

Influence of gender and medium of instruction on environmental attitude of primary school teachers

SYED HASAN QASIM

Assistant Professor

Department of Teacher Education, Sam Higginbottom Institute of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences, Allahabad (U.P.) India

ABSTRACT

The study aims at observing the influence of gender and medium of instruction on the attitude of primary school teachers towards environment. In India at school level, the education system has incorporated a few concepts of environment and its related problem only. The primary school teachers are successful in developing awareness about the environment in pupil who have passed out the school because teachers at this level play a very important role as they are largely responsible for moulding the young and impressionable minds. The sample consists of 200 primary school teachers of English (41 males and 59 females) and Hindi (50 males and 50 females) medium schools of Allahabad. For this study a self constructed and validated Environmental Attitude scale has been used. The finding of the study revealed that there is significant difference in attitude of English and Hindi medium primary school teachers towards environment but there is no influence of gender on attitude of primary school teachers towards environment.

Key Words : Environment, Attitude, Pollution

INTRODUCTION

In the past few decades, environment has attracted the attention of decision makers, scientists and even laymen in many parts of the world. They are becoming increasingly conscious of issues such as famines, droughts, floods, scarcity of fuel, firewood and fodder, pollution of air and water, problems of hazardous chemicals and radiation, depletion of natural resources, extinction of wildlife and dangers to flora and fauna. People are now aware of the need to protect the natural environmental resources of air, water, soil and plant life that constitute the natural capital on which man depends. The environmental issues are important because the absence of their solutions is more horrible. Education being a powerful instrument, can perform the task of developing favourable attitude among people about all such burning issues like environment, population and poverty problems in India. In a way environmental education has a long history linked with human growth interaction with the natural environment

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and developing appropriate attitude towards the same. The main objective of environmental education is to develop knowledge of environment, without losing sight of value system of society and individual. Environmental knowledge and awareness would be of no meaning without cultivation of right attitude towards environment, so attitude is a pre requisite for fostering valuing approach and responsible action which is ultimate goal of environmental education. In this context, Rachel Carson had said that in our rush to save the earth we may tend to bypass a fundamental ingredient which many of us consider basic to any programme for young children, developing a love for an appreciation of the earth.

The review of literature (Lahiri, 2011; Steele, 2011; Esa, 2010; Ushadevi and Dhanya, 2009; Larijani and Yeshodhara, 2008) shows that very few efforts have been made to highlight this problem in our country. In the present study an attempt has been to study the attitude of primary school teachers of Allahabad district towards environment. In India at school level, the education system has incorporated a few concepts of environment and its related problem only. It would be worthwhile to study how far the primary school teachers are successful in developing awareness about the environment in pupil who have passed out the school because teachers at this level play a very important role as they are largely responsible for moulding the young and impressionable minds. It is my firm belief that at the Primary level the teachers can help the students to form a healthy constructive attitude for environment. Once, this healthy constructive attitude for the nature is formed the child will become a friend of the nature throughout life. The study aims at observing the influence of gender and medium of instruction on the attitude of primary school teachers towards environment.

Objectives:

1. To study the difference in attitude of primary school teachers of English and Hindi medium towards environment.
2. To find out the difference in attitude of male and female primary school teachers towards environment.

Hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference in attitude of primary school teachers of English and Hindi medium towards environment.
2. There is no significant difference in attitude of male and female primary school teachers towards environment.

METHODOLOGY

The present study belongs to category of descriptive field survey type of research and include composite characteristic of causal comparative researches. The sample in this study consists of 200 primary school teachers of English (41 males and 59 females) and Hindi (50 males and 50 females) medium schools of Allahabad. The sample was selected by random sampling technique.

Tool used:

For the present study a self constructed Environmental Attitude scale for primary school

teachers has been used. There are 50 items related to 4 areas of Environment. The four areas dealt within the scale are Wild life and Forest (8 items); Health and Hygiene; (7 items) Pollution (17 items) and Environmental Concern (18 items). Initially, 100 items were constructed and were given to the few experts for review. In consultation with expert and calculated value of index of Difficulty and Discriminating Index, 50 items of desired DV and DI value were selected for final draft of test Reliability was estimated by test-retest method and the coefficient of correlation was found to be +0.77 and concurrent validity was found to be 0.41.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

