

## A STUDY ON BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS ENVIRONMENT ISSUES AMONG FEMALE COLLEGE GOING STUDENTS OF KASHMIR VALLEY

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### ABSTRACT

*In recent years the growing concern with environmental issues and their impact on general awareness is one of the most noticeable phenomena throughout the world. A major threat to the existence of humanity today is environmental degradation. Islamic jurisprudence contains regulations concerning the conservation and allocation of scarce water resources; it has rules for the conservation of land with special zones of graded use; it has special rules for the establishment of rangelands, wetlands, green belts and also wildlife protection and conservation. The main causes of environmental degradation, a major threat to the existence of humanity today are rapid industrialization, unplanned development and unprecedented growth in population with its accompanying poverty and deprivation. To raise environmental literacy level among female students, Environmental Education is taught in Kashmir valley using both interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary approaches. The aim of our present study was to assess environmental attitudes and behaviour of female students studying in various colleges of Kashmir valley. It was found that majority of female students (83.5%) used public media as a main source of information about environmental issues. Rural students were more concerned about environmental issues than urban ones. It was also determined that majority of students were more concerned about the environment and had positive behaviour toward environmental issues. The study reveals that only 2.25% of female students were a member of environmental organizations and had positive behaviour and attitudes regarding environment.*

**Keywords:** College students, Kashmir, Environmental Attitudes, Environmental Behavior, Nature, Statistics

## INTRODUCTION

The increasing concern with environmental issues and their impact on general awareness is one of the most evident phenomena in recent years. Fast industrialization, unplanned development and unprecedented growth in population with its accompanying poverty and deprivation are recognized as being the main causes of environmental degradation. Environmental issues at present have become increasingly important for people throughout the worlds (Pelstring, 1997). The major environmental problems we face are deforestation, loss of biodiversity, ozone depletion, global climate change, pollution and over-consumption of natural resources (Kibert, 2000). Protecting the environment is important because long term consequences affect people's life significantly (Shultz and Zelenzy, 1999). Earlier studies had focused on environmental awareness instead of trying to change people's attitudes and values about it (Pooley and Connor, 2000). Attitude has been defined as a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object (Fishbein and Ajzen, p.6, 1975). From this perspective, environmental attitude defined as a learned predisposition to respond consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to the environment (Pelstring, p.1, 1997). We know universities were particularly asked to play a prominent role in preparing citizens to analyze and resolve environmental issues (UNESCO-UNEP, 1995). Higher educational institutions are obligated to help students to be a part of society while they are also assumed to be leader in creating a culture of environmental stewardship in our society. Education institutions educate young generations whom are likely to be future leaders of many areas whom decisions on environmental issues could affect the sustainability of our existence. That is why; Higher educational institutions should pay huge attention to environmental issues while education tomorrow's leaders whom attitudes toward resources, environment and quality of life would matter great deal in the future world (Ip and Miller, 1996). In the light of the studies like Bilal et al 2016; Scott and Willik, 1994; Pelstring, 1997; Geoh-Chin et al 1998; Kuhlemmeier et al 1999; Pooley and Connor, 2000, we chose our present study with an aim to evaluate college going female students' environmental attitudes and behaviour in Kashmir valley. The study also explored the relationship between participants' attitudes, behaviour and demographic variables. These research results should be considered to take necessary action toward education on environmental issues if student's awareness doesn't meet the desired level.

