

Environmental education awareness between private and government secondary school students in west district of Tripura: A comparative study

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Abstract: We are all quite concerned about the state of the environment these days. People need to be made more conscious of the environment and its issues. Being conscious of the environment and making decisions that help the planet rather than harm it is known as environmental awareness. Human society will be better equipped to preserve the ecological balance through environmental education that raises awareness of environmental issues. The goal of environmental education is to instill in students the knowledge, mindset, abilities and communication necessary to preserve the environment. The sole purpose of environmental education is to teach human society to view the environment holistically. Degradation of the environmental procurement at the most fundamental level is caused by a lack of environmental consciousness regarding the conservation of forests and the preservation of species and culture, among other things. If it continues, human society will face an enormous problem. The purpose of the current questionnaire is to investigate pupils' awareness of the environment. It is the responsibility of every individual to take care of nature and to protect nature awareness about environment should be given. Thus, this questionnaire will be helpful for creating awareness among the students. It was determined that there is a significant difference between secondary school students attending government and private schools on all aspects of environmental awareness based on the respondent scores of the two groups on all the items listed in the questionnaire.

Key words: Environmental awareness, environmental education, conservation of forests, government and private schools.

1. INTRODUCTION

The excessive use of natural resources and increasing environmental pollution are putting our planet's fragile biosphere in danger of being destroyed by humans. Educating people about the environment and the issues it causes is urgently needed. To preserve our ecosystem, we must all do our part both individually

and collectively. The natural environment, which makes up an ecosystem and is essential to the survival of organic life and human development, is the subject of this survey. Food, water, air, and shelter are some of the most important ecological services that humans rely on. This ecology is delicate and vulnerable to several hazards, such as: Pollution, Climate change, Man-made disasters and Natural disasters etc. The Human Environmental Ecosystem, which is necessary for sustainable human, economic and social development, may suffer as a result of these challenges to vital keystone components, nutrients, and species. Societies must balance social and economic activities to preserve the supply of these necessities in our homes and environmental surroundings if we are to survive. Modern governments and democracies set up organizations to control the protection and supply of the necessary components in order to maintain this "social good".

According to John Luboc, "The Mountains and the sea, the woods and the fields, the lakes and the rivers, the earth and the sky are all great teachers and teach us more than we can ever learn from books". That means, a broad range of subjects are covered by environmental knowledge, such as biodiversity, pollution, climate change, sustainability, and conservation. It entails realizing the linkages between human endeavors and the environment and the significance of sustainable practices for the welfare of current and future generations.

Moreover, other environmentalist told that, "One of the most significant things in children's lives should be teaching them about the natural world". That means, effective environmental education is now required at all educational levels due to the growing awareness of environmental challenges. Research on secondary school teachers' attitudes toward environmental

awareness is essential since secondary schools have a significant influence on how pupils behave and think about the environment. Gaining an understanding of these educators' perspectives can help pinpoint possible areas for change and offer insightful information about the condition of environmental education today.

This research provides the foundation and motivation for the National Environmental Literacy/Awareness Survey, which assesses students' environmental literacy and awareness levels. Additionally, the survey offers the chance to improve environmental management, education, and awareness. The purpose of this study is to look into how secondary school students feel about environmental understanding. We can get a thorough grasp of how educators interact with and prioritize environmental education in their classrooms by looking at their attitudes, convictions and actions about environmental issues. Curriculum creators, school administrators and educational officials will find this information very helpful in determining how best to improve environmental education.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Since environmental issues have become irrelevant to economic progress, health, nature, and aesthetics, they have risen to high worldwide priorities despite previously being viewed as local or regional issues. The use of resources to make goods for the global market mainly degrades the environment locally rather than globally. Although everyone has the right to a decent living, there are certain aspects of our current environment that work against achieving and enjoying such a life. Therefore, it becomes imperative that every citizen cultivate environmental ethics that, even as we strive for a happy life, do not compromise the destiny of future generations. Hence, for the present study the problem was formally stated as- "Environmental education awareness between private and government school students in west district of Tripura: A comparative study".