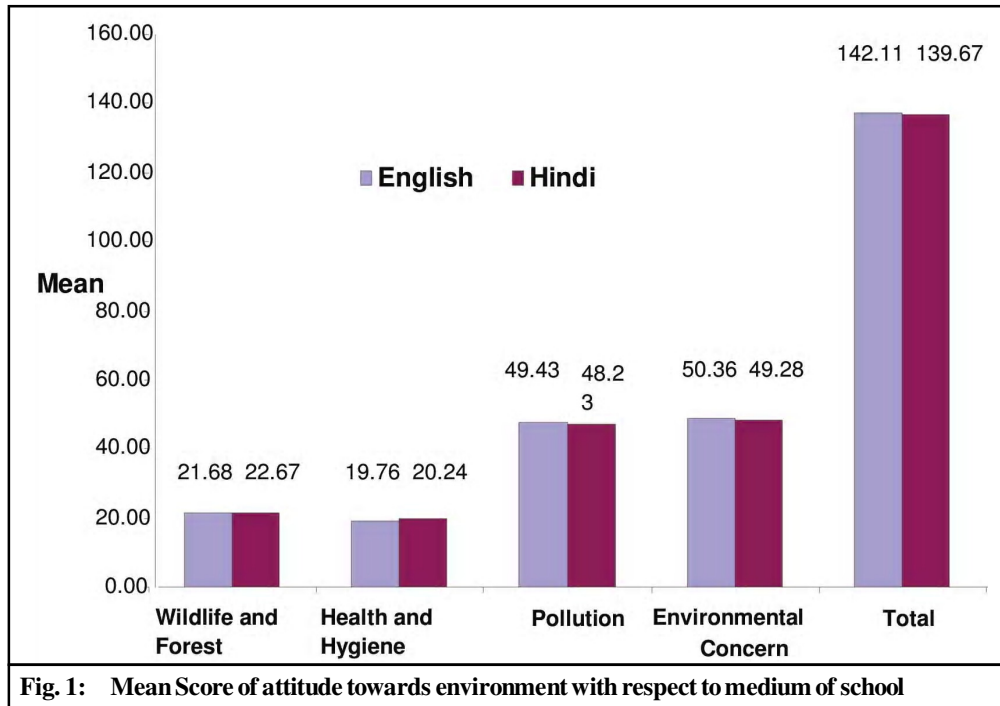
In order to find out attitude of primary school teachers with respect to medium of instruction, the results of analysis is shown in the Table 1.

| Aspects of environmental attitude | Sex | Mean | SD | t-value |
|-----------------------------------|---------|--------|------|---------|
| Wildlife and Forest | English | 22.67 | 1.76 | 4.77** |
| | Hindi | 21.62 | 1.54 | |
| Health and Hygiene | English | 20.24 | 1.26 | 3.07** |
| | Hindi | 19.76 | 0.92 | |
| Pollution | English | 49.43 | 1.86 | 3.77** |
| | Hindi | 48.23 | 2.58 | |
| Environmental Concern | English | 50.36 | 1.73 | 3.61** |
| | Hindi | 49.28 | 2.44 | |
| Total | English | 142.11 | 3.69 | 3.86** |
| | Hindi | 139.67 | 5.12 | |

** Significant at 0.01 level

Observation of the table shows that the attitude of English and Hindi medium primary school teachers towards environment is 3.86 which are greater than the required value (2.60) for significance at 0.01 level. Observation of the table related to Wildlife and Forest, Health and Hygiene, Pollution and Environmental Concern part of environment is 4.77, 3.07, 3.77 and 3.61 respectively. This indicates that there exists significant difference in attitude of English and Hindi medium primary school teachers towards environment. Thus the hypothesis stating that "There is no significant difference in the attitude of Hindi and English medium primary school teachers towards environment" is rejected. Graphical representation of the same is given in the Fig. 1.

The findings revealed that there exists significant difference in the attitude of English and Hindi medium primary school teachers towards environment. The direction of difference was in favour of English medium school teachers. It indicates that teachers teaching in English medium primary school perceive higher level of attitude towards environment than Hindi medium primary school teachers. Similar results were found by Mathew (2009) and Rakh *et al.* (2009) studied on environmental awareness among school students of different medium. The Probable reason of this finding may be that the infra structural facilities in



