IMPACT OF INTERVENTION PROGRAMME REB (RESPONSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOUR) ON ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS ENVIRONMENT OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

The campaigns such as Swach Bharat Abhiyan would be successful ony if the students gets the practical skills and awareness required to maintain hygiene and cleanliness in their surroundings. The present investigation is an attempt to inculcate the environmrntal awareness and attitude towards environment among the elementary students in order to aware the students about the environmental pollution and its health hazrds. In the present study the researcher provided intervention on REB (responsible environmental behaviour) to the students. Pre test Post Test Control group design was employed. ANOVA was employed to arrive at generalizations. The study revealed that REB had significant impact on environmental awareness as well attitude towards environment of the elementary school students.

INTRODUCTION

India is a developing nation with most of its population recognized as youth. In order to run in the race of developed nations India has to strive for excellence in all the endeavours. Today the entire globe is facing common issues such as global warming and its serious impact on human health. The increasing pollution be it man made or natural disasters the earth is being affected at large. By changing the attitude of its youth we can bring a change that can last for years. The project aims at providing an intervention to students about the environmental awareness and the hazardous effects and diseases that spread because of polluted environment. The last 20 years saw a number of significant changes in perceptions about the environment and the impact of human activity on it. Suggestions that a more ecologically sound worldview is emerging, have gained tremendous credibility over especially the last 10 years (Dunlap, Van Liere, Mertig & Jones, 2000). Much research went into how people view the environment. Although many efforts have been initiated by people time to time but it is high time that now everyone should raise up to save the planet earth for their survival.

The recently launched programme by the Indian government has a similar aim of cleanliness of the nation. Within this new paradigm, the earth's resources are seen as limited and the ecological balance is seen as fragile and easily disrupted by human behaviour (Schultz, 2001). Other research showed similar results and in each case, human behaviour was identified as the root cause of all environmental problems (Gigliotti, 1992; Newhouse, 1990).

People have finally realised that environment is the major determinant of the quality of life in any community. This led ordinary people and governments alike to realise the serious threat environmental degradation poses for earth and resulted in concerted efforts on a global scale curb this threat (Harris & Blackwell, 1995). Despite increased international attention governmental interventions however most local and global efforts are not sufficient at present. The World Wide Fund's (WWF) (2000) 'Living Planet Report', found that the state of the earth's natural ecosystems have declined by about 33% in the last 30 years, while the ecological pressure of humanity on earth has increased by 50% (Lotz-Sisitka, 2002; WWF, 2000).

All of this led to the realisation that the current behaviour of people towards their environment needs to change, implying that people need to learn how to behave in an environmentally responsible way.

As the ultimate aim of education is to shape human behaviour (Hungerford & Volk, 1990), education and particularly environmental education was identified as a method for promoting environmentally responsible behaviour. A vision of schools leading society was envisaged. South African education experts share this vision. Various projects and initiatives such as the Environmental Education Curriculum Initiative (EECI), the Learning for Sustainable Pilot Project and the National Environmental Education Project for General Education and Training (NEEP-GET) have been launched in order to address this particular void in the South African education arena (Lotz-Sisitka, 2002).

Environmental education however is not a new concept. It has been defined in many ways by various people and has been implemented in the school syllabi of many countries for years, albeit with mixed success. There are various reasons why implementation has not met with more success; for example, there is no consensus of views regarding the nature and purpose of environmental education. It was also realised that existing environmental education programmes have to be revised and new ones developed that are more holistic and learner-centred. This is because one of the more recent definitions of environmental education sees it as '...a holistic, lifelong process of becoming aware of, appreciating, valuing and contributing to the creation and development of the kind of environment that is healthy and sustainable' (Little, 1998, p. 103). It was also realised that environmental education programmes should not only address awareness of environmental issues, but should be geared toward changing learners perceptions and attitudes towards their environment lead them to engage in more environmentally responsible behaviour. In order to do this, learners also need to be equipped with the necessary skills (action strategies) to address environmental problems.

Forming Environmental Attitudes

According to Newhouse (1990), there is relatively little research about how environmental attitudes are formed and changed. Most research, according to her, focused on the more tangible question of impact of specific educational programmes despite the fact that most environmental attitudes are formed as a result of life experiences and not necessarily because of specific educational programmes designed to change attitudes. Brackney and McAndrew (2001) add that one needs to understand a person's environmental worldview before one can even attempt to understand and thus influence his or her attitudes towards the environment. Newhouse (1990) goes further and suggests that these life experiences that include initial predisposition to certain behaviour together with further activities concerning that behaviour interrelate to form attitudes. Other forms of life experiences, such as the environment in which a person grew up in, have been found to correlate with environmental attitudes (Newhouse, 1990). Newhouse refers to Kostka's (1976) research, which found that urban Grade 6 learners in the US scored much lower on an environmental attitude assessment than did their suburban counterparts. Kostka postulates that this may be due to a vast combination of factors, for example, the influence of peers and family and the physical environment (e.g. Zajonc, 1968) found evidence of this. She also cites studies by Morgan and Gramann (1988), which support this view point. They however caution that the level of exposure should be high and occur over a period of time. Another suggestion is that high levels of exposure be combined with hands-on contact with the object as this was found to promote attitudinal change. Information is another important factor that may contribute to attitudinal change. Newhouse (1990) warns that the value of pure information in changing attitudes is difficult to assess as there are too many factors involved, such as the source of message, message content, and the characteristics of the recipients.

