

# **Environmental Awareness of College Students in Mizoram and their Activities towards the Environment**

**Author**

**Lalmangaihzuali**

**Research Scholar**

**Department of Education, Mizoram University**

**Corresponding Author**

**Dr. Lynda Zohmingliani**

**Professor**

**Department of Education, Mizoram University**

## ***Abstract***

*The need for conserving our environment can never be an outdated issue because environmental problems keep on arising due to human activities. The need to disseminate certain types of awareness to inculcate environmental friendly behavior is something that requires urgent attention in today's world. This study is an attempt to find out the level of environmental awareness the college students had in Mizoram and their level of participation in protecting the environment. It was found out that college students in Mizoram had high environmental knowledge and average environmental activities. This study also found out that environmental awareness and activities of college students in Mizoram had a significantly positive correlation.*

**Keywords:** *Environmental Awareness, Environmental Activities, College Students*

## **Introduction**

Environmental degradation is happening in a fast pace all over the world due to human activities alone. The over-consumption of natural resources will somehow lead to such a situation where the natural environment is irreparably compromised thus leading to the extinction of humanity. Therefore to ensure a future where we can all live in a perfect harmony with our natural environment, we have to take extra steps to safeguard the cause of our environment. For this purpose it is very much necessary to raise awareness among the

masses regarding the needs to protect and conserve our environment and to gear the attitude of humanity as a whole towards sustainable development with the hope that the awareness will lead to promoting environmental-friendly behavior.

Environmental awareness means being aware of the natural environment and making choices that benefit--rather than hurt--the earth (Environmental Awareness: Definition, History & Importance, 2019). To be 'aware' we need to know the current situation of our environment, the extent of reparation it requires. It can be easily assumed that in a developing country like India, there will be thousands of people who are ignorant of the crisis of environmental degradation and that they have a role to play in conserving their environment.

Environmental Activities are those activities which reduce or eliminate pressures on the environment and which aim at making more efficient use of natural resources. There are some activities which, though not primarily aimed at protecting the environment, may have environmentally beneficial effects. Damage avoidance and treatment may also be included in the field of interest though these activities are more concerned with rectifying damage already done than with preventing it in the first place. Minimisation of natural hazards may be included although these are activities to protect the economy from the environment where the others are concerned with protecting the environment from the economy (Glossary of statistical terms: Environmental Activities, 2005).

Mizoram is a state where environmental issues are significantly less in comparison with other states in India. However, recent occurrences show that the rivers in Mizoram had been polluted to a great extent and deforestation is a common issue due to jhumming cultivation which has been in practice for so long. Waste management and disposal is not efficient which often results to disaster. Non-perishable objects like polythene bags are widely and commonly used by the masses. Although awareness had been given by concern government department, people hardly follows it since their activities had no immediate effect on the environment. Therefore it is very important to inform the masses about the effect that their activities can upshot and the inevitable problems for humanity if such activities that are negatively effecting environment are continuously practiced.

### **Review of related literature:**

Ningrum and Herdiansyah (2018) in their paper "Environmental awareness and behavior of college students in regards to the environment in urban area" analysed the environmental

awareness of college students, report their environmental behaviour, and analysed the correlation of some factors towards environmental awareness and behaviour in a sample of 150 college students in one university in Jakarta. This research concludes that college students have good environmental awareness and behaviour.

Hmangaihzuali (2015) conducted a study on Environmental Ethics among secondary school students in Aizawl City, Mizoram. She used Environmental Ethics Scale developed by Dr. Haseen Taj (2001) and an opinionnaire on issues related to environmental ethics developed by investigator herself. She finds out that-

1. Majority of the secondary school students in Aizawl had high level environmental ethics and female students have significantly higher environmental ethics.
2. Amongst the different environmental pollution majority of secondary school students most wanted to solve the problem of air pollution.