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Several prior research investigations on ecological behavior and environmental awareness have been carried out on a variety of samples. Gihar (2011) [1] investigated the environmental responsibilities of aspiring educators in Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad district. While female prospective teachers scored

significantly higher mean values on all the Environmental Responsibility Assessment Inventory categories, the study found no significant difference in environmental responsibility between rural and urban prospective teachers. A study on the level of environmental awareness among 1000 secondary school pupils living in rural or urban regions was carried out by Mondal and Mete (2010) [2]. According to the findings, urban boys are more conscious of the environment than their rural counterparts. However, there was no discernible difference between the boys' and girls' levels of environmental awareness. In his research, Duroy (2005) [3] shown that financial prosperity has no direct impact on environmental behavior and only a slight direct impact on environmental consciousness. The study shows that awareness is directly impacted by the degree of urbanization, subjective well-being, and income equality, while environmental behavior is strongly connected with education, population pressure, and happiness. According to Suneetha's (2007) [4] research, secondary school pupils exhibit a high level of environmental consciousness. The location of schools and the medium of teaching have no effect on students' environmental awareness, while student gender and school administration have a big impact. Budak et al. (2005) [5] discovered that male students were more hesitant about environmental issues than female students, whereas rural students were more concerned about them than urban ones. According to Tuohini (2001) [6], the two groups of boys and girls had a similar level of environmental awareness. Although both groups are conscious of environmental issues, they were not prepared to incorporate them into their purchasing decisions.

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

A clean, pure, and healthy environment is one of nature's greatest gifts to humans. Man, like many other organisms, must depend on this environment for sustenance. It supplies the man with food, shelter, air, and water, among other basic necessities. Therefore, it is not the place of today's generation or future generations to destroy its purity or pollute it. The present condition of a nation's environment actually reflects the standard of living of its citizens. The National Environmental Literacy/Awareness Survey is significant because it offers tools for assessing students' environmental literacy. Thus, it becomes important that every citizen adopt values related to the environment, which demand that, regardless of how we work for an enjoyable and joyful in our lives, we

must not sacrifice the future of our children and the generation that follows. The study will determine the proportion of students who are knowledgeable about ecology and the environment, and it will be beneficial for them to learn more about it.

5. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The major objectives of the study are as follows:

- (a) To study the attitude of students of Tripura on environmental awareness.
- (b) To compare the levels of awareness of school students with special reference to gender.
- (c) To compare the levels of awareness of government school and privet school students in Tripura.

6. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

6.1. Design of the Study

In this analysis, only primary data were employed. To fulfill the above objectives, a well designed and executed questionnaire has been created. Several structured questionnaires have been employed to collect primary data. Each response was analyzed using a five-point Likert scale that included the following options: SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, UD-Undecided, DA-Disagree and SD-Strongly Disagree.

6.2. Population

The population of the present study includes government and privet school students in between class IX to XII in different secondary schools under the west district of Tripura, Tripura.

6.3. Sample

A sample of 114 school students was selected from various government and privet school students of west

district of Tripura through using random sampling techniques.

7. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF DATA

The study's objectives have been achieved by the analysis of the gathered data utilizing qualitative descriptions, frequency and percentages. The sections that follow contain a detailed analysis and interpretation. A self-created survey focused on several facets of environmental literacy and awareness in the institutes. By seeking expert input, the validity of the tools was confirmed. After getting numerically coded, what had been collected was imported into MS Excel for analysis. Every item was examined in terms of percentage and an interpretation was developed as a result. The statistics on environmental awareness among the students in our survey sample is shown in Table-1 and Table 2, given below.

Table-1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Gender	Government school (in %)	Privet school (in %)
Male	29 (25.44 %)	26 (22.81 %)
Female	25 (21.93 %)	34 (29.82 %)

Out of the total participants, 48.25% were male and 51.75% were female. The demographics of the Government school indicate a well-balanced gender ratio, with men slightly outnumbering women. In contrast, the Privet school is awesomely female with more than men. This could suggest that female students have more environmental literacy and awareness in the institutes.

