

**A STUDY OF ASSESSING ENVIRONMENTAL  
AWARENESS AMONG THE UNDERGRADUATE  
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS OF KARACHI**

**RABIA KHATOON**

**DR.MEMOONA SAEED LODHI\***

**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study was to find the environmental responsiveness among undergraduate students of Karachi. The scope of the study was limited to 100 students each from Hamdard University and University of Karachi and the methodology used for the research was survey method. This methodology consisted of designing of a questionnaire, collecting of data, and the analyzing of data by quantitative method. After analyzing the collected data, it was observed that majority of students of these two institutes had environmental acquaintance and knowhow but there is a deficiency of participative approach among the student toward environmental friendly activities.

**Key Terms:** *Environmental Awareness, Undergraduate Students, Universities, Assess, Study*

**\* SUPERVISOR**

A Quarterly Double-Blind Peer Reviewed Refereed Open Access International e-Journal - Included in the International Serial Directories  
Indexed & Listed at: Ulrich's Periodicals Directory ©, U.S.A., Open J-Gate, India as well as in Cabell's Directories of Publishing Opportunities, U.S.A.

**International Journal of Research in Social Sciences**  
<http://www.ijmra.us>

## INTRODUCTION

Environmental awareness makes a person knowledgeable to the environment and environment challenges. It is also an indication of the person's attitude and outlook towards improvement of our environmental quality, this improvement in turns promote the skills, among the population, that are required to identify the environmental problems and helps to solve them.

To achieve the environmental happiness the person's has to observe the destructive elements present in the environment and to eradicate them slowly and gradually. One of the most obvious problem faced by mankind at all time is that of pollution. This pollution is occurring by anthropogenic activities like indiscriminate use of pesticides in the fields, addition of contaminated water from the industries into the water body, emission of gases from power plants and from the vehicular exhaust etc. All of them create problems for a peaceful life.

In Pakistan, the environmental issues require a very serious and dedicated effort to first understand the root cause and then connected steps to solve them. The first step in this important direction is the provision of environmental education at all levels of education for all tiers of population.

## Literature Review

Changes taking place in our environment in the recent years have become a serious cause of concern for everyone. So, to enhance understanding about the problems infecting the environment, it is highly important to become aware of the reasons.

Environment represents innate world. Environment is the flanking in which a person, animal or plant exist. The environment actually facilitates our livelihood that contains each and everything we have around us for example metal, water, air and etc. A severe risk to human beings and their environment is persistent and hastening over utilization and destruction of innate assets.

However, concerns and responsiveness about environment, as advised by Eckersley (1989) and Castles (1992), vary with living status of individual. It is because the people who have got better opportunities of living get to know things in better ways and also they understand the issues and problems related to their environment. They are more concerned with the

pollution, causes of air pollution and cure from it. Furthermore, since they have educational awareness they also have anxieties of noise pollution and health issues.

### **FIRST ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS**

Initial concern and attention in the environment was an attribute of the Romantic Movement of the 19th century. Famous poet William Wordsworth made many visits to the Lake District and created beautiful poems that motivated and convinced people to reflect about natural beauty and owning it as national property to keep it safe and enjoy.

John Ruskin a dominant philosopher uttered the Romantic model of environmental safety and maintenance. Organized hard work on the environment started in the late 19th century; it raised out of the amenity movement in Britain in the 1870s, that was a result of industrialization, the expansion of cities, and deterioration pollution. Opening with the development of the Commons Preservation Society in 1865, the group supported countryside fortification in opposition to the encroachments of industrialization. Robert Hunter joined Hardwicke Rawnsley, Octavia Hill, and John Ruskin to direct a flourishing movement to turn away the making of railways to take line up from the mine that could have busted the valleys of Newlands. This achievement directed to the establishment of the Lake District Society of Defense.

A movement of back-to-nature projected the idealistic principle of new ecology, was activated and supported by some famous scholarly thinkers who were not in favor of consumerism, smog and actions that were damaging the natural world. Realistic schemes in the founding of minute supportive farms were endeavored and old countryside customs were excitedly revitalized, together with the Morris dance and the maypole.

Many environmental groups in UK were impressed by these thoughts, for example 'the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds' this was founded in 1889 by Emily Williamson. People from middle classes and even some prominent and important people also got attracted and supported this society like Alfred Newton. The support increased in a great deal and the society was able to get 25000 members by 1900. Society of Garden city integrated numerous issues related to environment in developing the manifesto; moreover, the Socialist League and The Clarion movement too started to promote procedures of nature protection.

