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A Study on Attitude of Higher Secondary School Students towards Education for Sustainable Development

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Abstract: *Education may be considered as 'Human Ecology' which deals with man and his environment. Our dependence on nature is so great that we cannot continue to live without protecting the earth's resources. Now a day people understood the fact that the current development in the field of economic situation is not sustainable and so awareness, education and training are the keys to move towards sustainability. The growing awareness of the challenges in the traditional development thinking has led to the wide acceptance of the concept- that of sustainable development. Development which protects the environment, development which advances social justice phrases such as these have surrounded the introduction of what has been claimed to be a new paradigm- sustainable development. The present study is intended to examine the attitude of higher secondary school students towards education for sustainable development with respect to their locality and stream of study. Survey method was used for the study. The researcher used Stratified Random Sampling technique to select a sample of 150 higher secondary school students from Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala. The data were collected using an attitude scale developed and standardized by the investigator. The data were analysed using different statistical techniques like mean, standard deviation and t-test. The findings of the study revealed that higher secondary school students have positive attitude towards education for sustainable development. Further the study showed that higher secondary school students from different locality and stream showed of study significant difference in their attitude towards education for sustainable development.*

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Attitude, Higher Secondary School Students

I. INTRODUCTION

Education may be considered as 'Human Ecology' which deals with man and his environment. We know that our daily lives are inextricably linked with our surroundings. Everything around us forms our environment and our lives depend on keeping its vital systems as intact as possible. Thus the goal of education is to achieve balance or harmony among environment sustainability, economic sustainability and socio-political sustainability. Education for all has always been an integral part of the sustainable development agenda. The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 adopted the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) which in its Section X, gives emphasise in achieving universal primary education by 2015 (Millennium Development Goal 2). The JPOI addressed the need to integrate sustainable development into formal education at all levels irrespective of the gender, through informal and non-formal education opportunities.

Sustainable development is a difficult concept to define. According to Brundtland Commission: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p 43). Sustainable development is generally thought to have three components: environment, society, and economy. An environmentally sustainable system must maintain a stable resource base, avoiding over exploitation of renewable resource systems or environmental sink functions, and depleting non-renewable resources only to the extent that investment is made in

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adequate substitutes. This includes maintenance of biodiversity, atmospheric stability, and other ecosystem functions not ordinary classed as economic resources.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) empowers people to change the way they think and work towards a sustainable future. UNESCO aims to improve access to quality education on sustainable development at all levels and in all social contexts, to transform society by reorienting education and help people develop knowledge, skills, values and behaviours needed for sustainable development. It is about including sustainable development issues, such as climate change and biodiversity into teaching and learning. Individuals are encouraged to be responsible actors who resolve challenges, respect cultural diversity and contribute to creating a more sustainable world.

II. NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) empowers people to change the way they think and work towards a sustainable future. UNESCO aims to improve access to quality education on sustainable development at all levels and in all social contexts, to transform society by reorienting education and help people develop knowledge, skills, values and behaviours needed for sustainable development. It is about including sustainable development issues, such as climate change and biodiversity into teaching and learning. Individuals are encouraged to be responsible actors who resolve challenges, respect cultural diversity and contribute to creating a more sustainable world.

Sustainable education is about improving the quality of education, not the enrolment or the pass outs of it. The fact is we need a better education, not a bigger one. Thus, a strong education system broadens access to opportunities, improves health, and bolsters the resilience of communities – all while fuelling economic growth in a way that can reinforce and accelerate these processes. Moreover, education provides the skills people need to thrive in the new sustainable economy, working in areas such as renewable energy, smart agriculture, forest rehabilitation, the design of resource-efficient cities, and sound management of healthy ecosystems. Perhaps most important, education can bring about a fundamental shift in how we think, act, and discharge our responsibilities toward one another and the planet. After all, while financial incentives, targeted policies, and technological innovation are needed to catalyze new ways of producing and consuming, they cannot reshape people's value systems so that they willingly uphold and advance the principles of sustainable development.

Hence the curriculum at any level of education is designed to prepare professionals and students to be informed, conscientious global citizens and to be successful in the new green economy. By in order to attain sustainability in higher education hands-on learning strategies should be incorporated with what participants are most familiar with – their homes, their workplace, and their communities –and then the outcomes become more meaningful and lasting. This type of education develops critical thinking, analytical writing, and multi-dimensional understanding that is often absent in traditional curriculum or training.

In this context some schools are already becoming learning labs for sustainable development, where young students are being prepared to adapt to and help mitigate the consequences of climate change. Higher secondary school students are the ones who can shape the young minds of future society. Therefore, it is high time that higher secondary school students should develop a positive attitude towards education for sustainable development. The investigator thought that it would be desirable to explore the attitude of higher secondary school students towards education for sustainable development. The present study is an attempt in this direction.

