

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS AND ROLE OF MEDIA IN ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT: A FEW POSSIBILITIES

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Abstract

Mass media is one of the most important factors underlying the knowledge of environmental problems. This can only be true on the conditions that first, mass media are accessible to large proportions of the population second, are spending some time on environmental issues and third, people are interested in information on ecological issues provided by the media so that they view or listen to the corresponding programs as well as read newspaper articles or other written publications dealing with environmental issues. Television, print news, radio broadcast, and the Internet are enlisted to help promote a "green" ethic and raise environmental awareness. Communication remains the most fundamental element of society and its progress. Therefore, the modern epoch of information technology - also known as the era of 'satellite communication' - necessitates mass media as part and parcel of human existence, experience, and endeavor. Through communication, members of a society share their experiences and knowledge, understand each other, and generate collective wisdom. The ever-expanding network of communication has overcome great distances and formidable boundaries. It has enabled the most essential and basic trait of human communication to thrive and flourish more splendidly. Today, various types of mass media enable people all over the world to interact and learn from each other at a tremendous pace. Communication, with the help of mass media, not only brings people but also communities together, thus contracting the globe into a village. The focus of present paper is to understand the environment concerns and to explore the role of media in environment management.

Keywords: *Environment, Mass Media and Environment Issues*

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INTRODUCTION

There is nothing beyond nature, behind nature and other than nature. Life doesn't occur in vacuum. Man is an integral part of the natural environment and owes his existence to wise use of resources for sustainable development. Today the delicate ecosystem of our planet is facing a danger of destruction on a scale as never before in the history of mankind. In the mad race for development man has been ruthlessly consuming natural resources and polluting the environment. Man's desire for ultimate joy and comfort has led him to exploit nature's "free" goods to the extent of reducing its natural capacity for self stabilization. As consequences of this out right disregard of the impact of their activities on the environment, numerous environmental problems have arisen. Many issues are high lighted in the news on various problem of environment-via human population growth, global climate change, worldwide loss of habitat and biodiversity, soil erosion, forest destruction, air and water pollution, shrinking of fossil fuel supply, accumulation of toxic wastes etc. Man, in his pursuit of ever faster economic growth, is upsetting the environmental equilibrium and destroying life support system.

Environment Management must regulate the demands and activities of man in such a way that the ability of environment to sustain future development remains unpaired. Efficient environment management is a pre-requisite for sustained economic development. The task of achieving or attaining sustainable development is tough for both the developed and the developing world. Sustainable development is not just an approach but an agenda or paradigm in itself. It is not only talks about development or environment; it also talks about equity, equality, justice and self dependency, all in a sustainable manner. The various approaches of defying sustainable development highlight that development should be holistic and not just fragmented. Education, health, employment, gender, sensitivity, social justice, self reliance, rule of law and good governance; all are integral components of sustainable development.

Environment and development are complementary and are, in fact, two sides of the same coin. Development is a process with no end point and with continually changing targets reaching further but never really satisfied. The aim of development is to increase the wellbeing of the people of the world, measured not only by an increased supply of goods and services, but by social and cultural indices as well. The rates and kinds of change in economic and social activities constitute the process of development. Environment can be thought of as the stock of physical or social resources available at a given time for the satisfaction of human needs. This stock can and does change overtime and the rates and kinds of changes are important dimensions of environmental concern. Therefore, environment management is very important only because most physical resources can't be increased very easily, and some not at all. Human actions range along a continue from enhancement of available resources to irreversible damage not repairable at any cost.

Rationale of Media in Environment

Mass media with its wide reach and influential capacity is a highly potential instrument for educating the public and there by change the people mindset, It has the power to transform the lives of people by empowering them in so many diverse ways. Information and knowledge from a variety of sources work towards this end. And it should play this role to the optimum. Media, the fourth pillar of democracy and an ever active whip to the society has an important duty to perform - to make people aware about impending danger or threats facing the society. Even the mass media have been playing their crucial roles at the times of peace and crises. Media due to its functional roles- information, education and to create awareness has become the centre stage of discussion and debates of various event or issues including environmental awareness.