All the campaigns created an acknowledged awareness and people became concerned of their environment. They started looking at the causes and effects of environmental destruction. As a result of the above mentioned campaigns many societies and NGOs were formed that have

been working towards the sustainable environmental development. They developed certain activities and programs in order to make people aware about their surroundings as a result people became conscious of air pollution, smoke, noise pollution and health hazards. (Adams, 1999).

### **RISK AND DANGER OF HEALTH**

Every living thing needs to maintain life with clean environment and has a right to have fresh air, good food, clean water and a secure place to survive. It is evident from the history that life was prolonged and safe due the provision of all the above mentioned facilities. Progress in farming, purity, irrigation, and cleanliness had a larger affect on health of people as compared to medicine.

While the life of human can be prolonged by safe environment but at the same time it can also create health problems. Shortage of basic requirements is a major reason of individual transience. 1.8 million Human being (most of them were small children) died from diarrhea due to shortage of clean and safe drinking water in 2004. It did not stop; 160 million people had to suffer with diseases due to absence of sufficient sanitation. A great number of people still does not have access to clean drinking water and proper sanitation. As a result risk of health increases the danger of cancer, heart attack and different other diseases. And the most unfortunate thing is that despite of many acts and campaigns people are not trying to understand the importance of environmental awareness. Only surface level efforts are not enough to create awareness rather there has to be very serious campaigns in the institutions and organizations.

### **BIOETHICAL, COMMUNAL, & LAWFUL CONCERNS**

Association linking human health and the environment increase a lot of moral, communal, and lawful predicament by influencing people to select amongst contending standards. These contemplations preserve the subsequent grouping.

### **ADMINISTRATING REMUNERATION AND HAZARD**

Most of the concerns and problems at the connection of environment and health are related to the administrating remuneration and hazards. Like insect killers have vital importance for a crop capitulate, however at the same time they can be dangerous for human health and environment. if the use of insect killers will be stopped without proper working and administering its benefits it will harm the agricultural productivity that will ultimately lead to shortage of food items.

Global warming requires a significant care to balance administrating benefits and dangers. A major proportion of global atmosphere change is because of the human being production of hothouse gases. There could be a great deal of harms and dangers for environment and health of human being as a result of climate change. But actions to radically decrease greenhouse gases can have more undesirable results for world and local economies. For instance, significantly rising petrol duty will support larger petroleum effectiveness and lesser carbon dioxide production, but on the other hand it would also enhance the cost of transport, which will lead to extensive price rises and abridged consumer expenditure authority.

For many years some politicians and scholars have disputed that we should linger for more indication of global warming, because the action required to avoid or reduce it could have catastrophic economic issues and results. Other politicians had been discussing that it is difficult for the society to keep waiting for the results of global warming as the consequences can be very dangerous. This dissimilarity of judgment increases an essential question regarding the moral values of benefit/risk administration: What is the responsibility of systematic proofs and facts in management?

The largest part authoritarian agencies in the world build benefit/risk assessment that are related to scientific studies and experiments. Organizations usually make decisions after adequate approvals from the regulatory authority. Hence everyone shares many responsibilities in order to make environment pleasant.

As such, environmental education is to make individuals aware of and apprehensive about the environment and its associated harms, as well as to stimulate dedication to work individually and collectively towards the solution of present issues and the prevention of upcoming generation. Hungerford, Peyton and Wilke (1980) designed a set of curriculum development aims intended for education about environment such as (a) environmental foundations; (b) issue responsiveness; (c) investigation and evaluation; in addition to (d) issue resolution. The first two objectives spotlight on theoretical awareness which serves as a requirement for the later goal

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION:**

It has been an unfortunate fact people of Pakistan are suffering badly with the issues related to environment whether of health, pollution, or noise. There have been different

movements and activities by NGOs and some institutions in order to create awareness but still there is an increasing need to bring it more seriously for better results.

As trade has extended, much toxic effluents have been produced by the factories into the air and water. The textile and food industries are increasing in a large number resulting pollution into the air and water. The quality of groundwater has also suffered from speedily escalating use of insect repellent and fertilizers meant at endorsing more intensive cropping and facilitating self-sufficiency in food production.

Because of the rising environmental dilemma that has been created by man himself, survival on earth has become a question mark! It is a high time to address environmental problems and look into the issues of climate change before it gets too late. That is the reason that serious attention is being given to colonize the other habitable planets. (Bardwell, 1994)

The level of environmental awareness in the general public of Pakistan is extremely low and this is obvious from the existing hopeless sanitary conditions, disposal of waste water and pitiful condition of smoke emitting vehicles and factories, the environmental problems can only be solved through education related to environmental condition.

