

A Study on Environment Awareness Among the Secondary School Students of Phek District

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Abstract: The study was undertaken to find out the environmental awareness among the secondary school students of the Chakhesang tribe of Phek district Nagaland. The study is descriptive and qualitative in nature. 1000 secondary students were chosen for the study. Purposive, incidental and random sampling method were used for collection of data. A self-made questionnaire was used for collection of data. The data was analysed and interpreted using simple percentage (%). The findings revealed that the students have very high level of awareness on environmental degradation, negative effects of deforestation and shifting cultivation and diseases caused due to environmental degradation. Findings further revealed that the secondary school students have high level of awareness on air and water pollution and diseases caused due to climate change. Findings also revealed that the secondary school students have moderate level of awareness on noise pollution. A very low number of secondary school students were aware about proper ways of disposing of waste.

Keywords: Environmental awareness, environmental degradation, shifting cultivation, pollution, diseases.

1. Introduction

Phek district is situated in the south-eastern part of Nagaland with its headquarters at Phek town. It is bounded by Myanmar in the east, Zunheboto and Tuensang in the north, Manipur in the south and Kohima in the west. The district covers an area of 2026 sq.kms. Phek district is the home of the Chakhesangs. The word “Chakhesang” is derived from the names of three major sub tribes, “Cha” from “Chokri”, “Khe” from “Khezha” and “Sang” from “Sangtam”. Originally the Chakhesang tribe consisted of three major sub tribes namely Chokri, Khezha and Sangtam. These tribes have similar dress pattern and socio-cultural practices which brought them under a common name called “Chakhesang”, according to Das and Sinha (1994). However, in 1993, the Sangtam gained their separate tribal identity. Now the Chakhesangs consists of two major tribes, “Chokri” and “Khezha” and one minor tribe “Zhamai” or “Zhavame”, who belong to the Pomai Naga tribe living predominantly in Manipur.

At present environmental issues have increased manifold in Phek district due to deforestation, developmental works, unsustainable agricultural practices, economic practices etc. hence the present study was undertaken, to find out the

environmental awareness among the secondary school students of Phek district, among the Chakhesang tribe of Nagaland.

2. Need of the Study

The study will generate awareness among the secondary school students as there is wide scale of environmental degradation in the district. Studies were carried out on deforestation in Phek district but it was not carried out on environmental awareness among the secondary school students, hence the present study can help generate awareness among various sections of the society.

3. Population and Sample Method of the Study

The study includes secondary schools under Phek district inhabited by the Chakhesangs. 1000 secondary school students were chosen as sample for the study. The sampling method followed was incidental, purposeful and random technique.

4. Data and Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used for the study. The questionnaire was administered directly on the secondary school students after which the data were collected. Books, journal, articles etc. were referred for the study.

5. Methodology

The study is descriptive and qualitative in nature. Incidental, purposive and random sampling method was used for data collection. 1000 secondary school students were chosen for the present study. A self-made questionnaire was constructed for the secondary school students after which the questionnaire was examined by 6 experts and a pilot study was carried out in order to check the validity of the questionnaires, after which with approval from supervisor, Dr. Khotole Khieya, the data collection for the present study was done. Simple percentage (%) was used to analyse and interpret the data.

6. Findings and Discussions

1) The secondary students have very high level of awareness about the environmental degradation in Phek district whereby 97.70% were aware whereas 2.30% were unaware.

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Study by Lohe Sakhoveyi (2014) revealed the whole of Phek district is under moderate to severe soil erosion and that the environment in the district have been degraded by land use mainly because of shifting cultivation, deforestation, road construction, soil erosion, landslide and dwindling water resources and that the damage to the ecological imbalance was due to the delicately fragile ecosystem of the region. Awareness about the environmental affairs can help curb environmental degradation.

- 2) The secondary students have high level of awareness on air pollution whereby 74% were aware whereas 26% were unaware. Benjongkumba's (2002) study revealed that burning forest and fields mainly caused air pollution. The study further revealed that air pollution is caused due to environmental imbalance, automobiles, factories, burning forests, shifting cultivation, adulterated petrol, sewage, burning wood, urbanization, overcrowding in towns, improper draining system etc. Less use of machines and resources, planting of more trees or vegetation can help absorb noise as well help curb pollution.
- 3) The secondary students have high level of awareness on water pollution whereby 76.50% were aware whereas 23.50% were unaware. Menla Rasem's (1984) study revealed that water pollution was mainly caused by improper sanitation. Preservation of forest resources and water resources can be done to improve the water quality.
- 4) The secondary students have very high level of awareness on negative effects of deforestation whereby 94% were aware whereas 6% were unaware. Deforestation has detrimental effects on environment hence afforestation and wide plantation of trees should be done.
- 5) The secondary students have very high level of awareness on negative effects of shifting cultivation on the environment whereby 90.10% were aware whereas 9.90% were unaware. Study by Ao Lanukumla (2018) revealed that shifting cultivation, a predominant form of agriculture in Nagaland was found to be a major cause of forest fire. With 70% of the inhabitants of Nagaland engaging in agriculture, the students as well as the public should be sensitized about the status of the environment and eco-friendly means of farming should be adopted.
- 6) The secondary school students have moderate level of awareness on noise pollution. 60% of the students were aware of noise pollution whereas 40% of the students were of the opinion that Phek district doesn't face noise pollution. Noise pollution have detrimental effects on health hence every individual should have civic sense and work towards less pollution.
- 7) The secondary school students have very high level of awareness on diseases caused due to environmental degradation. 98.20% of the students were aware that environmental degradation causes ill effects on human health whereas 1.80% was unaware. Awareness about diseases and proper dissemination of information on how diseases are spread due to environmental degradation can go a long way in minimizing environmental degradation.
- 8) The secondary school students have high level of awareness on diseases caused due to climate change. 78.50% of the secondary students were aware whereas 21.50% were unaware. Over the years in Nagaland, there had been a gradual rise in temperature hence the students as well as the public should be sensitized on the negative effects of climate change on the ecosystem as well as on health.

7. Conclusion

Lack of awareness about environmental issues play a contributing factor in rising environmental problems. Hence educational institutions should initiate programmes for raising the environmental awareness among the student community. Agriculture is the main occupation of the people in Nagaland with 70% of the inhabitants engaged in agriculture hence organizations, societies, church should sensitise the farmers about the current environmental issues in the state and educate them on eco-friendly farming methods like adopting agro-forestry, watershed management, rainwater harvesting, animal husbandry and farming etc. The church should also play an active role in raising awareness among the community members. Everyone should follow an adopt environment friendly code of behaviour so that environmental issues can be minimised. The environment in Nagaland have been degraded due to unsustainable agricultural practices, developmental works, lack of awareness among the masses, due to the hilly topography of Nagaland etc, hence it is imperative for all sections of the society to actively engage in preservation of the environment. A healthy environment promotes good health hence extra care should be taken to preserve and protect the environment.

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