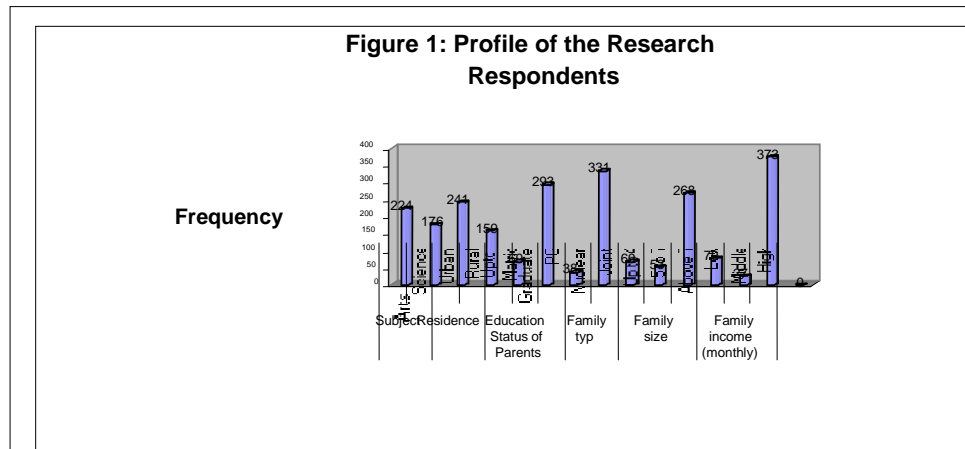
## METHODOLOGY

In the present study the survey included 400 college going female students studying in various colleges of Kashmir valley. To collect information a well designed questionnaire was prepared keeping in view the literature available on the topic and the characteristics of the respondents viz., residence, education status of parents, type

of family, economic status, subject chosen etc. The respondents who participated in this study were given a verbal explanation regarding the purpose of the study. The data collected using Multistage stratified random sampling technique (Cochran, 1977), was tabulated and analyzed with the help of standard statistical tools.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The data presented in Figure 1, shows the distribution of the research respondents as per the characteristics Family status, Economic status, Residence, Education Status of parents and Subject chosen. It is observed that majority of the respondents were from nuclear family (82.75%), middle class families (93.25%), living in urban areas (60.25%), education qualification of parents graduate (73.25%) and having arts subject (56.0 %).



The data presented in Table 1 shows the behaviour of respondents towards environment. The mean score of the items using 9 item Likert-type scale shows the behaviour of students towards environment. The response categories for this scale ranged from one (all the time) to five (not at all). In response to statements (ii)-(ix) students showed poor behaviour towards environment protection. Only in statement (i) students showed showed positive behaviour. The results obtained are in agreement with earlier studies (Scott & Willit 1994, Williams 1991)

**Table 1: Behaviour of Students towards Environment**

S.No.	Statement	Mean±S.D
1.	I turn off the lights when they are not being used to save electricity?	1.71±0.87
2.	I avoid purchasing product that are over packaged?	3.11±0.98
3.	I talk to people when they harm the environment in an effort to persuade that person to stop that activity?	2.83±0.80
4.	I recycle paper, glass, plastic and metal waste products at home?	3.76±1.07

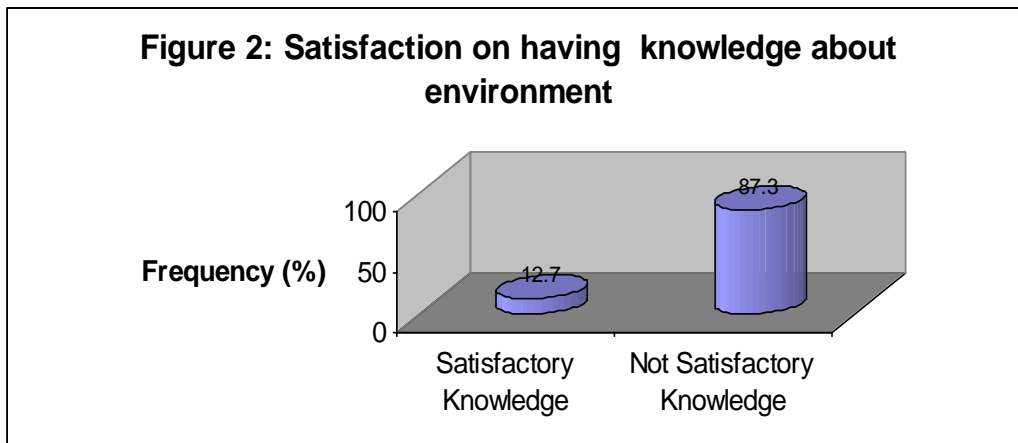
5.	I recycle paper, glass, plastic and metal waste products at Collge?	3.98±0.89
6.	I purchase organic fruits and /or vegetables?	2.92±1.02
7.	I do not run the water when I brush my teeth?	3.23±1.41
8.	I do not use paper towel?	2.80±1.23
9.	I talk to my family and friends about they can do to help solve environmental problems?	3.05±1.11