Table-2: Students response towards Environmental Awareness

Sl. No.	List of items	Government school (in %)					Privet school (in %)				
		SA	A	UD	D	SD	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1.	I feel that we take some action to improve the environment	23.08	15.38	23.08	15.38	23.08	32.26	14.52	20.97	11.29	20.97
2.	The importance of the environment in our lives is very significant.	34.62	21.15	15.38	17.31	11.54	27.42	29.03	11.29	17.74	14.52

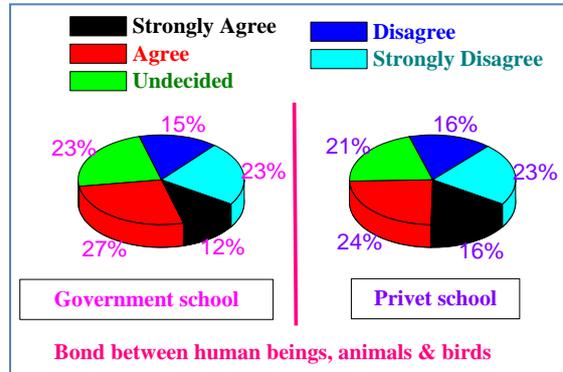
3.	We must be know about National Environmental Policy	28.85	19.23	23.08	15.38	13.46	29.03	19.35	24.19	11.29	16.13
4.	We need to know about the current status of environment	11.54	23.08	34.62	11.54	19.23	12.90	22.58	30.65	14.52	19.35
5.	I think that everyone heard about environmental literature	15.38	19.23	23.08	30.77	11.54	14.52	25.81	22.58	25.81	11.29
6.	There is a bond between human beings, animals & birds	11.54	26.92	23.08	15.38	23.08	16.13	24.19	20.97	16.13	22.58
7.	Our myths insist on the worship of animal images	30.77	17.31	19.23	23.08	9.62	29.03	17.74	19.35	22.58	11.29
8.	The nature more powerful than man	13.46	15.38	26.92	21.15	23.08	14.52	16.13	24.19	19.35	25.81
9.	I think that we should keep a balance with nature always	17.31	19.23	30.77	19.23	13.46	17.74	19.35	29.03	19.35	14.52
10.	I feel that animals are symbolize of power & energy?	21.15	25.00	11.54	15.38	26.92	20.97	24.19	12.90	16.13	25.81
11.	Deforestation is one of the major reasons for the loss of animals.	28.85	15.38	21.15	15.38	19.23	27.42	16.13	20.97	16.13	19.35
12.	Should man protect nature	25.00	23.08	17.31	13.46	21.15	24.19	22.58	17.74	14.52	20.97
13.	I think we keep our environment neat and clean	17.31	19.23	11.54	28.85	23.08	17.74	19.35	12.90	27.42	22.58
14.	A pollution free environment is needed to live peacefully	11.54	26.92	30.77	7.69	23.08	16.13	25.81	29.03	9.68	19.35
15.	I feel that our environment is pollution free	30.77	15.38	23.08	19.23	11.54	29.03	16.13	22.58	19.35	12.90
16.	We should know about the factors of environmental pollution	23.08	21.15	17.31	25.00	13.46	22.58	20.97	17.74	24.19	14.52

17.	Everyone adopt positive step to keep your environment pollution free	19.23	28.85	15.38	9.62	26.92	19.35	27.42	16.13	11.29	25.81
18.	I think that the rapid growth of science and technology is another cause of environmental pollution	34.62	15.38	23.08	11.54	15.38	32.26	16.13	22.58	12.90	16.13
19.	Are we aware about the plan/policies taken by the govt to control the environment pollution?	15.38	26.92	21.15	19.23	17.31	16.13	25.81	20.97	19.35	17.74
20.	Are we aware that environmental pollution is dangerous for the next generation?	23.08	15.38	32.69	17.31	11.54	25.81	16.13	24.19	20.97	12.90
21.	I think that the polythene bags, artificial chemicals or manure etc creates environmental pollution	23.08	9.62	25.00	26.92	15.38	22.58	11.29	25.81	24.19	16.13
22.	I think that environmental education should be included in the curriculum of all stages	19.23	19.23	30.77	11.54	19.23	20.97	22.58	24.19	11.29	20.97
23.	I feel that the pollution of environment is the source of all kinds of diseases	38.46	15.38	11.54	19.23	15.38	33.87	17.74	11.29	24.19	12.90
24.	We know that environment can be protected from pollution	42.31	7.69	11.54	15.38	23.08	29.03	12.90	16.13	17.74	24.19
25.	Is there any meeting and held environmental awareness in your area?	30.77	19.23	11.54	15.38	23.08	27.42	20.97	14.52	16.13	20.97
26.	We must be participate environmental awareness programme	17.31	26.92	21.15	23.08	11.54	17.74	25.81	20.97	22.58	12.90
27.	Unnecessary cutting of trees the cause of natural calamity	19.23	17.31	23.08	15.38	25.00	20.97	17.74	24.19	14.52	22.58