The primary function of print media is to tell the truth. In a country like ours where press has the freedom, a lot is expected of the press in the area of environment education. The press must act as an educator of the people on environmental issues. Scores of new items and articles relating to environment, ecological balance, eco restoration and the popular support to these causes are too republished. Electronic media is a medium of great educative value influencing human life in various ways. The medium of audio-visual communication has a powerful appeal. Radio, Television and Internet are profitably used in education. In addition to magazines, periodicals, journals, websites, posters, etc. are equally important. These environmental media have a regular column taking up issues from time to time.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Peteden and Blicek(2006) emphasized on the importance of relationship between science-society- environment. His attempt is to raise the people both scientifically as well as environmentally. His emphasize is on the importance of values and feeling of concern for the environment that helps in achieving a balance between environmental protection and using nature for human needs. He stressed to find solution for the conservation of remaining environmental assets.

Fishman (2005) investigated the influences of an urban environment education program on student's awareness of local environment. The results suggested that consciously encouraging students to apply their environmental knowledge to their home environment may be an influential strategy to develop local environmental awareness. Reaching out to the public is essential to ensure sustainable development and environmental management, since the livelihood of people and the environment are symbiotically linked. To this end, the need for public awareness and participation has been regarded as imperative (Dey, 2002). Lyons and Breakwell(1994) discussed that it is important to study people as they are the ones who are affected by and would provide solutions to the environmental problems that are arising from their current activities.

Lowery and De Fleur (1988) argue that development, the process of modernization, and the growth of mass communication are closely linked. According to them, modernization is needed to trigger the culture of consumerism, which can be effectively achieved by the expansion of mass media communication. This is accompanied by a bandwagon of cultural change, creating a major shift from traditional values to modern ways of life. Thus, it may be possible to inculcate a predisposition towards environmentalism through mass media by cautiously paving a middle path between preservation of traditional values and resistance to wanton modernization as a result of exposure to pervasive forms of media such as TV. In an approach to create conservation education strategy in Nepal, the use of various forms of mass media, such as radio, television, newsletters, etc., has been highly recommended to reach out to the masses effectively in terms of cost, time and efficacy (Bhujju, 1987).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

As the title suggests, the prime aim of the present study is to know Environmental Concerns and Role of Media in Environment Management: A Few possibilities. However, in order to pursue this broad objective, some affiliated objectives have been identified which are given as follows:

- To study the meaning of environment.
- To know awareness about environmental problems.
- To assess the role of media in creating environment awareness. .
- To find out the sources of media in creating environment awareness.
- To find out the role of various programs on media, providing information about environment issues..
- To find out the environment issues which need special focus through media.

The study aims at testing the following hypotheses.

- H1: Age and Environment have no association.
- H2: Education and Role of Media in Environment awareness have no association

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on primary data, which has been collected through a multiple-choice and well structured questionnaire. Questionnaire has been filled through personal contact with respondents and has been conducted on people in the age group of 15 to 75 belonging to Rohtak city in Haryana. The questionnaire also contains some statements to which respondents have to give their level of agreement ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The number of respondents is 100, all from Rohtak city in Haryana. Since it is not possible to examine the entire universe, the researcher decided to design a representative sample. Stratified random sampling technique has been adopted to determine the universe. The study is descriptive in nature. For testing the hypothesis, Chi square test has been used.

Data Compilation Technique

To know the perception of respondents on programs providing information about environmental issue they were asked to evaluate on 1 to 6 point scale. All the factors were aggregated onto one factor by taking the weighted average of individual factors while percentage of behavior explained by individual factors is taken as weight. In this way, we have extracted the weight of all factors into one factor. Factor analysis is far the most often used multivariate technique of research studies, specially pertaining to solve problem relating to behavioral science. Factor analysis is most desirable technique to analyze inter-related variables of large number. It is a technique applicable when there is a systematic inter-dependence of observed variables and the researcher is more interested in finding which is more fundamental.

DATA ANALYSIS

The demographic description of the sample is given in Table 1

Table 1: Demographic Description of Samples

Age (years)	Education		Total
	Under Graduate	Graduate and Above	
15-35	18	12	30
36-55	16	20	36
56-75	12	22	34
Total	46	54	100

Out of 100 respondents 30, 36 and 34 respondents were in the age group of 15-35, 36-55, and 56-75 years respectively. On the basis of education, 46 and 54 respondents were under graduate and graduate and above respectively.

