

# Analysis Of Environmental Activism In High Schools In District Peshawar

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## Abstract

Environmental degradation is serious issue that has adverse impacts on human population locally, regionally and globally. There is dire need to adopt environmentally friendly lifestyle to minimize further environmental degradation. One of the mediums through which environmentally friendly attitude and behavior may be inculcated is through school education. The purpose of this study was to investigate environmental activities organized in High Schools of District Peshawar. The population for this study was comprised of 77 Headmasters of the High Schools in District Peshawar. A sample of 65 Headmasters was selected randomly from the above-mentioned population. One questionnaire was developed from the relevant literature for the Headmasters and was self-administered by the researcher. The collected data was entered into Excel and was analyzed and interpreted through SPSS 20 using the frequencies, percentages, and Chi-square test was applied. The results indicated that most of the High Schools had never organized environmental activities for secondary level students. It was suggested that the High Schools may organize various environmental activities such as plantation, parks visits, debate competition, environmental club and drawing competition.

**Key Words:** Environmental activism, high schools, headmasters.

## Introduction

Our society is facing environmental threats and challenges such as global warming, depletion of natural resources and climate change nationally and globally. According to Singh & Singh (2016), unsustainable use of natural resources, burning of fossil fuels, emission of Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and greenhouse gases lead to several environmental problems. Pakistan is at number seven on the global climate risk list and has faced many natural disasters (Kreft et al. 2016), and the country is facing several problems like water scarcity, deforestation, unavailability

of clean water, waste disposal, pollution and biodiversity loss.

Due to humans` unsustainable activities, harsh attitude and behavior towards limited natural resources, the scientists are seriously worried (Singleton, 2011). The Qur`an also mentions about limited resources as, “We have surely created all things according to a measure” (Dawood, 2014). Keeping in view the current environmental degradation and problems, there is a dire need for a sustainable use of the finite resources and development of pro-environmentalism (i.e. pro-environmental attitude and behavior) for a sustainable society.

The Qur`an also stresses environmental conservation, preservation and sustainable lifestyle, as mentioned in The Holy Qur`an, “O Children of Adam! Dress properly whenever you are at worship. Eat and drink, but do not waste. Surely, He does not like the wasteful” (Khattab, 2018).

The conventional concept of Environmental Education is about developing knowledge and enhancing attitude, supposing a direct relationship between knowledge and pro-environmental behavior (Darner, 2009); because knowledge alone is insufficient for bringing behavioral change (Ajzen, 2002).

### **Environmental Activism**

Activism is to stand up for a political, social or environmental cause for bringing positive change in society, while Environmental activism is any activity that raises environmental awareness, and a struggle for protection and conservation of the environment, and for bringing positive environmental change (Fung and Adams, 2017), and includes such goal-oriented and deliberate activities with personal efforts for bringing change in habits and try to adopt environment-friendly lifestyle (Læssøe, 2017). These activities may include energy and water conservation, hiking, camping, gardening, nature photography, kitchen gardening, plantation, bird watching, learning plant and animal names, visits to the zoo, garden, and museum, cleanliness activities, arts competition, celebrating environmental days, non-violent resistance against environmental degradation, recycling and other related areas mentioned in the textbooks.

The world had started efforts and initiatives for the protection and improvement of the environment for long. The Tbilisi Declaration (UNEP, 1978) presented principles for international environmental education and defined objectives of environmental education including awareness, knowledge, attitude, skills and participation. According to Yousuf and

Bhutta (2012), Environmental Education is at the beginning stage in Pakistan. Pakistan has committed to attaining 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, and that Environmental Education shall be introduced and integrated into curricula at the school level in Pakistan as an emerging key issue (National Education Policy, 2017). National Education Policy (2009) stressed that initiatives shall be made for the awareness and training of students and teachers regarding the environment.

Furthermore, the study of Hines et al. (1987) suggested that along with cognitive knowledge of the problem positive environmental attitude and desire and intention to perform are also responsible for bringing responsible environmental behavioral change. Moreover, UNESCO defines environmental education as a learning process that improves knowledge and awareness of the environment and its related problems. It cultivates the skills and competence required to handle the issues and encourage motives, attitude and commitments to choose responsible choices for responsible behavior (UNESCO, 1978).