28.	I think that everyone face natural calamity	11.54	32.69	25.00	13.46	17.31	12.90	25.81	22.58	17.74	20.97
29.	I think that everyone need plant trees at home and school	17.31	23.08	30.77	21.15	7.69	17.74	22.58	29.03	20.97	9.68

The Table-2 presents a survey on students' responses towards environmental awareness, comparing perspectives from government and private school students. The survey results indicate a growing awareness among students regarding environmental issues, with private school students generally showing a more proactive attitude towards taking action. The recognition of the importance of environmental education suggests that students are aware of the need for structured learning about environmental issues. However, the mixed responses regarding government policies indicate a gap in awareness that could be addressed through better communication and educational programs. The emphasis on the dangers of pollution and the need for a pollution-free environment reflects a collective concern for health and future generations. The key differences in environmental awareness between government and private school students, as indicated in the survey results from Table-2 are as follows:

- (a) *Proactive attitude:* A higher percentage (32.26%) of private school students strongly agreed that they take action to improve the environment, suggesting a more proactive approach towards environmental issues. Only 23.08% of government school students strongly agreed with the same statement, indicating a comparatively lower level of proactive engagement.
- (b) *Recognition of environmental importance:* A significant 34.62% acknowledged the importance of the environment in their lives. This percentage was lower at 27.42%, suggesting that government school students may have a stronger recognition of environmental significance.
- (c) *Bond between human and others:* Students (Government 26.92% & Privet 24.19% “Agree”) believe there is a strong bond between human beings, animals, and birds, highlighting the interconnectedness of all living beings. This sentiment is reflected in their responses, indicating an understanding of the importance of this relationship in environmental awareness. The bond is seen as essential for maintaining ecological balance and harmony.

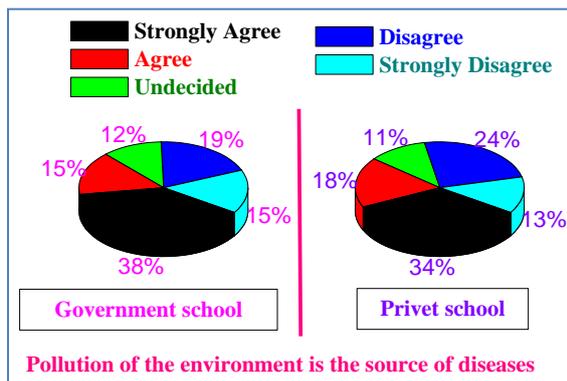
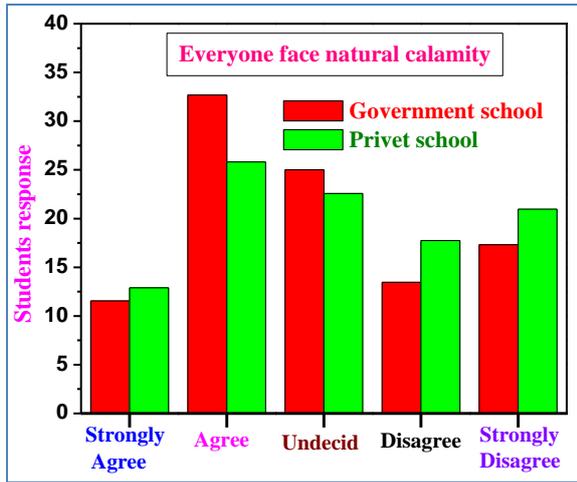


(d) *Awareness of pollution:* Both groups (Government 30.772% & Privet 29.03% “Strongly Agree”) expressed concern about pollution, but the private school students tended to show a greater awareness of the need for a pollution-free environment and the factors contributing to environmental pollution.

(e) *Environmental education and its importance:* Private school students view the importance of the environment in our lives as significant, with 27.42% strongly agreeing and 29.03% agreeing with the statement. This indicates a strong recognition of environmental issues and their relevance to daily life among private school students. However, there is also a notable percentage that remains undecided or disagrees, suggesting varying levels of awareness.