Objectives of the Study

Following are the objectives of the study:

1. To find out the level of attitude of higher secondary school students towards education for sustainable development.
2. To find out the significant difference in the attitude scores of higher secondary school students towards education for sustainable development with respect to their locality.
3. To find out the significant difference in the attitude scores of higher secondary school students towards education for sustainable development with respect to their Stream of study.

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Hypotheses

Based on the above-mentioned objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1.Attitude of higher secondary school students towards education for sustainable development is low

2. There is no significant difference in the mean attitude scores of higher secondary school students towards education for sustainable development with respect to their locality.

3. There is no significant difference in the mean attitude scores of higher secondary school students towards education for sustainable development with respect to their stream of study.

III. METHOD OF THE STUDY

To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher has adopted normative survey method.

Tool Used

The present study employed Attitude Scale on Education for Sustainable Development which was developed by the investigator. The scale had 30 items.

Sample

One hundred and fifty higher secondary school students were taken as sample from various schools of Thiruvananthapuram district. Stratified random sampling technique was used for selecting sample for the study.

Statistical techniques used

Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Hypothesis I

Attitude of higher secondary school students towards education for sustainable development is low

Table 1: Level of attitude of higher secondary school students towards education for sustainable development

Variable	Sample size	Low		Moderate		High	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Attitude towards education for sustainable development	150	18	12	72	48	60	40

From table 1, it is found that about 18%, of the higher secondary school students under study have low level of attitude towards education for sustainable development whereas 40% and 48% of the higher secondary school students have high and moderate level of attitude towards education for sustainable development and hence the hypothesis., *Attitude of higher secondary school students towards education for sustainable development is low* is rejected.

Hypothesis -II

There is no significant difference in the mean attitude scores of higher secondary school students towards education for sustainable development with respect to their locality

Table – 2: ***Mean, Standard Deviation and t value of attitude scores of higher secondary school students towards education for sustainable development with respect to their locality.***

Sub-sample		N	Mean	S. D	't' Value	Remarks
Locale	Urban	90	26.34	6.634	2.40	S
	Rural	60	28.91	6.283		

(At 0.05 level of Significance of the table value of 't' is 1.96)

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From table 2 it is found that the calculated 't' value 2.40 is greater than the table value 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis, *'there is no signific ant difference in the attitude scores of higher secondary school students towards education for sustainable development with respect to their locality'* is rejected.

Hypothesis -III

There is no significant difference in the mean attitude scores of higher secondary school students towards education for sustainable development based on their stream of study.

Table – 3: ***Significant difference in the mean attitude scores of higher secondary school students towards education for sustainable development based on Stream of study***

Sub-sample		N	Mean	S.D	't' Value	Remarks
Stream of study	Arts	75	28.16	6.481	3.82	S
	Science	75	32.62	7.742		

(At 0.01 level of Significance of the table value of 't' is 2.58)

From table 3 it is found that the calculated 't' value 3.82 is greater than the table value 2.58 at 0.01 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis, *There is no significant difference in mean attitude scores of higher secondary school students towards education for sustainable development based on their stream of study* is rejected.

III. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The following are the important findings of the present study.

1.The level of attitude towards education for sustainable development among higher secondary school students is moderate

2. There is significant difference in the attitude of higher secondary school students from urban and rural localities towards education for sustainable development.

3. There is significant difference in higher secondary school students 'attitude towards education for sustainable development based on their stream of study. Higher secondary school students from science background are having significantly more level of attitude towards education for sustainable development than those from Arts subjects.

Educational implications

Based on the findings of the study certain implications are made by the investigator.

1.The higher secondary school students could be given more in-depth knowledge on education for sustainable development.

2. Higher secondary school curriculum and syllabus could be redesigned to promote education for sustainable development.

3. Extensive training, seminars and workshops could be organized for the higher secondary school students regarding education for sustainable development.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study revealed that the higher secondary school students have moderate level of attitude towards education for sustainable development. It shows that the higher secondary school students are to be provided with more knowledge on sustainable development in the modern era of living. The study also found that locality (rural/urban) play much role in higher secondary school students 'attitude towards education for sustainable development. Another finding of the study indicates that higher secondary school students from science stream shows high level of attitude towards education for sustainable development than those from arts stream. Hence it could be concluded that higher secondary school students can become more proficient in knowledge on sustainable development, so that they willingly uphold and advance the principles of sustainable development. So it is needed to nurture a new generation of environmentally savvy citizens who support the transition of a prosperous and sustainable future.

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