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## A Comparative Study of Environmental Awareness among Secondary Level Students

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**ABSTRACT:** Environment is the utmost important part of our lives. Lack of awareness towards environment will lead to destruction of living beings. Students can play a big role in protection of environment. In this study the level and uniformity of environmental awareness between male and female secondary students was compared. The findings revealed that male students of rural area, private and English medium school were more aware than female. Female students of urban area, Government and Assamese medium school were more aware than male. Awareness of female is more uniform in rural area, Government, Assamese and English medium school. In urban area it is more uniform in male. But in private school both sex have same uniformity. Thus environmental awareness of students is high. Further considerable work is to be done incorporating environmental concepts into existing curriculum, development of new strategies, preparation of instructional material to protect and conserve the environment.

**KEYWORDS:** Environmental awareness, Secondary level students, Male, Female, Uniformity

### I. INTRODUCTION

Environmental awareness implies information and understanding of the environment, its creatures and simultaneously to solve the related environmental problems [1, 2]. In recent days environmental awareness is very important issue. Lack of awareness towards environment will lead to destruction of the earth and living beings. Meinhold and Malkus [3] emphasized the importance of environmental awareness to individuals about ecology and ecological balance and to combine the knowledge with values leading to action. A large section of our society has a very low awareness about the problems of the environment. Thus the need of creating mass awareness about the environmental problems is felt by all including those concerned with education. Education is the only powerful instrument which stimulates awareness in human beings towards environment. [4] It enhances the concern of people towards their environment, their immediate surroundings as well as towards the entire world. Man's ignorance has drawn all of us in to very serious problems of environmental crisis that are life threatening [5]. Environmental education helps social groups and individuals to acquire an Awareness of sensitivity to the total environment and its allied problems. There is an urgent need for new approach to aware the all level of people especially student community to environment related problems. Because the role of students would go a long way in achieving such desired goals [6]. A properly planned syllabus and activities appropriately calculated and executed will bring the desired change. The application of environmental education as a separate disciplines in both school and college may manage the environment in near future. [7]

In this study, the investigators examined environmental awareness among secondary level students in relation to area where they are belongs to, type of school and medium of instruction.

### II. RELATED WORK

Human activities towards environment lead to unexpected gigantic hazard for the whole creature in the coming few years. Day by day human is consuming these natural resources in an unsustainable way. The main reason behind this is the non cooperative thinking with nature. Awareness and involvement of the civil society is a precondition of checking environmental degradation. Gupta [8] studied attitude of teachers towards environmental education and he found the majority of teachers showed a favorable attitude towards environmental education. Saha [9] studied environment, social forestry and concluded that there is a need for the environmental education in Indian context. Read and Pongracz [10] studied public education and awareness rising in UK and concluded that several techniques have been commonly used

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in Europe and North America to try to motivate residents to participate in all form of waste management. Environmental awareness has been studied with respect to scientific attitude among higher secondary students of Varanasi city [11]. Mahajan and Darbari [12] conducted a study to know the environmental awareness of different standard and different sex and compared their environmental awareness and observed that the male students of class XII scored highest where as the female students of X class show lowest on environmental awareness. From the above it is clear that a few study carried out related to environmental awareness among the students of higher secondary schools and some demographic factors affecting it.

The present study was carried out among secondary level students in Kamrup district (Metro & Rural), Assam, India. (Figure 1). The methodology adopted in the present study was descriptive in nature. The sample consists of 997 nos. of secondary level student. The sample was collected by investigator and all the data were recorded in a questionnaire developed by investigator. In the present study, variables considered were area where students are belongs to, type of school, gender and medium of education. The purpose of the present study was to measure the awareness of secondary students. The study also examined whether or not awareness is differentiated by sex in relation to area where they are belongs to, type of school, sex and medium of education. Mean and standard deviation (SD) were calculated by using 'SPSS 19.0'.

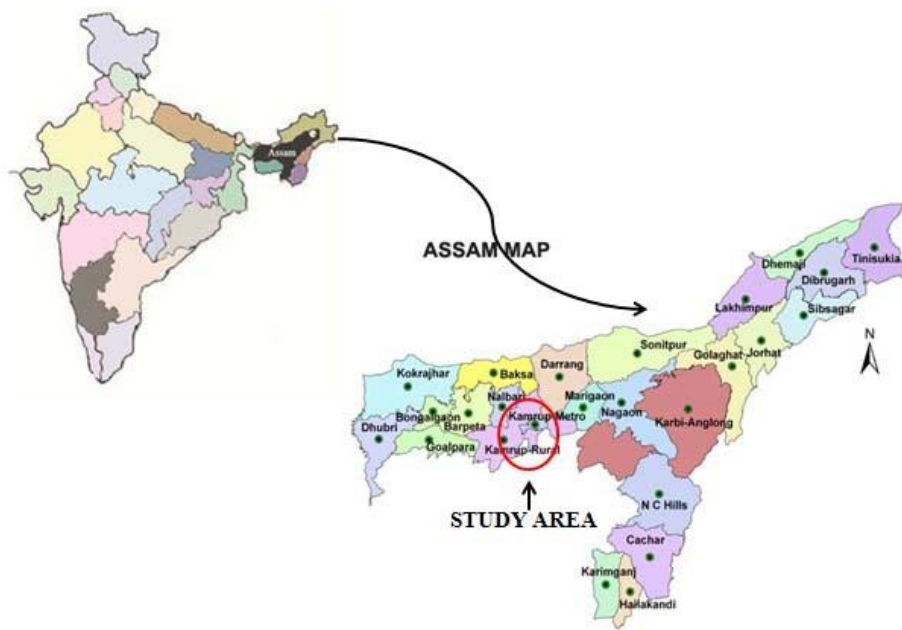


Figure 1: Map showing the study area

## Hypothesis

There will be no difference in environmental awareness between male and female students irrespective of their location, type of school and medium of education.