Lalremruati (2019) in her research entitled “Environmental Education in Colleges of Mizoram: An Analytical Study” assessed the contents of the syllabus, mode of transaction, evaluation procedures of environmental education in colleges of Mizoram and the profile of college teachers teaching environmental education, the time devoted for the subject in the college time table. She also studied the attitude of college students towards their environment where all the college students were found to have positive attitude towards the environment.

### **Objectives:**

In order to find out whether the environmental awareness of college students influence their environmental attitude, the following objectives had been formulated-

1. To find out the level of environmental awareness of college students in Mizoram
2. To find out the level of environmental activities of college students in Mizoram
3. To determine whether the level of environmental awareness influence the activities of college students in Mizoram towards the environment

### **Methodology:**

Population:

The population of the present study comprised of all the college students of Mizoram

**Sample:**

A sample of 200 college students in Mizoram was collected on the basis of Random Sampling Technique. The sample was collected through online mode using Survey Monkey app.

**Tools used:**

1. Environmental Awareness Ability Measure (EAAM-J) (2010) developed by Dr. Praveen Kumar Jha, Professor P. G. Dept. of Psychology T. P. College, Madhipura (B. N. Mandal University, Madipura) Bihar.
2. Environmental Activity Scale (EAcs) (2021) developed by the investigator

**Statistical Techniques used:**

Descriptive statistics like percentages and inferential statistics i.e. Pearson Product Moment Correlation were used for the analysis of data.

**Analysis of Data:**

Objective No.1: To find out the level of environmental awareness of college students in Mizoram

In order to find out the level of environmental awareness of college students in Mizoram, Environmental Awareness Ability Measure (EAAM-J) (2010) developed by Dr. Praveen Kumar Jha was employed. EAAM-J consists of 51 items based on the following dimensions:

1. Causes of pollution
2. Conservation of soil forest, air etc.
3. Energy conservation
4. Conservation of human health
5. Conservation of wild-life and animal husbandry

The scale is a two point scale with positive and negative items. In the positive items, 'agree' carry one point and 'disagree' carry zero point and vice versa in the negative items. The range of the score is 0-51. The norm of the scale was established in such a way that the level of environmental awareness was classified into 'High', 'Average' and 'Low'. The scores

ranging from 37-51 falls under 'High', 16-36 falls under 'Average' and 0-15 falls under 'Low' category

Table No 1: Environmental awareness of college students in Mizoram

<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>High Environmental Awareness</b>	<b>Average Environmental Awareness</b>	<b>Low Environmental Awareness</b>
200	43.11	5.72	176 (88%)	24 (12%)	0 (0%)

Table No. 1 shows that college students in Mizoram had high environmental knowledge with a Mean value of 43.11 and Standard Deviation 5.72. Majority, i.e. 88% of them had high environmental awareness, 12% had average environmental awareness and there are no students who had low environmental awareness

Objective No.2: To find out the level of environmental activities of college students in Mizoram

In order to find out the level of environmental activities of college students in Mizoram, Environmental Activities Scale (EAcS) developed and standardized by the investigator was made use of. The scale consists of 31 items. Each item has three alternative responses- 'always', 'sometimes' and 'never'. In positive items, the point for 'always' is 2, 'sometimes' is 1, 'never' is 0 and vice versa in negative items. The maximum possible score is 62 and minimum possible score is 0. Thus the range of the scale is 0 – 62.

The norm for EAcS was prepared in such a way that scores ranging from 50-62 falls under 'High' category, 38-49 under 'Average' category, 0-37 falls under 'Low' category.

Table No.2: Level of environmental activities of college students in Mizoram

<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Low Environmental Activities</b>	<b>Average Environmental Activities</b>	<b>High Environmental Activities</b>
200	42.37	5.34	23 (11.5 %)	174 (87%)	3 (1.5%)

Looking at Table No. 2, it can be seen that Mizoram college students had average environmental activities because majority (87%) had average environmental activities. Only 1.5 % had high environmental activities while 11.5% had low environmental activities. The Mean score of college students is 42.37 and the Standard Deviation is 5.34.