### **Statement of the Problem**

According to the Asian Development Bank (2008), due to the unbalanced population growth and unfriendly attitude towards environment, the natural resources are overburdened in Pakistan and the country is facing several environmental challenges, which have adverse impact on public health especially on children. Lack of public awareness and education is one of the reasons for these problems. Environment needs to be at the top of decision-making, planning and development. Therefore, there is dire need to create awareness, promote pro-environmentalism, and to use our natural resources in a sustainable way. Although the school curriculum consists various topics regarding environment, but several studies have indicated that knowledge and awareness alone is

insufficient for pro-environmentalism, and the association between students and nature is declining; therefore, students' environmental activism is much needed for pro-environmentalism. The purpose of this study was to analyze secondary students' environmental activism in District Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

### **Significance of the study**

Through this study the students, teachers, parents, headmasters and the public will know the importance of practical involvement in environmental-related activities and their impact on the natural world and; besides, students' knowledge, understanding, awareness and skills will enhance to adopt a sustainable lifestyle. Moreover, the Ministry of Education, policymakers, educational planners and other stakeholders will be able to identify shortcomings in the current Environmental Education program and will help in rectifying them in upcoming policies and programs.

### **Objective of the Study**

The objective of the study is to:

- Identify environmental activities organized by High Schools in District Peshawar for secondary level students.

### **Research Questions**

- What types of environmental activities are organized by High Schools in District Peshawar for secondary level students?

## **Results**

## **Research Methodology**

### **Nature of the Study**

This study was quantitative in nature, and descriptive research was conducted.

### **Population**

The population for this study was comprised of 77 Government High Schools for Boys in District Peshawar and 77 Headmasters of these schools.

### **Sample**

Using Krejcie & Morgan Table (1970), 65 Government High Schools for Boys and 65 Headmasters of these schools were selected through random sampling technique as a sample of the Study to achieve the objectives of the study.

### **Research Tool and Procedure for Data Collection**

The researcher developed one questionnaire from the relevant literature to collect data from the headmasters. It was composed of 23 items with four Likert Scale, i.e. Always, Often, Rarely and Never. The researcher collected the data personally by visiting the sample schools. Verbal permission was taken from the HMs of the schools for collection of data.

### **Data Analysis**

The collected data was first entered into Excel sheet and then it was transferred to SPSS 20 for analysis, and frequencies and percentages were calculated and Chi-square was applied.

**Table 1. 1. Environmental Activities organized by High Schools**

S. #	Statement	Always <i>f</i> (%)	Often <i>f</i> (%)	Rarely <i>f</i> (%)	Never <i>f</i> (%)	Chi-square p-value
1.	Urge students to use energy & water wisely.	0 (0%)	29 (49%)	17 (29%)	13 (22%)	4.102 (.129)
2.	Plantation.	0 (0%)	10 (17%)	15 (25%)	34 (58%)	16.305 (.000)
3.	Parks visit.	0 (0%)	8 (14%)	12 (20%)	39 (66%)	(28.915) (.000)
4.	Teachers deliver lecture.	12 (20%)	22 (37%)	9 (15%)	16 (27%)	6.424 (.093)
5.	Drawing competition.	0 (0%)	11 (19%)	16 (27%)	32 (54%)	12.237 (.002)
6.	Urge students to keep class clean.	16 (27%)	30 (51%)	13 (22%)	0 (0%)	8.373 (.015)
7.	Organize cleanliness day.	0 (0%)	35 (59%)	24 (41%)	0 (0%)	2.051 (.152)
8.	Organize environmental day.	0 (0%)	8 (13.6%)	16 (27.1%)	35 (59.3%)	(19.6) (.000)
9.	Classes have dustbins.	0 (0%)	32 (54%)	17 (29%)	10 (17%)	12.847 (.002)
10.	Urge students to throw waste in dustbin.	0 (0%)	19 (32%)	10 (17%)	30 (51%)	10.203 (.006)
11.	Environmental club.	0 (0%)	4 (7%)	19 (32%)	36 (61%)	26.068 (.000)
12.	Debate competition.	6 (10%)	8 (14%)	15 (25%)	30 (51%)	24.051 (.000)

Table 1.1. is composed of 12 items which indicated the activities organized by Headmaster for secondary level students.

