



RESEARCH ARTICLE

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AMONG WOMEN: A SAMPLE STUDY OF WOMEN AT SUMMER HILL, SHIMLA

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Abstract

The study was conducted to find out the level of awareness among women as the environmental degradation touching such alarming proportions it is felt that we all must be pro-active in preserving it. With this object, it was decided to find out a target group and analyze its awareness about the environmental concerns. The effort was to look for a group whose awareness would impact not only itself but a large number of people around. Teachers could be one such group, the other could be students. The search ultimately narrowed down to women, whose awareness of the environmental concerns would be beneficial for the entire family. Besides, she is the one who could inculcate the positive attitude about the issue among the children right from childhood, which would go a long way in preserving the environment. Therefore, we prepared a questionnaire to test environmental awareness among women of different age groups staying at Summer Hill, Shimla.

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Description of Summer Hill, Shimla

Shimla district of Himachal Pradesh, lies between the longitude 77.00" and 78.19" east and latitude 30.45" and 31.44" north, has its headquarters at Shimla city, and Summer Hill is a part of the city. It is surrounded by Mandi and Kullu in the north, Kinnaur in the east, Uttarakhand in the south, Sirmaur in the west. The elevation of the district ranges from 1300 meters (984 ft) to 6,000 meters (19,685 ft). There are no bodies of water near the main city and the closest river, Sutlej, is about 21 km away. Other rivers that flow, through the Shimla district is Giri, and Pabbar. The main forests in and around the city are that of pine, deodar, oak and rhododendron (Fig.1).

Introduction:-

"It is high time that we, responsible citizens should have concern for the environment in which we live. The first step for this is to have an environmental awareness. The importance of environmental awareness cannot be overemphasized. It is also one of the objectives of Environmental Education", as observed by Dr. L Chhakchhuak, Department of Education, Alpine College, Shillong.

Environment and its preservation is one of the most important issues today. Unfortunately, the environment is in focus today for wrong reasons, because its degradation is everywhere to be found. And this degradation has assumed threatening.

Environment-

Environment includes Air, Water Land, Flora & Fauna and their interrelationship with human being.

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"ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AMONG WOMEN"

As the title of the study "Environmental Awareness among Women" is self-explanatory. The major aim of this study is to know the level of environmental awareness regarding major issues facing the society. It is not possible to draw any conclusion on the basis of a small sample consisting of forty women on the basis of their age, qualification & marital status in the Summer-Hill area of Shimla Town. Due to time constraints the researchers had tried their level best to justify their work. Environment and its preservation is one of the most important issues today. Unfortunately, the environment is in focus today for wrong reasons, because its degradation is everywhere to be found. And this degradation has assumed threatening proportions. To live and sustain ourselves we need healthy environment.

In case our natural surroundings are unhealthy, we would not be able to sustain ourselves for long. Therefore, there is an urgent need for all of us to be aware about this concern and make concerted efforts at preserving the environment in whatever little way we can. Every small contribution in preserving the environment is welcome as it is sure to add up to a big joint effort in future. The most prominent dangers to environment today are the ever increasing population, the consequent depletion of green cover, and water scarcity and pollution.

The ever increasing number of people will lead to increased demand for food, which has to come primarily from our land resources. As the population increases, arable land will decrease, since the increasing numbers would require more land for shelter, making the availability of land scarce for agricultural purposes. Besides, it will also lead to deforestation and the consequent loss of bio-diversity. Depletion of green cover from the earth leads to global warming. The dangers of global warming are imminent and well known. It leads to melting glaciers, threatening supply of water to for millions of people. Water is the source of life, and its depletion may cause serious threat to human life as well. Water, like other natural resources, is a scarce resource that needs to be seriously preserved, and an ever increasing population would not let that happen. Therefore, we not only need to protect green cover over the earth to douse the rising temperatures, but also guard against wasting water, and polluting it. An increasing population also leads to industrialization and the consequent water pollution by discharge of untreated effluents in rivers which is a common practice here.

Ecological Feminism -

1. Women comprises half of the total population, so their contribution at least half if not more than.
2. Gandhi ji said ((you educate the man, you educate a individual you educate a woman, you educate a generation."
3. In 1980s saw awareness about the need for women's participation in planning and development-including sustainable development.
4. In Indian society women's are customarily much closer to nature than men.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to test the level of environment awareness among the women of different age groups staying at Summer Hill, Shimla.

Objectives of the Study:-

Objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the awareness among half of the population, i.e., women about environment and the importance of women's active participation in improving the quality of life through sustainable development and environment conservation.
2. To understand their sensitivity towards the environment issues.
3. To analyze the implementation of these issues in their day to day life

Procedure for Data Collection

The questionnaires were administered personally to the respondents at Summer Hill, Shimla, and collected on the same day. The respondents were assured utmost confidentiality by the researchers. Respondents were given ample time to read through the information while the researchers were available to clarify any necessary issues. Thirty questionnaires were administered. The response rate was hundred per cent because the researches collaborated with the respondents to ensure successful results.

Methodology of Research:-

We used the questionnaire as a research tool. The questionnaire is the best method for mass enquiry (Bass, Lehman, 2007). The questions were open ended but we possibility too. The research was carried out among the women of different age groups staying at Summer Hill, Shimla. The questionnaire was filled up by the respondents. The test is based on difference in percentage.

Result and Discussion:-

Table 1:- Educational / Marital Status of Women(%).