## III. MAIN CONTRIBUTION OF THE PAPER

Over recent decades, global problems relating to degradation of natural resources and pollution have increased dramatically. Environmentalist has repeatedly pointed out that a solution to environmental crisis will require an environmental awareness which should be deeply rooted in the education system at all levels of school education. Today, environmental awareness is very important issue and that's why research and seminars are being held world over. These issues cannot be resolved until and unless we make our students, who are the mature citizens of tomorrow,

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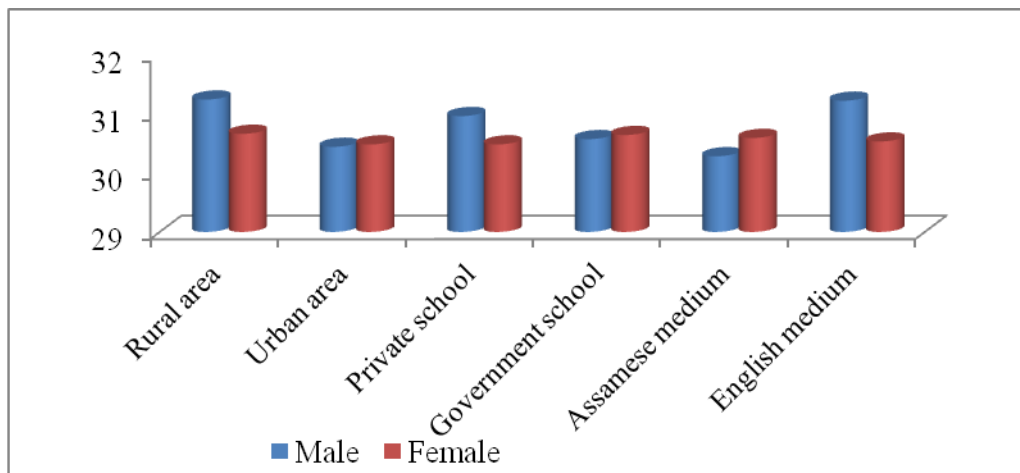
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aware about the environmental issues. The present study for the first time is aimed at identifying the differentiation in the level of environmental awareness between male and female secondary level students in relation to their location, type of school and medium of education. Based on the findings of this study, the government can initiate different education programme to make aware the people about the environmental problems.

## IV. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

When we compared the level of environmental awareness between male and female students with respect to the area they belongs to, type of school and medium of school, we observed that male students of rural area, private school and English medium school are more environmentally aware in comparison to female students of rural area, private school and English medium school as their mean values are found to be higher (Figure 2). On the other hand, the mean value of female students belonging to urban area, Government and Assamese medium school was found to be higher than that of the male students of urban area, Government school and Assamese medium school which reveals that female students of urban area, Government school and Assamese medium school are more aware to the environmental pollution than respective male students (Figure 2).



**Figure 2:** Mean value of male and female students based on the area where they belongs to, type of school and medium of education

It is observed that the SD value of female student (4.76) is found to be smaller than that of male student (4.77) in rural area which indicates that the environmental awareness in case of female student is more uniform (Table 1). On the other hand in urban area the environmental awareness of male student is more uniform as compared to the female student as the SD value of male student (4.55) is smaller than female student (4.57). In case of private school both male and female student have same uniformity in environmental awareness as the SD value in both cases are found to be similar. In case of Government school, female student have more uniformity in environmental awareness than that of male student as the SD value of female student (4.53) is less than that of male student (4.54). Similar conclusion may be drawn in case of both Assamese and English medium school (Table 1).

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Table 1: Mean and standard deviation scores of male and female students regarding their belonging area, type of school and medium of education

Category		Total Student		Male			Female		
		Nos.	Mean	Nos.	Mean	SD	Nos.	Mean	SD
Area	Rural	470	30.98	258	31.24	4.77	212	30.66	4.76
	Urban	527	30.46	289	30.44	4.55	238	30.48	4.57
Type of school	Private	562	30.78	349	30.96	4.67	213	30.48	4.67
	Government	435	30.61	198	30.57	4.54	237	30.64	4.53
Medium of School	Assamese	494	30.44	235	30.28	4.54	259	30.59	4.53
	English	503	30.97	312	31.22	4.57	191	30.53	4.49

## V. CONCLUSION

Thus, it is very much evident from the present study that secondary level students have fairly good awareness about the environmental problems. Based on the analyses of the data obtained in the present study, it can be revealed that males of rural area, private school and English medium school were found to be more aware about their environmental problems as compared to female. On the other hand female students of urban area, Government school and Assamese medium have higher environmental awareness than male students. Kumar & Patil [13] also found no significant difference between male & female on environment awareness. Dixit and Agarwal [14] studied on environmental awareness of students of three DIETS of U.P. state and concluded that there is no significant difference on environmental awareness in relation to sex. Dubey et al [15] found from their research that educational status produced significant differential effects on overall environmental awareness of women.

Environmental education should be introduced as a separate unit in the higher secondary level with an infused approach of teaching for producing a healthy environment. Various activities related to environmental education like essay writing, mime etc. can be arranged in schools and organizing awareness campaigns about environment related social issues in rural areas. To further increase environmental awareness ability of students' integration of environmental education into curriculum, teachers training have to be started keeping in mind the holistic approach. Thus including topics related to environment in the curriculum at every level will surely help in developing environmental awareness.

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