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Exploring Student's Awareness on Sustainable Lifesytle Practices

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Abstract:*Awareness of individuals in sustainability matters is one among the key factors which enable them to lead an ecologically responsible lifestyle. Although students are much exposed to the issues of sustainability formally and informally, their awareness regarding implementing the principles of sustainability in day to day life is a less explored area. The presentstudywas conducted to elicit the awareness on Sustainable Lifestyle Practices among Upper primary school students of Malappuram district of Kerala. The study confirmed a rising awareness on sustainable lifestyle practices among the students. If our student community succeeds in extending their awareness to purposeful green actions, surely it would make a big move towards creating sustainable communities.*
(***Keywords:****Awareness,Sustainablelifestylepractices,Upperprimarystudents)*

I. Introduction

The environmental issues which challenge our survival are rising day by day in the current scenario. Global warming, Climate change, Ozone depletion are some among them. Since anthropogenic sources are the major contributory factor for these issues, we have to think seriously about how to reduce our impact on nature to a minimum. Adopting sustainable lifestyle will be the best remedy to tackle this problem. For this we have to be skilled practitioners of eco-friendly practices and actions. 'Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and well being Research' defined sustainable Lifestyles as "collection of social practices perceived by the individual to be environmentally and socially responsible. This often encompasses concerns regarding the methods of travel, procurement and consumption of food, the management of household waste and the involvement in local groups"[1].

Although environmental awareness does not turn up always as eco friendly actions, it can contribute as guiding force in bringing about eco friendly practices and changed behaviour in favourof environment. The investigators believe that it is essential to explore the current state of student's awareness in practicing Sustainable Lifestyle, since they are the future decision makers of the society.

During the review of related literature the investigators could rarely find studies measuring awareness on 'Sustainable Lifestyle Practice' as such. But they were able to notice a number of studies on synonymous concepts like awareness on environmental issues, eco-friendly practices and pro-environmental behaviour. There were lots of studies measuring the environmental awareness (Ride out, 2014[2]; Wong, 2003[3]; Ozden, 2008[4]). Many studies confirmed that the environmental knowledge and awareness the people possessed are affecting significantly their eco-friendly behaviour. For example, Sanchez *et.al's* (2015)[5] study on pro-environmental behaviour revealed that personal attitude, environmental knowledge and female gender positively influenced the pro-environmental buying behaviours in Spain. Harun*etal* (2011) [6] revealed that the attitude of students towards environment was influenced by the environmental knowledge they possessed. Alp *etal* (2008) [7]pointed out a contradictory finding that the eco-friendly behaviour of elementary school students was not dependent on their understanding of ecological issues.

1.1.Objectives

The objectives of thepresent study are:

1.1.1. To find out the level of awareness on 'Sustainable Lifestyle Practices among Upper Primary School Students for the total sample and subsamples based on

1.1.1.1. Gender

1.1.1.2. Type of School

1.1.2. To find out the level of student awareness on 'Sustainable Lifestyle Practices' related to the dimensions Energy, Waste, Water, Food and Transport for the total sample.

II. Methodology

The aim of the study was to explore the student's awareness on 'Sustainable Lifestyle Practices'. Survey method was adopted for the present study.

2.1.Sample

The target population for the survey was Upper Primary School Students of Kerala following state syllabus. A total of 602 7th standard students belonging to 2 government and 3 aided schools of MalappuramDistrict were selected as the sample. The sample consisted of 52.16% males and 47.84% females. The sample covered 35.04% government school students and 64.95% aided school students.

2.2.Survey Instrument

The investigators designed 'Scale on Sustainable Lifestyle Practices' to perform the survey. The tool comprised of 40 items meant to assess student's awareness on Sustainable Lifestyle Practices covering five dimensions ie, Energy, Waste, Water, Food and Transport. The items from 1 to 10 represented the dimension 'Energy'. The items from 10 to 20 belonged the dimension 'Waste'. The items from 20 to 30 covered the dimension 'Water' and the items from 30-35 represented the dimension 'Food'. The final session of items from 35 to 40 covered the dimension 'Transport'.