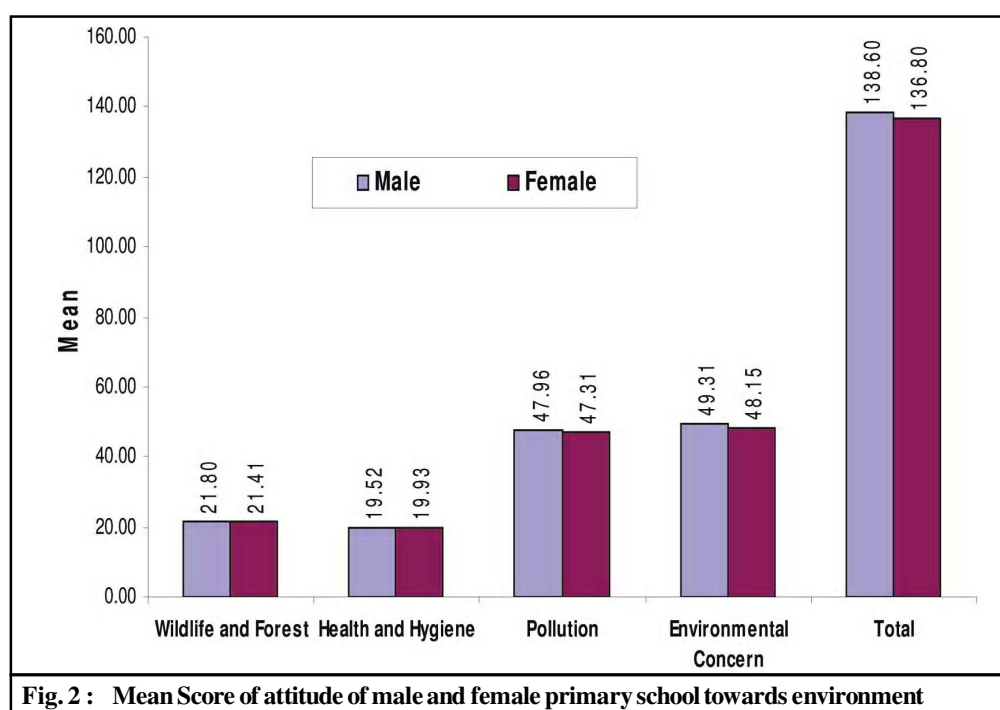
English medium schools are better than Hindi medium. Other reason for this finding may be the there may be scarcity of teachers in Hindi medium school causing implementation of curriculum and co curricular activities like inculcating cleanliness activities and environmental awareness programmes. English medium school is well equipped with human resource so they give time on the environmental activities along with curriculum.

In order to see the difference in attitude towards environments of male and female teachers, t-test was computed and result of the analysis was given in Table 2.

| Aspects of environmental attitude | Sex | Mean | SD | t-value |
|-----------------------------------|--------|--------|------|---------|
| Wildlife and Forest | Male | 22.20 | 1.34 | 1.267 |
| | Female | 21.95 | 1.66 | |
| Health and Hygiene | Male | 19.90 | 0.98 | 0.615 |
| | Female | 19.99 | 1.14 | |
| Pollution | Male | 48.52 | 2.25 | 0.126 |
| | Female | 48.49 | 2.07 | |
| Environmental Concern | Male | 50.08 | 1.84 | 0.672 |
| | Female | 49.91 | 1.97 | |
| Total | Male | 140.70 | 4.19 | 0.612 |
| | Female | 140.34 | 4.94 | |

** Significant at 0.01 level

Observation of the table shows that the attitude of primary school teachers towards environment is 0.612 which is less than the required value (2.60) for significance at 0.01 level which indicates that there exists no significant difference in attitude of male and female primary school teachers towards environment. Observation of the table related to Wildlife and Forest, Health and Hygiene, Pollution and Environmental Concern part of environment is 1.267, 0.615, 0.126 and 0.672, respectively. This indicates that there exists no significant difference in attitude of male and female primary school teachers. Graphical representation of the same is given in the Fig. 2.



Similar result was found by Ushadevi and Dhanya (2009) which showed no significant gender difference exists among student-teachers in the case of Environmental Awareness and in the case of Attitude towards Local Environmental Issues. One cross culture study by Larijani and Yeshodhara (2008) indicates that Male and female teachers differed significantly in most of the factors except population explosion, and total attitude scores. Probable reason for this result may be that nowadays women are not confined to home but equally participate in developmental process of society along with male counterpart. There are various means of awareness about environment like T.V., internet, newspaper etc so the women are equally aware about environment and related problems.

Conclusion:

The finding of the study revealed that there is significant difference in attitude of English

and Hindi medium primary school teachers towards environment which is in favour of English medium teachers but there is no influence of gender on attitude of primary school teachers towards environment. Healthy attitudes and concern for the environment and motivation to improve or maintain environmental quality can be imparted through activities like Role plays, Debate and Symposiums on themes like 'Save Earth' etc in these schools. It is suggested that teachers can play an important role in educating their students about environment which is possible only when the teachers themselves have the necessary level of environmental attitude for this purpose, the government should introduce and enrich environmental education programmer in both in service and pre-service teacher education.

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