools and colleges. This aspect will be integrated in the entire educational process." (8.15,p.39} Accordingly, the *National Curriculum for Elementary and Secondary Education: A framework* -1988 presented the NCERT's view : "The school curriculum should highlight the measures for protection and care ' of the environment, prevention of pollution and conservation of energy." In consonance with these documents, environmental studies was made an independent subject at the primacy level and topics related to environment were suitably infused with different science and social science subjects at all school stages. Books under a 'Reading to Learn' series were brought out to highlight a number of environment related subjects and concerns. Emphasis was also laid on teacher orientation-cum-training in the subject and a number of training modules were developed by the NCERT.

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE)-2000 also highlights the need for including environmental concerns at all the levels of schooling. It asserts the Fundamental Duties (Article 51 A of part IV A of the Indian Constitution) : " protect and improve the national environment including forests, lakes, rivers, wildlife and to have compassion , for the living creatures ... " (Common Core Components, p.36). As one of the General Objectives of Education, it mentions "understanding of the environment in its totality, both natural and social, and their interactive processes, the environmental problems and the ways and means to preserve the environment." (p.40) Following these recommendation, a subject, the

Art of Healthy and Productive Living, along with language and mathematics, has been introduced at the level of Classes I and II. All the three subjects are to be woven around the immediate environment of the learners and integrate environmental concerns as well. In Classes III-IV, Environmental Studies becomes a separate subject.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The present study has been taken up as a humble beginning of the tremendous task ahead with the following objectives:

1. To study the effect of environmental awareness programme on elementary level school children.
2. To assess the existing amount of environmental awareness among the elementary school children.
3. To assess a sense of responsibility and urgency to ensure appropriate action to solve environmental problems.
4. To evaluate the basic competencies achievement of the pupils of elementary standard in environmental awareness.
5. To study the level of understanding of environmental education among elementary level school children.

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

Analyzing the research studies the following hypotheses have appeared in the mind of investigator:

- 1 Elementary level students have good amount of environmental awareness.
- 2 Elementary level students have good understanding of environmental education.
- 3 Elementary level students are well in their competence level related with their environment.
- 4 Those elementary level students who are well aware of their environment have better understanding of environmental education.

- 5 Those elementary level students who are well aware of their environmental have better competence level.
- 6 Those elementary level students who have better understanding of environmental education have better competence level.

### **Method of the Study**

Research methods have been defined as tools to be used for answering specific questions and for solving different scientific or practical problems (Enderud, 1984). It is the substance of the matter the questions to be answered that must guide the selection of methods and not vice-versa. Methods should not become straitjackets.

Research is nothing, but the quest of knowledge and truth. For the sake of the aforesaid knowledge, we do adopt different methods of study in the domain of education. Descriptive survey method has been employed in this study. Descriptive survey method also known as non-experimental or co relational method deals with the relationship between variables, the testing of the hypothesis and the development of generalizations, principles or theories that have universal validity. The survey method gathers data from a relative large number of cases at a particular time. It is not concerned with characteristics of individuals. It is concerned with the generalized statistics that result when data are abstracted from a number of individual cases. A descriptive survey describes and interprets what is existing. It is concerned with conditions or relationships that exist, opinion that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident, or trends that are developing. It is primarily concerned with the present although it often considers past events and influences as they relate to current conditions (Best,1999). A descriptive research uses quantitative methods for describing, recording, analyzing, and interpreting conditions that exist. It involves some type of comparison or contrast and attempts to discover relationships between existing non manipulated variables. Some form of statistical analysis is used to describe the results of the study.

## Result

Table-1

Statistical analysis of the scores of grade-A and grade-B children in their understanding of environmental awareness

	Mean	S.D	t-value		
Grade-A children	29.22	6.66	t-obtained	12.45	.05 Level
Grade-B children	23.74	4.91	t-table	1.96	

**Interpretation –**

Table-1 shows that grade-A children and grade-B children are different from each other in their understanding of environmental awareness as the t-value is significant at .05 level of significance. So, the hypothesis 'there is no significant difference between grade-A children and grade-B children in their understanding of environmental awareness' is rejected. The mean of the scores shows high average performance of grade-A children and lower average performance of grade-B children in their understanding of environmental awareness. From the standard deviation, it can be inferred that the group of grade-A children is more homogeneous in comparison to the group of grade-B children.

Table-2

Statistical analysis of the scores of grade-A and grade-B in their understanding of Environmental Concepts

	Mean	S.D	t-value		
Grade-A	30.38	6.45	t-obtained	13.69	.05 Level
Grade-B	23.26	4.37	t-table	1.96	

**Interpretation –**

It is evident from the table-2 that grade-A are different from grade-B in their understanding of environmental concepts as t-value is significant at .05 level of significance. So, the hypothesis ‘there is no significant difference between grade-A and grade-B in their understanding of environmental concepts’ is rejected. Mean of the scores shows high average performance of grade-A and lower average performance of grade-B in their understanding of environmental concepts. Standard deviation of both groups shows that the group of grade-A is more homogeneous in comparison to the group of grade-B.

Table-3

Statistical analysis of the scores of grade-A and grade-B in their understanding of Environmental Competencies

	Mean	S.D	t-value		
Grade-A	28.05	6.67	t-obtained	9.04	.05 Level
Grade-B	23.26	4.37	t-table	1.97	

**Interpretation –**

t-value in the table-3 shows that grade-A and grade-B are different from each other in their understanding of environmental competencies as there is a significant difference at .05 level of significance. So the hypothesis ‘there is no significant difference between grade-A and grade-B in their understanding of environmental competencies’ is rejected. From the mean, we can infer that the performance of grade-A is high in average while the performance of grade-B is lower in average. From the standard deviation, it can be said that the group of grade-A is heterogeneous in comparison to grade-B.

**Observations**

It is observed that most of the teachers are not evinced any interest in using the hand book for teachers and supplementary readers have not been distributed to students. The protection of local

specific communication, transportation, recreation and public service systems did not find a suitable place in the books on environmental education. It is observed that environmental education is rhetoric but not realistic. It is not a discipline; it is a way looking at the world and should become a life-long process instead of remaining confined to textbooks and curriculum. Further, it is observed by the investigator that students understand what to do to preserve the environment, but they do not connect these actions to actual local and global environmental problems. Eventually, awareness and concept for the environment are values that need to be inculcated during the early years of development.

### References

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