Objective No.3: To determine whether the level of environmental awareness influence the activities of college students in Mizoram towards the environment

In order to determine whether the level of environmental awareness influence the activities of college students in Mizoram towards the environment, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was employed to

Table No. 3: Relationship between environmental awareness and environmental activities of college students in Mizoram

Variables	Critical r value		Calculated r	Significance
Environmental Awareness	At 0.05 level of significance	.138	0.89	Significant
Environmental Activity	At 0.01 level of significance	.181		

Table No.3 shows the correlation value between environmental awareness and environmental activities of college students in Mizoram is 0.89 which is a high correlation. Since the calculated r value is higher than the critical r value at both 0.05 and 0.01 level of significance, it can be stated that there is a significantly positive correlation between environmental awareness and environmental activities of college students in Mizoram

### Discussion of Findings:

It is plausible to state that college students in Mizoram had high environmental awareness because a large majority i.e. 88% had high environmental awareness and the remaining 12% had average environmental awareness. It is completely unanticipated that no students have low environmental awareness. The reason behind majority of college students having high environmental awareness can be reckoned that environmental education which was included in the education system as a separate subject from lower classes have a positive influence in the learners till they reach higher education stage. This finding coincide with the

finding of Lalremruati that the college students in Mizoram were found to have positive attitude towards the environment since awareness can have impact on the attitude of a person.

Although college students in Mizoram had high environmental awareness, majority i.e. 87% of them had average environmental activity. There are 11.5% of college students having low environmental activity while only negligible percentage of students had high environmental activity. The reason why college students in Mizoram had average environmental activity even though they had high environmental awareness may be due to insufficient amount of activities for environmental conservation and protection in educational institutions in Mizoram.

This study also finds out that there is a significantly positive correlation between environmental awareness and environmental activities of college students in Mizoram. This indicates that if the environmental awareness of college students increases, their activities towards environment will be increasing and at the same time environmental activities of college students decreases as the environmental awareness of college students decreases. The fact that there is a significant correlation between environmental awareness and environmental activities of college students in Mizoram can be somehow anticipated because human beings usually act according to their own ideas and understanding which are being built by the kind of awareness they are having.

### **Conclusion:**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, environmental issues are the most crucial occurrence which requires immediate action. Awareness should be made regarding the protection of environment in all spheres and stages of live. College students, being the future leaders of the nation, needed to be well-acquainted with the present issue that our environment is facing and the remedial measures needed so that they can act out accordingly. Being aware simply is not enough if that awareness is not followed by action. The reason that college students in Mizoram had only average environmental activity while they have high environmental awareness may be lack of opportunity to do environmental-friendly activities. Therefore activities for environmental protection and conservation need to be adequately included in the curriculum not only of college students but in all stages of education since education has proved to be the most effective agent in changing the mindset of people.

**REFERENCES:**

Ningrum, Zarah & Herdiansyah, Herdis. (2018). Environmental awareness and behavior of college students in regards to the environment in urban area. E3S Web of Conferences. 74. 10004. 10.1051/e3sconf/20187410004.

Environmental Awareness: Definition, History & Importance. (2019, March 19). Retrieved from <https://study.com/academy/lesson/environmental-awareness-definition-history-importance.html>.

Glossary of statistical terms: Environmental Activities (2005). Retrieved from <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=6420#:~:text=Activities%20which%20reduce%20or%20eliminate,Context%3A&text=In%20addition%2C%20there%20are%20some,may%20have%20environmentally%20beneficial%20effects>.

Lalremruati, P.C. (2019). *Environmental Education in Colleges of Mizoram: An analytical study*. An unpublished Ph. D thesis. Department of Education, Mizoram University

Hmangaihzuali, V. L. (2015). *Environmental Ethics Among Secondary School Students in Aizawl City*. An unpublished M. Phil dissertation. Department of Education, Mizoram University