Authors such as Morgan and Gramann (1988 in Newhouse, 1990) and Bell et al. (2001) found that modelling is also an effective way of producing attitude change. Morgan and Gramann (1988) believe that modelling relies on associating objects with people who are respected or liked.

Effective modelling according to them should meet at least three criteria:1. Subjects must believe that the rewards observed for the model will be the same if they perform the behaviour. 2. The benefits of the behaviour must appear to outweigh the costs. 3. The model must be viewed in an emotionally positive way (In Newhouse, 1990). However, it has also been argued (Newhouse, 1990) that modelling, despite its effectiveness in encouraging the adoption of appropriate values and attitudes, has at least three shortcomings when it comes to the complex issue of forming positive environmental attitudes. Thesr shortcomings are: 1. Modelling stresses persuasion, not true education. 2. Modelling views the learner as an object to be manipulated rather than taught. 3. Modelling fails to provide the learner with the skills to make future decisions. Kauchak et al. (1978 in Newhouse, 1990) therefore suggest that environmental attitudes to be formed by teaching environmental issues as moral dilemmas in order for learners to analyse and draw inferences from their own 15 personal perspectives. Baines (1988) in Newhouse, 1990) agrees. He adds that teachers should be prepared to introduce children to controversial topics. This will give them the opportunity to assess the value of the information (data) they gather. It will also help them recognise the motivations of different interest groups and critically assess information from a variety of sources, hence allowing them to draw their own conclusions and make their own value judgements.

Environmentally Responsible Behaviour

Various studies on environmentally on environmentally responsible behaviour have been undertaken over past 20 years. Some of these studies showed that the process is complex and the prediction of responsible behaviour depends on various factors that interact (Bell et al., 2001; Hungerford & Volk, 1990). Research focused mainly on identifying the demographic and personality characteristics of those most likely to engage in environmentally responsible behaviour (e.g. Hines et al., 1986/7) and on the effects of behavioural interventions on environmental behaviour. The most enduring avenue of research this area, however has been to examine how cognitive and psychological variables influence environmental behaviour. 24 Variables studied have included the influence of perceived costs and benefits of the behaviour (e.g. De Young, 1990); inconvenience of performing the behaviour(e.g. Humphrey, Bord, Hammond & Mann, 1977); barriers and facilitating conditions to performing the behaviour (e.g. Derksen & Gartrell, 1993); knowledge or difficulty of the behaviour (e.g. De Young, 1989);

Perceived effectiveness or control required to perform the behaviour (e.g. Hines et al., 1986/87); attitudes towards the behaviour (e.g. Hines et al., 1986/87) and social influences on the individual performing the behaviour (in Taylor & Todd, 1995).

Taylor and Todd (1995) believe that people generally seem to be sensitive to environmental issues, and may have a positive attitude toward environmental programmes. Yet, despite these positive attitudes, participation in environmental programmes such as waste management programmes for exale, varies widely (Bell et al., 2001). Little is known about how an individual's beliefs and attitudes are related to behaviour. Hopper and Nielson (1991) suggest that this is because the literature lacks an integrated theoretically based model to understand the relationships between environmental beliefs, attitudes and behaviour. Schultz (2000) concurs. He adds that this may be because most of the research on environmental issues has been based on traditional social psychological theories of attitudes, resulting in most of the research on environmental concerns, motives and behaviours, being fragmented and hence difficult to integrate into an organised theory.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Seeing the importance of environment in our life its becoming our duty to protect the environment from getting polluted. If not taken care of it will certainly produce the dangerous results which everyone will have to face. As I got the opportunity to have the investigation I chose the responsible environmental behaviour which tells about our responsibility towards environment through our behaviour. There may be certain difficulties in seeing the impact of responsible environmental behaviour on environmental

awareness and attitude towards environment of elementary school students but with proper help and guidance of my guides I will be able to investigate it correctly. As the elementary school students are the roots of our community we need to see their awareness and attitude towards environment through responsible environmental behaviour. Thus today being our first need that is environment protection there must be our responsible behaviour towards environment through environmental awareness and positive attitude towards environment.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Impact Of Intervention Programme Reb (Responsible Environmental Behaviour) On Environmental Awareness And Attitude Towards Environment Of Elementary School Students

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To create awareness about the environmental pollution and its hazards.
2. To study the impact of intervention programme REB (Responsible Environmental Behaviour) on environmental awareness of elementary school students.
3. To study the impact of intervention programme REB (Responsible Environmental Behaviour) on the attitude towards environment of elementary school students.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Pre test post test control group method was used in present investigation. Two groups namely experimental and control group of 45 students each were equated on environmental awareness and attitude towards environment and were later subjected to intervention REB (responsible environmental behaviour) and conventional strategies respectively. The design of the study can be discussed under following heads:

1. One way ANOVA was used to find the effect of REB strategy on environmental awareness and attitude towards environment of 200 elementary school students of Amritsar City.

IV. MAJOR FINDINGS

1. The students of experimental group given REB scored more on environmental awareness as compared to control group taught by Traditional method.
2. There was a significant gain on mean scores of attitude towards environment of students of experimental group as compared to control group taught by Traditional method.

V. CONCLUSION

REB is an intervention programme to inculcate the attitudfe and awareness required to maintain cleanliness in surroundings. The intervention provides practical knowledge which can help us tackle with the problems such as global warming. The intervention can be a component of the study at elementary level and can be beneficial for improving the cleanliness of our country.

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