Item 1 indicated that 49% of the respondents responded that they often urged the students to use energy and water wisely, while 29% chose rarely option, 22% responded with never option and 0% opted always for this statement. The Chi-square value for the statement is 4.102.

Item 2 stated that 58% of the respondents responded with never option, 25% with rarely option and 17% with never option to the given statement. The Chi-square value for the statement is 16.305 which is greater than the table value at .05, therefore, the result is significant and it was

concluded that plantation activities were never organized.

Item 3 indicated that 66% of the respondents responded with never option, 20% with rarely option and 14% with often option to the given statement. The Chi-square value for the statement is 28.915 which is greater than the table value at .05, therefore, the result is significant and it was concluded that parks visits were never organized.

Item 4 indicated that 37% of the respondents chose often, 27% never, 15% rarely and 20% always options to the given statement.

The Chi-square value for the statement is 6.424 which is greater than the table value at .05 which is significant.

Item 5 stated that 54% of the respondents responded with never option, 27% with rarely option and 19% with often option to the given statement. The Chi-square value for the statement is 12.237 which was greater than the table value at .05, therefore, the result is significant.

Item 6 indicated that 51% of the respondents responded with often option, 27% with always option and 22% with never option to the given statement. The Chi-square value for the statement is 8.373 which is greater than the table value at .05, therefore, the result is significant.

Item 7 stated that 59% of the respondents responded with often option and 41% with rarely option to the given statement. The Chi-square value for the statement is 2.051 which is greater than the table value at .05, therefore, the result is significant.

Item 8 indicated that 59% of the respondents responded with never option, 27% with rarely option and 14% with often option to the given statement. The Chi-square value for the statement is 19.559 which is greater than the table value at .05, therefore, the result is significant.

Item 9 stated that 54% of the respondents responded with often option, 29% with rarely option and 17% with never option to the given statement. The Chi-square value for the statement is 12.847 which is greater than the table value at .05, therefore, the result is significant.

Item 10 stated that 51% of the respondents responded with never option, 17% with rarely option and 32% with often option to the given statement. The Chi-square value for the statement is 10.203 which is greater than the table value at .05, therefore, the result is significant.

Item 11 indicated that 61% of the respondents responded with never option, 32% with rarely option and 7% with often option to the given statement. The Chi-square value for the

statement is 26.068 which is greater than the table value at .05, therefore, the result is significant.

Item 12 stated that 51% of the respondents responded with never option, 25% with rarely option, 14% with often option and 10% with always option to the given statement. The Chi-square value for the statement is 24.051 which is greater than the table value at .05, therefore, the result is significant.

Hence, the overall Chi-square value was greater than the table value at .05, therefore, it was concluded that in majority of the High Schools environmental activities were never organized for secondary level students.

### **Findings**

A considerable number of the Headmasters, which is (46%), agreed that they often urge students to use energy wisely. Majority of the Headmasters that is 54% responded that they often urge students to use water wisely. Most of the headmasters, that 56%, were of the opinion that they have often lack of school land for plantation. In terms of arranging parks visits for students; a considerable number that is (49%) of the Headmasters responded with rarely option. The analysis showed that most of the Headmasters that is (37%) were of the opinion that teacher often deliver lectures regarding environmental problems. A huge number that is (54%) of the Headmasters responded that they never arranged drawing competition regarding environmental problems.

According to the Headmasters' statement it is indicated that (51%) of the Headmasters often urge their students to keep the classes clean. Majority of the Headmasters that is (59%) often arranged cleanliness day in school. A considerable number of the Headmasters which is (59%) were agreed that they never arranged environmental day in school. Most of the Headmasters that is (54%) were of the opinion that dustbins are often placed in classes. The

analysis stated that (49%) of the Headmasters often urge students to throw waste in dustbins. According to the analysis of the Headmasters responses it was found that majority of the schools that is (73%) have had never environmental club. In terms of arranging debate competition in school regarding environmental problems, (42%) of the Headmasters responded with rarely option to the statement.