Sr. No.	No. of Women	Marital Status		Educational Qualification	Age Group	Percentage
		Married	Unmarried			
1.	4	1	3	Upto 12th standard	Upto 25 years	10%
2.	11	10	1	Upto 12th standard	25 years & above	27.5%

It has been observed that 10% women who possess qualification up to 12th standard & below 25 years age are not sure so well aware about the environmental issues related to their day to day life due to their casual attitude. In comparison to them 27.5% of the women possessing same qualification but are in the age group of 25 years & above & most of them are married comparatively well versed about the environmental issues.

Table 2:- Educational / Marital Status of Women(%).

Sr. No.	No. of Women	Marital Status		Educational Qualification	Age Group	Percentage
		Married	Unmarried			
1.	13	--	13	Higher Education	Upto 25 years	32.5%
2.	12	12	--	Higher Education	25 years & above	30%

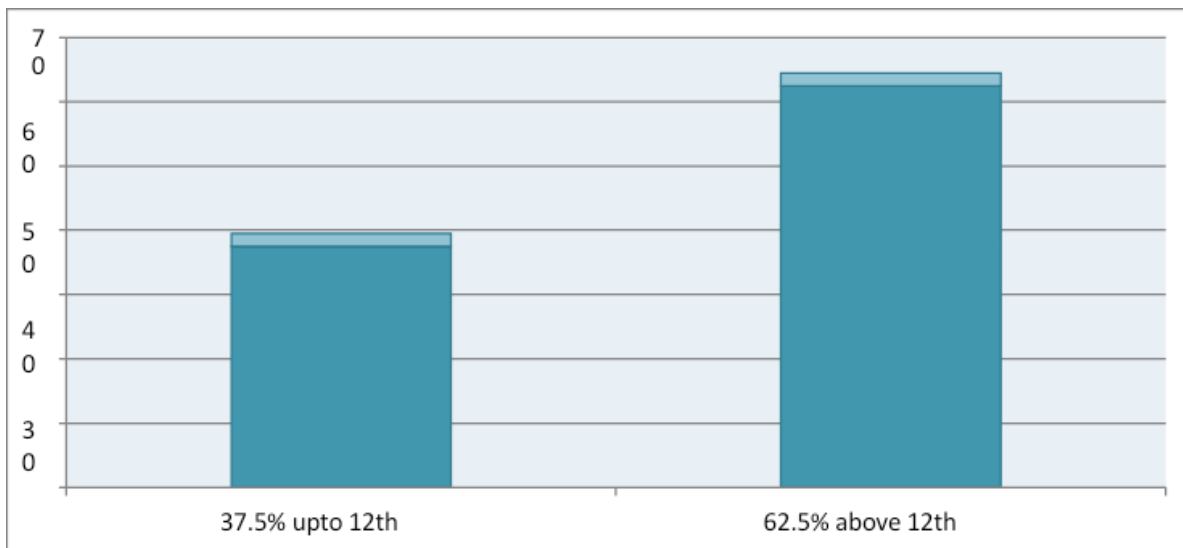
Table-2 shows that 35.2% of unmarried & 30% of married women who possess higher qualification & are in the age group of up to 25 years & above are well aware about the environmental issues facing the society like cleanliness, disposal of garbage use of organic products ,effects of pollution, importance gardening etc.

Table 4:- Table Showing Educational Qualification Of Women (%).

Sr.No.	No. of Women	Educational Qualification	Percentage
1.	15	Upto 12th	37.5%
2.	25	Higher Education	62.5%

It is evident from Table no. 4 that 62.5% of the women who are highly qualified are more aware of the bad effects of the about the bad effects of the environmental degradation & its impact on the society as whole. In contrast to the lesser qualified women who comprise 37.5% of the population investigated.

Figure 2:- (See Table 4.)



Major findings of the study

1. Those women who are less qualified (studied up to 12th. standard) and are less than twenty five years of age had a casual approach towards the issues related to environment, which is not a good sign. The need of the hour is that every individual has to contribute so that the future should be secured.
2. What is interesting about this study is that the women who studied up to 12th standard but are married; found to be better informed.
3. Another finding of our study is that the women who are highly qualified are well versed about the environmental issues facing the society in comparison to the less qualified which shows that education plays an important role in broadening and expanding one's thought about social issues.
4. It has also been observed that married women are more sensitive towards environmental issues in comparison to unmarried women. It shows that married women are closer to the nature due to their concerns towards their family and siblings.

Conclusion:-

Environmentalist David Kortan says "Environmental awareness is to understand the fragility of our environment and the importance of its protection. Promoting environmental awareness is an easy way to become an environmental pollution awareness has been growing in recent years. There are a number of academic and research organizations which are presently engaged in the study of the environmental pollution at local, national, international levels. But all the governmental policies and issues are applicable only through public awareness. If the individuals are environmentally educated, the society and the government are automatically educated, because the later two are only an extension of an individual. After analyzing the data we find that women who are less qualified (up to 12 standard). A, and less than 25 years of age had casual approach towards the issues related to environment which is

not a good sign. The need of the hour is that every individual has to contribute so that the natural sources should be saved. What is interesting about the study is that the women who studied up to 11th standard but are married found to be better informed so it has been observed that the married women are more sensitive towards environmental issues, in comparison to unmarried women. It shows that married women are closer to the nature due to their concerns towards their family. Another finding of our study is that the women who are highly qualified either married or unmarried are well versed about the environmental issues facing the society in comparison to those who show that education plays an important role in broadening and expanding thoughts about the social issues. Therefore, to have an optimum environment protection plan we need to emphasize upon their multidimensional role played by them in day to day life to convert their role as a value addition to the overall strategy for conservation and moreover evolve an all encompassing approach to save our earth.

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