Environmental education and awareness for achieving global sustainable development and global environmental sustainability are top priorities of the international Environmental Agenda. (Adams, 1991)

In order to solve environmental problems there is a great need to integrate natural science and social sciences perspectives and methodologies. Stakeholders and society need to think systematically to deal with the issues related to the environment. In this connection scientific reasoning, critical thinking and value awareness are vital to make links for better results.

Ballantyne (2000) suggested that the environmental respecting values and attitude could be developed through a formal education about and for environment. He further said that there is a strong need to develop curricula for environmental education.

Love and respect for nature and environment has been emphasized in older societies and different religions. Older societies recognized and maintained a pleasant relationship with nature and their environment. Islam teaches to respect nature and natural environment. In the Holy Quran there are many points written about this for example:

“Uncorrupted water is the sign of paradise. If one wants to improve his way of life to match the high quality of the most perfect, one should stop polluting water”. (Verse 47, Parah 15, Holy Quran).

Our Society is not paying attention towards the dangerous consequences as a result of environmental problems. Schools, colleges, universities and Institutions are running short-term programs to create awareness but the implementation of the actions required is missing. Results of the efforts being made by different stakeholders are not visible. We still see garbage around the roads, we still find smoke of vehicles, and while going on the road we have to suffer with the loud horns!

## METHODOLOGY

Survey method was used in determining the views of the respondents. The population of the study was comprised of the students from the universities of Karachi. The overall sample size of 200 students was taken randomly from Hamdard University and University of Karachi. Questionnaire (fixed or closed type) was used as a research instrument for data collection. The questionnaire is composed of three sections; environmental knowledge, environmental concern and efforts towards environmental problem solving. Each question in a questionnaire consists of five responses.

Responses	Rating
Strongly Agree	5
Agree	4
Uncertain	3
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	1

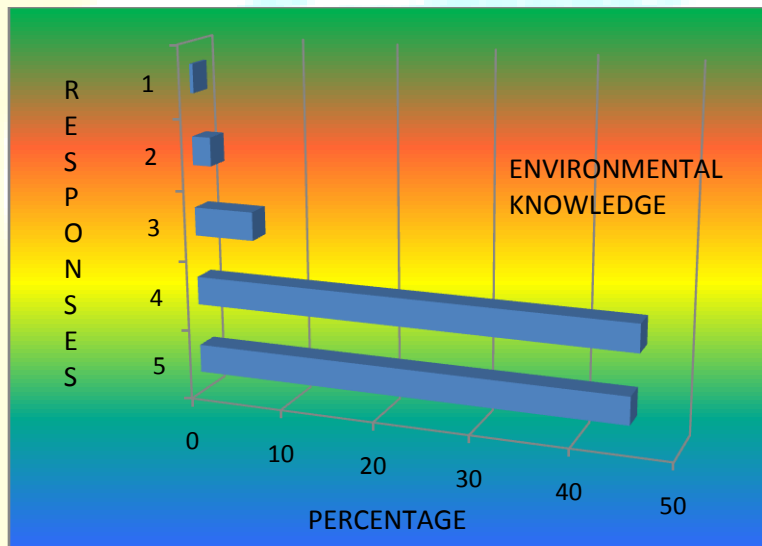
## DATA ANALYSIS

The scores of the environmental awareness of different samples were collected through personal visits and the data has presented in terms of tables and graphs.

**Hamdard & University of Karachi**

Responses	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	45.25
Agree	46
Uncertain	6.375
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	0.375
Total	100

*ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE*



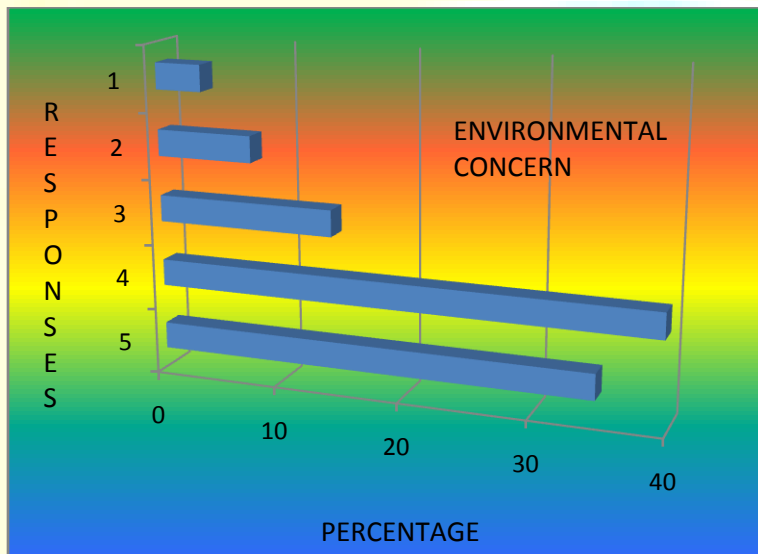
**Hamdard & University of Karachi**

Responses	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	34.66667
Agree	39.58333
Uncertain	14.25
Disagree	7.75
Strongly disagree	3.75



