

Environmental Ethics of The Higher Secondary School Students**In East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya****Amanda Tariang**Research Scholar,
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Nehu, Shillong, Meghalaya.**ABSTRACT:**

Environmental ethics is the moral relationship of human beings with the environment. It concerns the do's and don'ts for human beings towards the environment. It deals with ecological rights of all creatures present today as well as those that will follow on the earth. The present study aims to find out the environmental ethics of the higher secondary school students based on gender and locale of the students. The data was collected from a sample of 973 higher secondary school students by using the Environmental Ethics Scale (EES) constructed by Haseen Taj (2001). It was found that the higher secondary school students of East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya have high environmental ethics and gender has no impact on the environmental ethics of the students. However, locale has an impact on the environmental ethics of the students of East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya.

KEYWORDS: Environment, environmental ethics, higher secondary school students.

I. INTRODUCTION

Environmental ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with the ethical issues of the environment. Environmental ethics is the guiding principles of decision making in the fields of conservation and environmental management. It extends to not only include the values of human beings but it extends to include much more, it stretches to the values and social justice of all that exist in the environment including animate and inanimate beings, to its flora and fauna and to its air, water and land.

Environmental ethics as an academic field evolved in response to the work of scientist such as Rachel Carson and events such as the first earth day in 1970. Two papers that had a crucial influence on the evolution of environmental ethics were Lynn White's (1967) "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis" and Garrett Hardin's (1968) "The Tragedy of the Commons". Essays such as Garrett Hardin's "Exploring New Ethics for Survival" and Aldo Leopold's "The Land

Ethic," advocated the needs of environmental ethics.

Environmental ethics aims to bring out a healthy ethical relationship between man and his environment, where man can live in concord with his natural environment, culture and his biophysical surroundings. Environmental ethics includes the law of right and wrong which gives a clear direction as to what is to be followed by an individual and what is to be rejected. Our environment is at the brink of its endurance and it would soon collapse at the greed of its people. Therefore it is the duty of the people to be more responsible for their actions and to carefully judge for themselves if their actions would develop or destroy our mother earth.

II. NEED OF THE STUDY

Very few studies have focussed on environmental ethics of students across our country especially with reference to the state of Meghalaya which points to a knowledge gap in this regard. This knowledge gap needs to be bridged in order to further our understanding of environmental ethics of our society. Hence, this proposed study is a necessary attempt to bridge the knowledge gap concerning environmental ethics of the higher secondary school students in East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya.

III. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERMS USED

- a. Environmental ethics – is the moral relationship of human beings with the environment. It concerns the do's and don'ts for human beings towards the environment. It deals with ecological rights of all creatures present today as well as those that will follow on the earth.
- b. Higher secondary school – It constitutes students studying in class XI and XII both male and female.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the level of environmental ethics of the higher secondary school students in East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya.
2. To find if there is any significant difference in environmental ethics between Male and female students.
3. To find if there is any significant difference in environmental ethics between Urban and rural students.

V. HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference in environmental ethics between male and female higher secondary school students.
2. There is no significant difference in environmental ethics between urban and rural higher secondary school students.

VI. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present study is delimited to the higher secondary schools students under M.B.O.S.E only.

VII. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Hough, D. L. (2003) revealed that care orientation had a stronger influence than gender and race in case of environmental dilemmas on moral reasoning. Values and ethics should be included in environmental education as they play a central role in the consideration of environmental problems. The study further revealed that gender and race does influence the reasoning power about moral prospective on environmental issues.

Little Flower (2006) found that the higher secondary school students possess a high level of environmental ethics. It was also found that there is a significant difference in environmental ethics of students in terms of gender and locale.

Raju (2007) found that the higher secondary students of Cuddalore educational district have high level of environmental ethics. It was also found that female students had more environmental ethics than the male students and rural students had more environmental ethics than the urban students.

Uitto, Juuti, Lavonen, Byman and Meisalo (2011) found that Girls' attitude towards environmental responsibility was significantly more positive than in boys, and their biocentric value was also stronger than those of the boys, while in terms of interest, the gender difference was small. It was also found that the effect of residential area was negligible. A school's own environmental projects and participation in programmes linked to environmental education or education for sustainable development was suggested to enhance students' interest in environmental issues.

Balachandran (2013) found that the co-relation between environmental awareness and environmental ethics of the secondary and higher secondary school students showed positive significance.

VIII. RESEARCH METHOD

Descriptive method was used in the present study.

Population

The population of this study includes all Higher Secondary school students (male and female) in East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya.

Table 1

Population of the Study

No of Schools	Grand total
107	24339

Source: Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) 2014-15

Sample

A representative sample of 973 higher secondary school students was selected for the study.

Research tools

Environmental Ethics Scale (EES) constructed by Haseen Taj (2001) was used for data collection.

IX. ANALYSES AND INTERPRETATION

Objective 1: To study the level of environmental ethics of the higher secondary school students in East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya.

Table 2

Mean and SD of higher secondary school students on environmental ethics

Environmental Ethics	N	Minimum score	Maximum Score	Mean	SD
	973	65	135	111.23	12.12

Table 3

Stanine Grade of higher secondary school students on Environmental Ethics

Stanine Grade	Raw Scores	Frequency	Percentage	Percentage	Classification
IX	98 and above	845	86.84	86.84	High Ethics
VIII	90-97	67	6.88	12.01	Above Average Ethics
VII	82-89	50	5.13		
VI	74-81	6	0.61	1.12	Average Ethics
V	66-73	4	0.41		
IV	58-65	1	0.10		
III	50-57	0	0	0	Below Average Ethics
II	42-49	0	0		
I	Upto 41	0	0	0	Low Ethics

Table 2 shows that the minimum and maximum scores obtained from the sample on environmental ethics were 65 and 135 respectively. The observed mean score on environmental ethics was 111.23 with a standard deviation of 12.12.