The tool comprised of both positive and negative statements. Three responses were provided to each statement, that is Agree, Undecided and Disagree. The right response was scored as '2', undecided response as '1' and the wrong response as '0'.

III. Analysis and Discussion

The percentage of student's response to each item is given in TABLE 1.

TABLE 1**Item wise Response percentage**

Item No.	Statement	Response %		
		Agree	Undecided	Disagree
1	It is better to avoid the usage of lights at day time.	92.02	3.48	4.48
2	The windows of the school should be closed always.	13.62	11.12	75.24
3	Incandescent bulbs are consuming more electricity than LED lights.`	66.44	11.96	21.59
4	It is better to iron clothes daily than ironing for a week	54.65	9.30	36.04
5	LCD Televisions consume less electricity compared to ordinary Television.	42.52	20.76	36.71
6	Conventional energy resources cause more air pollution than solar energy.	46.51	21.92	31.56
7	Excess freezing of ice in freezers of refrigerators leads to greater consumption of electricity.	56.48	16.61	27.00
8	Setting up and maintenance of a biogas unit for domestic purpose is much cost effective.	41.69	16.78	41.52
9	Smokeless chulha won't help to reduce the fuel consumption.	38.04	16.78	45.18
10	Biogas is a renewable energy source.	68.77	15.94	15.28
11	Waste materials are not at all useful to us.	29.40	9.46	61.12
12	Paper wastes can be reused.	61.46	11.46	27.08
13	Metal wastes can't be recycled.	32.72	23.42	43.85
14	It is a good practice to bury plastic wastes in soil.	24.75	6.81	68.44
15	School projects should be prepared only by using one side of the white paper.	48.84	9.63	41.52
16	It is better to utilize both sides of paper while taking print outs from computer.	57.48	11.46	31.06
17	There is no need of carrying big shoppers while purchasing from super markets.	30.40	5.98	63.62
18	It is necessary to install bio compost in every school.	87.04	6.48	6.48
19	Electronic wastes can be easily recycled.	16.28	25.58	58.14
20	Digitalizing of data will help to reduce the paper wastes to a greater extent.	71.42	12.46	16.11
21	There is nothing wrong in consuming more water for our daily routine.	57.64	9.14	33.22
22	It is better to limit the water consumption for bathing, washing and cleaning the utensils.	74.92	6.31	18.77
23	Rain water harvesting system are difficult to afford for a middle class family	20.10	7.64	72.26
24	Since the major portion of earth is covered by water, we won't face scarcity of water in future.	26.24	11.62	62.12
25	Rain water harvesting system is a must in every house.	83.88	7.97	8.14
26	The small leakages of pipes should be repaired quickly.	87.38	3.82	8.80
27	There is nothing wrong in watering the garden at noon time.	15.11	11.79	73.08

Item No.	Statement	Response %		
		Agree	Undecided	Disagree
28	Watering by hoses in gardens will help to conserve more water than by drip irrigation.	39.53	11.46	49.00
29.	For flushing the toilets 100% of pure water is not required.	53.16	11.96	34.88
30	Long showers lead to more water consumption.	64.78	7.97	27.24
31	Chemical fertilizers are unavoidable for better yield in vegetable garden.	34.22	11.63	54.15
32	Local fruits and vegetables are inferior in nutrient efficiency compared to the imported ones.	13.29	8.47	78.24
33	Since jack fruits and mangoes are plenty in our locality, there is no need of processing and storing them.	39.20	17.10	43.68
34	Purchasing milk, vegetables and fruits from local farmers is better than purchasing them from town.	68.44	6.64	24.92
35	It is a good practice to take away the unfinished food items to home, which we ordered from the hotel.	44.35	9.46	46.18
36	It is preferable to have a vehicle each for each one of the family	29.56	10.96	59.46
37	Sharing of vehicles won't help much in reducing air pollution.	36.38	22.26	41.36
38	Motor vehicles are imparting carbon emissions to a large extent.	51.82	18.77	29.40
39	We should depend more on public transport system than using private vehicles.	59.14	12.79	28.07
40	Transport by bicycle is more harmful to nature than drive out by car.	23.58	4.65	71.76

For the statement regarding the usage of lights at day time,majorityof the students (92.02 %)showed awareness(item no.1).