The data presented in Table 2 shows the attitude of respondents towards environment. The mean score of the items using 7 item Likert-type scale shows the attitude of students towards environment. The response categories for this scale ranged from one (strongly agree) to five (strongly disagree). In response to statements (iv) and (v) students showed poor attitude towards environment. Whereas, in all other statements students showed showed positive attitude towards environment. Further, correlation between behaviour and attitude was observed as  $r=0.27$ . The results obtained in this study are in agreement with earlier studies (Kuhlemeier, 1999)

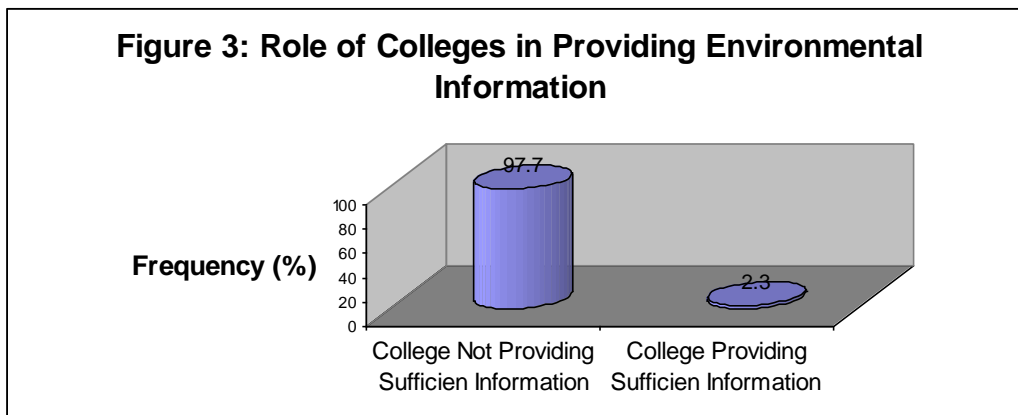
**Table 2: Attitude of Students towards Environment**

S.No.	Statement	Mean±S.D
1.	I am concerned about the Issues of deforestation?	1.44±0.66
2.	Conservation of water is important to me?	1.78±1.01
3.	More controls should be placed on industry and agriculture to protect the quality of environment?	1.63±0.88
4.	There are enough laws to protect the environment?	4.08±0.90
5.	I would oppose any environmental regulations that would restrict my way of life?	2.16±1.17
6.	I enjoy watching T.V programs related to environmental issues?	1.61±0.71
7.	It does not make difference if I do not turn off the lights in classroom because many other lights are in use at campus?	1.85±0.98

The study, further revealed that age, education level of parents, family income, residence of respondents showed low correlation with environmental behaviour and attitude of students under study.



The data presented in Figure 2, shows that majority of the respondents (87.3%) are not satisfied with the knowledge they possess on environment related.



The data presented in Figure 3, shows that majority of the respondents (97.7%) believe that colleges are not providing sufficient information on environment issues.

## CONCLUSION

The present study reveals that students held positive attitude towards environment but lack in practice. The students are willing to learn more about environment and related issues. In our study, it was found that students use different information sources like Internet, T.V., newspapers and radio. It is important that education value of these information sources should be maximized. Especially, T.V. and Radio can be powerful tool for changing the attitude of people. It is concluded that students should be encouraged to participate in seminars, conferences or symposiums. They should be encouraged to be member of environmental organizations and be ready to help

government to protect environment as good citizens. Finally, it was proposed that environmental course should be made compulsory for all students.

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