Responses	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	34.66667
Agree	39.58333
Uncertain	14.25
Disagree	7.75
Total	100

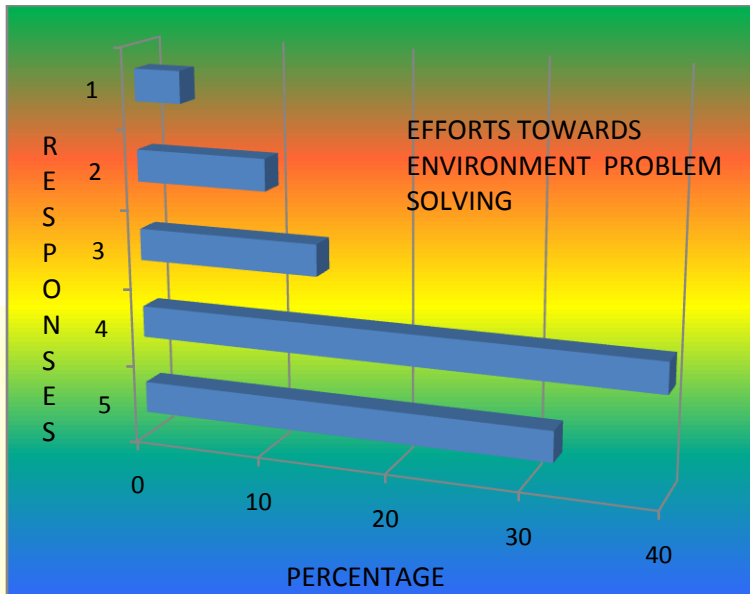
*ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN*



**Hamdard & University of Karachi**

Responses	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	32
Agree	40
Uncertain	14.14286
Disagree	10.21429
Strongly disagree	3.642857
Total	100

*EFFORTS TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM SOLVING*



## FINDINGS

In the light of the study, following major research findings are made:

- 1) University students have basic environmental knowledge.
- 2) The students worried about the environmental degradation.
- 3) Most of the students want to work for the environment and they are interested to spread environmental awareness among other members of the society.
- 4) The students very well knew that the environmental degradation is due to rapid industrialization.
- 5) In view of the students, environmental decisions should be based on considering economic factors.
- 6) Majority of students agreed that conservation of natural resources is necessary.

## CONCLUSION

The results with significant analysis of the study showed most of the undergraduate University students have environmental understanding and apprehension regarding environmental issues but there is insufficiency of the efforts towards environmental problem solving.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In the reflections of the study, the following recommendations were prepared:

1. The students have environmental knowledge; there is a need of strong participation from them. They should be encouraged to involve in environmental related activities.
2. Environmental Education should be addressed in the education policy.
3. Curriculum planners should revise their curricula at every level up to the current status of environmental problems of the country.
4. Social media should play positive role in spreading environmental knowledge and consequences of Environmental damage.
5. Environment related seminars and workshops should be arranged at University level.
6. To promote environmental awareness, environmental education should be included in school curriculum. The school should incorporate environment related curriculum in their education system.

## References

- Adams, G. R. & Schvaneveldt, J. D. (1991). *Understanding Environmental Education*. Longman: New York.
- Ballantyne, R.R.; Fien, J. & Packer, J. M. (2000). Program Effectiveness in Facilitating Intergenerational Influence in Environmental Education: *Journal of Environmental Education*, 32(4). 8-15
- Bardwell, L. V.; Monroe, M. C. & Tudor, M. T. (1994). *Environmental Problem Solving: theory, practice and possibilities in environmental education*. Troy, OH, NAAEE.
- Eckersley, R. (1992). *Environmentalism and Political Theory*. London. University College of London Press.
- Hungerford, H.R., Peyton, R.B., and R.J. Wilke. R.J. (1980). Goals for curriculum development in environmental education. *Journal of Environmental Education*, 11(3). 43-47.
- Hungerford, H.R. and T.L. Volk. (1990). Changing learner behavior through environmental education. *Journal of Environmental Education*, 21(3). 8-21.