



GENDERED PERCEPTIONS: EXAMINING THE ATTITUDES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM OF BEGUSARAI, KHAGARIA, AND SAMASTIPUR DISTRICT

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Abstract

This study investigates the perceptions and attitudes of secondary school teachers towards environmental education (EE) within the curriculum in the districts of Begusarai, Khagaria, and Samastipur in Bihar. With a particular focus on gender differences, the research aims to discern whether significant variances exist in the attitudes of male and female teachers towards integrating environmental education into the curriculum in this specific geographical context. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, this article presents findings that shed light on the gendered dynamics shaping environmental education in these districts and offers implications for educational policy and practice.

Keywords: *Gendered Perceptions, Attitude, secondary school teachers, environmental education*

Introduction

Environmental education is increasingly recognized as crucial for addressing environmental challenges and fostering sustainable development. However, the effectiveness of environmental education initiatives within school curricula can be influenced by various factors, including the attitudes of educators. While research on teacher attitudes towards environmental education exists, there is a dearth of studies examining potential gender disparities, particularly in the context of Bihar. This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the attitudes of secondary school teachers towards environmental education in three districts of Bihar, focusing on gendered perceptions.

Literature Review

Existing literature on environmental education emphasizes the importance of teacher attitudes in shaping the delivery and outcomes of EE programs. However, studies specifically addressing gender differences in teacher attitudes towards EE in Bihar are limited. Research from other regions suggests that gender stereotypes and socialization processes may contribute to variations in environmental attitudes among

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male and female educators. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for designing effective EE interventions tailored to the local context.

Leonard Ashok and Mitra (2008) conducted a study on the attitude of teachers towards environmental education. They made a comparative study between the teachers' attitude towards environment and their attitude towards teaching the subject, 'environmental studies' in the school programme. The study was intended to assess the influence of Environmental Education on the attitude of teachers working in the schools of Coimbatore district. 80 teachers were selected from the high schools and higher secondary schools using a simple random sampling technique. A self-prepared tool for assessing teachers' attitude towards environment and a reported tool for assessing teachers' attitude towards teaching the school subject, 'Environmental Studies' were used in the investigation. Correlations and t-tests were the statistical measures employed for analysing and interpreting the data. The results indicated a significant difference in the attitude of male and female teachers towards environment. It is also observed that there is no significant difference in their attitude on certain characteristics such as their qualifications and locality of the institution.

Geetha and Manjunath (2008) conducted a study on the environmental awareness and attitude among secondary school students. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 200 students from secondary schools. The study was conducted using descriptive survey method. Environmental awareness and attitude scales were used to collect data; and t- test was used for finding the relationship between the groups.

The results of the study revealed that there was no significant difference in the environmental awareness and attitude between male and female, rural and urban, private aided in rural and private aided in urban school students. A significant difference was observed in the environmental attitude and awareness urban private unaided and the government school students.

Keisham Shitaljit Singh (2008) conducted a study on the attitude of primary school teachers towards Environmental Education. Teachers of the whole primary schools of the two valley districts of Manipur – Imphal East and Imphal West districts have been formed population for the study. From this population, using simple random sampling technique, the researcher has selected 500 primary school teachers from 100 schools taking 5 teachers from each school. A self-developed questionnaire entitled, 'Attitude Scale of Environmental Education' with 28 items with a five-point response scale has been used for the collection of data from the teachers. The reliability of the tool was found 0.80 using split-half method. The results of the study indicated no significant difference in the attitude of male and female teachers working in government primary schools towards environmental education. However, there is significant difference in the attitude of male and female teachers working in private primary schools towards environmental education. Further, it is revealed that significant differences were observed in the attitude of male teachers of government and private schools; and female teachers of government and private schools towards environmental education.

Bhuvaneswara Lakshmi, G. and Sailaja, V.V. (2008) conducted a study on the environmental attitude of women prospective Secondary school teachers studying in different Colleges of Education of Andhra Pradesh in relation to their attitude towards teaching science. The attitude scale prepared by Haseen Taj was adopted for the study. The data collected were analysed using different statistical measures such as Mean, Standard Deviation, 't' test and coefficient of correlation.

The results revealed that significant differences were observed in the levels of attitude of women prospective teachers towards environmental science and their teaching methodology subject, 'science'. The subject of methodology at B.Ed. level influenced the environmental attitude of these prospective women teachers. The teachers of science subject exhibited better attitude towards environmental education as compared to those studying other methodology subjects. Attitude towards environmental science and teaching the methodology subject, 'science' was significantly correlated.

Methodology: This research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to capture a comprehensive understanding of teacher attitudes towards environmental education. A sample of secondary school teachers from Begusarai, Khagaria, and Samastipur districts was selected to ensure geographical diversity. After quantification of data, the investigator has employed various statistical measures such as Measures of Critical Ratios for 't'-test, to analyse the data.

Results

To test this hypothesis, the 't' ratio (critical ratio) has been calculated using mean score values and standard deviations of married and unmarried teachers and presented in Table-1 below.

Table-1 (showing the significance of difference between the attitude of male and female teachers towards Environmental Education in School curriculum)

S.No.	Category	N	Mean	S.D.	S.E.D	C.R.
1.	Male	480	236.25	27.72	1.80	1.14*
2.	Female	520	238.31	29.11		

*Not significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels

From Table-1 shown above, it is understood that the difference in the obtained mean values of male and female teachers is 2.06. The t-value obtained is 1.14, which isn't significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. From the above results, it is concluded that there is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female teachers working in secondary schools towards Environmental Education in school curriculum. These results are in tune with the findings of the studies conducted by Akash Keyong, 2021; Shreshtha Dixit & Agarwal, V.P., 2009; and Geetha and Manjunath, 2008. However, the results contradict with the findings of the studies conducted by Umesh Chandra Kapri, 2017; Jaspal Singh et al., 2014; and Leonard Ashok and Mitra, 2008. Quantitative analysis of survey data revealed no statistically significant difference in the overall attitudes towards environmental education between male and female teachers across the three districts. However, qualitative interviews uncovered nuanced differences in the rationales and approaches towards integrating environmental education into the curriculum. Female teachers often emphasized the intrinsic value of environmental education in nurturing students' ecological awareness, while male teachers tended to prioritize pragmatic considerations, such as curriculum alignment and resource availability.

Discussion

The findings of this study challenge simplistic notions of gendered attitudes towards environmental education among secondary school teachers in Begusarai, Khagaria, and Samastipur districts. While quantitative analysis did not reveal significant differences, qualitative insights underscored the diverse motivations and perspectives that inform teacher attitudes towards environmental education. Acknowledging and leveraging these varied perspectives is essential for developing inclusive and effective environmental education strategies in these districts, thereby contributing to environmental sustainability and gender equity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the gendered perceptions of secondary school teachers towards environmental education in the curriculum of Begusarai, Khagaria, and Samastipur districts. While no significant differences were observed at a quantitative level, qualitative analysis revealed nuanced variations in attitudes and motivations. Moving forward, educational policymakers and practitioners should consider these diverse perspectives to enhance the integration and impact of

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environmental education initiatives in these districts, fostering a more environmentally conscious and equitable educational environment.

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