Least percentage of students (only 33.22 %) were aware about the fact that it is a wrong practice of consuming more water for daily routine(item no.21). The item which obtained more 'Undecided' response wasregarding the scope of recycling of electronic wastes(item No. 19). 25.58% of the students had no opinion to the statement, 'Electronic wastes can be easily recycled'.

Oneof the objectives of the study was to study the level of awareness of 'Sustainable Lifestyle Practices' of the total sample and that of subsamples. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data. The obtained values are shown in TABLE 2.

TABLE 2**Descriptive statistics of the total sample and subsamples**

Category	Group	N	M	SD
Gender	Male	314	54	8.7
	Female	288	52	9.4
Type of management	Govt.	211	53	9.4
	Aided	391	53	8.9
	Total	602	53	9.1

Level of student's awareness on 'Sustainable Lifestyle Practices' was calculated by taking mean ± SD. The values are shown in TABLE 3.

TABLE3**Level of awareness on 'Sustainable Lifestyle Practices' of the total sample and subsamples**

Category		Level of awareness		
		High	Average	Low
Gender	Male	19.74%	62.74%	17.52%
	Female	17.36%	63.88%	18.75%
Type of Management	Govt.	20.85%	61.61%	17.54%
	Aided	17.39%	63.94%	18.67%
	Total	18.60%	61.96%	19.44%

The survey findings revealed that among the total sample 18.60% of students showed high level of awareness regarding sustainable Lifestyle Practices. 61.96 % showed average level of awareness and 19.44% of students showed low level of awareness.

Among males, 19.74% showed high level awareness whereas among females only 17.36% showed high level awareness on Sustainable Lifestyle Practices. 62.74% of males showed average level awareness whereas 63.88% of females showed average level awareness. The percentage of males showing low level of awareness is 17.52% and that of females is 18.75%.

Among government school students 20.85% showed high level of awareness whereas only 17.39% of Aided school students showed high level of awareness.

TABLE 4 shows dimension wise comparison of mean and Standard Deviation(SD) values of student's awareness in the fivedimensions.

TABLE 4**Dimension wise comparison of students awareness on Sustainable Lifestyle Practices for the total sample**

Number	Dimension	Mean	SD
1	Energy	12.86	2.94
2	Waste	13.50	3.35
3	Water	13.97	3.32
4	Food	6.30	2.10
5	Transport	6.40	2.20

From the mean and SD values the level of student's awareness on Sustainable Lifestyle Practices was determined. The obtained values are shown in TABLE 5.

TABLE 5**Level of awareness on Sustainable Lifestyle Practices for the total sample in each the 5 dimensions**

Dimension	High (%)	Average (%)	Low (%)
Energy	18.94	58.30	22.76
Waste	17.78	61.46	20.76
Water	20.93	58.64	20.43
Food	11.96	66.61	21.42
Transport	16.94	58.80	24.25

From TABLE 5 it is clear that majority of the students (20.93%) showed highawareness regarding the dimension 'Water' better than the other four dimensions. The dimensions which are coming next to 'Water' are 'Energy' (18.94%) and 'Waste' (17.78%) respectively in terms of higher level of awareness.

Majority of the students (24.25%) who showed low awareness is on the dimension 'Transport'. The dimensions which are coming next to 'Transport' are 'Energy' (22.76%) and 'Food' (21.42%) in terms of low level of awareness.

Majority of the students (66.61%) possessed average awareness regarding the sustainable practices on 'Food'. The dimension that coming next to 'Food' is 'Waste' (61.46%) and 'Transport' (58.80%) in terms of average level of awareness

IV.Conclusion

Since more than half of the students showed an average level of awareness it can be concluded that there is an overall trend of growing awareness regarding sustainable Lifestyle Practices among the Upper Primary students. The percentage of males having high awareness is more compared to that of females. The percentage of Government school students having high awareness is more compared to that of Aided school students. The researchers infer that the rise in green activism from the part of schools and influence of mass media have contributed much to this promising trend. The awareness regarding 'Sustainable Lifestyle Practices' could have been increased to a better level if each school sets its own vision on 'Sustainable Lifestyle Practice' and prioritize the areas which should be focused more.

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