Further looking at table 3 it is observed that 86.84% of the students have high environmental ethic scoring between 98 and above on the EES, 12.01% students have above average ethics scoring between 82 and 97, 1.12% students have average ethics scoring between 58 and 81, and 0% students have below average ethics and low ethics on the EES.

Objective 2: To find if there is any significant difference in environmental ethics of male and female students

H₀: There is no significant difference in environmental ethics of male and female higher secondary school students.

Table 4

Mean, SD and t-value of mean scores in environmental ethics of male and female students.

Sex	N	df	Mean	S.D	Computed t value	Table t value	Significance Level
Female	540	971	111.06	11.65	0.50	1.96	Not Significant
Male	433		111.44	12.70			

From table 4 above it is seen that the mean score of female sample is 111.06 with an SD of 11.65 and the mean score of male sample is 111.44 with an SD of 12.70. The calculated t-value between male and female higher secondary school students at 95% confidence level and 971 degree of freedom was calculated at 0.50. As the table value of 't' was found to be more than the calculated value of 't' at 5% level of significance with df 971 the difference between female and male students was found to be not significant. Thus the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference in environmental ethics of male and female higher secondary school students" is retained.

Objective 3: To find if there is any significant difference in environmental ethics of urban and rural students.

Ho: There is no significant difference in environmental ethics of urban and rural higher secondary school students.

Table 5:

Mean, SD and t-value of mean scores in environmental ethics of urban and rural students.

Region	N	df	Mean	S.D	Computed t value	Table t value	Significance level
Urban	708	971	111.76	12.38	2.33	1.96	Significant
Rural	265		109.80	11.32			at 0.05 level

From table 5 above it is seen that the mean score of urban sample is 111.76 with an SD of 12.38 and the mean score of rural sample is 109.80 with an SD of 11.32. The calculated t-value between urban and rural higher secondary school students at 95% confidence level and 971 degree of freedom was calculated at 2.33. As the table value 't' was found to be less than the calculated value of 't' at 5% level of significance with 971 df the difference between urban and rural students was found to be significant. Thus the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference in environmental ethics of urban and rural higher secondary school students" is rejected.

X. DISCUSSION

The present study found that majority (86.84%) of the students have high ethics, 12.01% of the students have above average environmental ethics, 1.12% of the students have average ethics and 0% of the students below average ethics and low ethics. This indicates that the highest number of students have high environmental ethics. This may be attributed to the culture and custom of the people in Meghalaya where since time immemorial people of this land have respected and revered mother-nature and this love and affection towards our environment has been passed on from generation to generation through folklore, stories, poems and songs. This finding is in line with the findings of Little Flower (2006) and Raju (2007) which found that the higher secondary school students possess a high level of environmental ethics.

It is seen from the analysis of the study data that there is no significant difference in environmental ethics between male and female higher secondary school students. This may be due to comparatively unbiased upbringing of a male and female child in Meghalaya. Children of both genders are given equal educational opportunities, taught the same values and moral ethics. Hence, there is no significant difference observed between girls and boys as regards environmental ethics. The finding contradicts with that of Little Flower (2006) which found that there is a significant difference between male and female higher secondary school students of Pondicherry. Further, Raju (2007) conducted a study on environmental ethics of higher secondary students of Cuddalore educational district and found that the female students had more environmental ethics than the male students. Again, Uitto, Juuti, Lavonen, Byman and Meisalo (2011) in a study on Secondary school students in Finland found that the Biocentric value of the female students was higher as compared to the male students.

The present study found that there is a significant difference in environmental ethics between urban and rural higher secondary school students. The urban higher secondary school students have higher environmental ethics as compared to the rural higher secondary school students. The probable reasons why urban higher secondary school students have higher environmental ethics as compared to the rural higher secondary school students may be because of their comparatively greater exposure to the various types of environmental problems such as contaminated drinking water, air pollution, noise pollution, soil pollutions, deforestation etc, which make them value the environment more as compared to the students from the rural areas who are still naïve, unaware and unexposed to a large extent to the various aspects of environmental pollution. This may perhaps be responsible for making the students from rural areas less concerned about the environment. The findings are comparable with that of Little Flower's (2006) which also found that there is a significant difference between urban and rural higher secondary school students of Pondicherry. A contradictory observation was however made by Raju (2007) who in his study found that the rural higher secondary students had more environmental ethics than the urban higher secondary students. Uitto, Juuti, Lavonen, Byman and Meisalo (2011) found that the effect of residential area was negligible on level of environmental ethics of students.

XI. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

- The present study was delimited only to the higher secondary school students in East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya. Further studies may be carried out with different sample group such as students studying in different levels / streams, teachers, student teacher, general population and other such sample stratification.
- Environmental ethics could be studied in relation to other variables like social status, academic discipline, intelligence, personality profile, family background and socio-economic status.

CONCLUSION

In the context of the degrading environmental situation across the globe, environmental ethics is the need of the hour. Environmental ethics – is the moral relationship of human beings with the environment. It concerns the do's and dont's for human beings towards the environment. It deals with ecological rights of all creatures present today as well as those that will follow on the earth.

The present study found that majority of the higher secondary school students in East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya have high environmental ethics and that there no impact of gender on the environmental ethics of the higher secondary school students. However, there is an impact of locale on the environmental ethics of the higher secondary school students.

Thought environmental ethics amongst the higher secondary school students of East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya is high; there is still a need to educate the impressionable youth about the environment and ways to conserve it.

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