(f) *Government policies:* There was a moderate awareness of government policies aimed at controlling environmental pollution among both groups, but the private school students may have a better understanding or access to information regarding these policies.

(g) *Response to natural calamities:* Both groups recognized the link between deforestation and natural calamities, but private school students may be more inclined to participate in tree planting initiatives and other environmental programs.



In the presented Table-2, "I feel that the pollution of the environment is the source of all kinds of diseases". This statement garnered a strong agreement of 38.46% from the students, indicating a significant recognition of the link between environmental pollution and health issues. This reflects a critical awareness among students about the impact of environmental conditions on public health, emphasizing the importance of addressing pollution as a key environmental action.

Based on the survey results from Table-2, students perceive the importance of the National Environmental Policy with a notable level of agreement, particularly in the following ways: (i) a significant percentage of students (28.85%) from government schools expressed the need to know about the National Environmental Policy, indicating recognition of its relevance to environmental issues. (ii) Students also highlighted the importance of being informed about the current status of the environment, with 34.62% of government school students acknowledging this need. This suggests that they see the National Environmental Policy as a framework that could guide understanding and action regarding environmental conditions.

Overall, the findings suggest that while there is a foundational awareness of environmental issues among students, there is still a significant opportunity for educational institutions to enhance environmental literacy and encourage active participation in sustainability efforts. This could involve integrating more comprehensive environmental education into the curriculum and promoting community engagement initiatives. These insights can guide future programs aimed at fostering environmental stewardship among students, ensuring they are equipped to contribute positively to their communities and the planet.

8. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The main findings of the study on students' responses towards environmental awareness are as follows:

- (i) Private school students demonstrated a higher level of proactive engagement in environmental actions compared to government school students, with 32.26% of private school students strongly agreeing that they take action to improve the environment.
- (ii) A significant portion of government school students (34.62%) acknowledged the importance of the environment in their lives, indicating a strong awareness of environmental issues.
- (iii) Students expressed a high level of concern regarding environmental pollution, with many recognizing its detrimental effects on health and future generations. The statement linking pollution to diseases received the highest agreement at 38.46%.
- (iv) There was a consensus among students that environmental education should be included in the curriculum at all educational stages, reflecting a shared belief in the importance of educating future generations about environmental issues.
- (v) Students showed moderate awareness of government policies aimed at controlling environmental pollution, indicating a need for better communication and education regarding these initiatives.
- (vi) Students recognized the connection between deforestation and natural calamities, with many advocating for tree planting initiatives at home and school as a means to combat environmental degradation.
- (vii) There was a clear desire among students to be informed about the National Environmental Policy and the current status of the environment, suggesting that they value structured approaches to environmental management.

(viii) Students generally believe in the importance of keeping a balance with nature, as indicated by their responses. A significant portion expresses agreement with the idea, reflecting a recognition of the need for harmony between human activities and the natural environment. This perspective underscores their awareness of environmental sustainability and the consequences of imbalance.

Overall, the study highlights a growing awareness and concern among students regarding environmental issues, with a particular emphasis on the need for education, proactive engagement, and better communication about policies. The findings suggest that while students are aware of environmental challenges, there is an opportunity for educational institutions to enhance their understanding and involvement in sustainability efforts.

9. CONCLUSION

The study indicates a significant awareness among students regarding environmental issues, with a majority recognizing the importance of a pollution-free environment and the need for protective measures. Both government and private school students acknowledge the impact of deforestation and technological growth on environmental degradation. There is a call for increased knowledge about pollution factors and government policies to foster a cleaner environment for future generations. On other hand, both government and private school students recognize the significance of environmental policies and the bond between humans and nature. There is a consensus on the need for balance with nature and the role of animals as symbols of power and energy.

This elaborated that there is slight significant difference between government and private school students on environmental awareness areas mentioned above which explains that private secondary student were more aware of environment than government schools students in few cases and government secondary student were more aware of environment than private schools students in rest of the cases. To conclude we can say that government should negotiate in this direction. Government should make more such programmes for both type schools which make the students environmentally aware and eco friendly. Hence, it is essential to spread environmental awareness for building ecologically sustainable society.

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