### **Discussion**

Regarding the analysis of wise use of resources in schools the headmasters often urged students to use energy and water wisely. Regarding plantation activities in schools it was indicated that most of the headmasters were unable to arrange such activities in schools. It was mentioned by Veselinovska and Osogovska (2012) that most of the students found plantation and forestation as the most interesting activity. The findings of the Study indicated that the headmasters rarely arranged parks or outdoor visits for students due to various reasons. The research of El-Batri et al. (2019) revealed that public schools of Morocco do not arrange outdoor and field visits for students while private sector schools usually arrange such trips in the same region. Simmons (1998) indicated that one of the reasons for less outdoor activities by schools is that teachers are concerned regarding students` safety during these visits. According to Behrendt and Franklin (2014), taking students on school trips and visits to outdoor environment enhances students` motivation and their willingness towards environment friendly behavior.

Teachers often deliver lectures to the students to make them aware of the environment and its associated problems and that how they can participate in environmental activities to play their role in protecting environment. Analyses of the findings revealed that majority of the headmasters have rarely arranged drawing competition regarding environment and its

associated problems. Most of the headmasters were of the opinion that they often urged the students to keep their class clean. The study conducted by Campbell (2008) indicated that for a better learning environment cleanliness is vitally important and necessary.

The opinions of the headmasters exhibited that most of them often arranged school cleanliness day. The analysis of headmasters` opinion regarding dustbins in classes indicated that dustbins are often placed in classes but were not used properly. According to Ana et al. (2011), one of the factors of worsening environmental health situation is the lack of appropriate waste management methods and practices in schools of developing countries.

Majority of the headmasters agreed that environmental club had never existed in their schools. A similar study conducted by Toili (2007) exhibited that the students who were part of any environmental club have shown concern and responsibility towards environment and they were ready to improve and protect the environment. Moreover another study conducted in Kenya by Gakuo (2016) indicated that participation in environmental club had a positive impact on students` environmental attitude and they would be more involved in environmental activities.

The analysis of headmasters` opinion stipulated that most of them were agreed that they rarely arranged debate competitions regarding environmental problems.

### **Conclusion**

It has been concluded that high schools were not organizing adequate environmental activities, although the headmasters urge students frequently to use energy and water wisely and the students are found to be using these resources wisely in schools, however, environmental activities such as plantation, parks visits, environmental club, organizing environmental days, debate competition and drawing

competition regarding environmental problems were never organized in most of the schools. Cleanliness day was being organized frequently in schools and dustbins were available in classes.

### Recommendations

1. Plantation and plants distribution activity may be organized both inside and outside of the school.
2. Parks, zoo, mountains and outdoor trips to natural environment may be arranged by schools on regular basis for students. Students may also be educated about the importance of trees and animals during the trips to mountains, parks and zoo.
3. Environmental day, drawing competition, debate competition, environmental clubs, Botanical Garden and Quraanic Garden may be organized and established in schools.
4. An environmental expert as teacher may be appointed in schools.
5. Students may be engaged properly by government in various projects such as Billion Tree Tsunami etc.
6. An external environmental expert may be invited on regular basis to schools to deliver lectures regarding environment and to show students practically how they can reduce, recycle and reuse plastic, plastic products and shopping bags etc.
7. The 3 R's program that is: reduce waste, reuse resources and recycle materials may be introduced in schools. This program may also be introduced in each and every home by parents.
8. The linkage between school and various government and non-government environmental organizations may be established for

mutual collaboration towards students' environmental activism.

9. Teachers' training may be organized to train them how to prepare students towards participation in environmental activities and protection of environment.
10. Programs such as establishment of kitchen garden may be organized in schools to train students how they can establish the same in their home.
11. The government through education ministry may formulate policy that encourages environmental activities such as establishment of environmental club and organizing other environment relevant activities on regular basis in schools.

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