Table 2: Awareness and Meaning of Environment

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Awareness about Environment problem	Yes	96	96.0
	No	04	4.0
Role of media in environment awareness	Yes	82	82.0
	No	18	18.0
Meaning of environment	Earth, sky, plants, mountains, air, water nature concerned	20	20.0
	Whole Universe Things necessary for survival	25	25.0
	Grow more trees	41	41.0
	Home and Surrounding atmosphere	14	14.0

Table 2 shows responses to Awareness about environmental problems; and meaning of environment. Respondents were aware of environment problem and only very less in number were not aware of environment problem. About more than fourth-fifth respondents agreed on the role of media in environment awareness and only one-fifth respondents were of the view that media is not awakening environment issues. Two-fifth respondents understand the meaning of environment as earth, sky, plants, mountains, air, water, and nature concerned. Notably that seventy one per cent understand environment as growing more trees and remaining twelve per cent takes it as home and surrounding atmosphere.

Table 3: Sources of Environmental Information

Sources of Environmental Information	Frequency
Family members	10
Relatives	10
Friends	14
Neighbors	8
Peer groups	8
Doctors	4
NGOs	7
Scientist	5
Institute	20
Organization	4
No reply	1

Table 3 reveals that a source of information about environment, Institute was ranked the highest with one-fifth respondents which is followed by friends. Family members and relatives occupied the third place followed by neighbors and peer groups as a source of information about environment. NGO's took the next place followed scientists and doctors only one respondent gave no reply to the above query.

Table 4: Age and Awareness about Environment Problem

Age (years)	Awareness about Environment problem		Total
	Yes	No	
15-35	34	2	36
36-55	30	2	32
56-75	32	0	32
Total	96	4	100

(Chi-square (χ^2) = 6.3559, degree of freedom = 2, 5% level of significance, p-value = 5.991). The table value (p-Value) of χ^2 for 2 degree of freedom at 5 per cent level of significance is 5.991. The calculated value of χ^2 is greater (6.3559) than the table value and hence the hypothesis (H_1) gets rejected.

Table 5: Role of Media in Environment Awareness

Education	Role of media in Environment Awareness		Total
	Yes	No	
Under Graduate	43	3	46
Graduate and above	53	1	54
Total	96	4	100

(chi-square(x2)= 1.39, degree of freedom=1, 5 per cent level of significance, p-value=3.841). Since the table value(p-value) of x2 for 1 degree of freedom at 5 per cent level of significance is 3.841 which is higher than the calculated value of x2 and hence the hypothesis (H2) is accepted.

Table 6: Mass Media Exposure Environment Related Program

Mass Media (see/hear/read)	Print Media				Electronic Media		
	Posters	Newspaper	Magazines/ Journals	Books	Radio	T.V	Internet
Yes	65	74	67	66	75	82	72
No	15	12	13	14	16	8	18
Don't know	13	16	12	13	4	4	6
No reply	7	8	8	7	5	6	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Perusal of data in Table 6 reveals that print media and electronic media are seen /heard and read by respondents as on environmental issues. More than half of the respondents read environmental programs in print media like posters, newspapers, magazines /journals. Whereas fifteen, twelve, and thirteen respondents of posters, newspapers, magazines/journals, respectively have not read the environmental programs. At the same time a relatively less numbers of respondents have expressed that they don't know about the presence of such issues in print media and also a few respondents are not interested to answer this query. In case of electronic media like-Radio, T.V and Internet many of use these on environmental issues and only small number respondents have not heard and seen environmental issues on electronic media.

Table 7: Programs Providing Information about Environmental Issues

Programs	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Talks/discussion/ Ideas/Articles	54	14	12	10	10
Advertisements	74	12	4	5	5
News/Views/ Letter to editor	44	18	11	14	13
Music/Poems	44	22	10	16	8
Drama/serial/story	56	14	10	10	10
Posters	32	38	22	4	4
Hoarding	44	20	14	12	10
Banner	52	18	10	12	8
Wall writing	54	18	12	12	4
Pamphlet	64	22	4	5	5
Public meeting	40	13	3	40	4
Prayers	22	45	12	10	11
Speech	23	22	23	30	2
Exhibition	54	18	12	12	4
Cultural program	32	38	22	4	4
Agricultural programs	44	22	12	12	10
Interviews	32	22	22	12	12
Websites	12	42	21	22	3
Social sites	42	12	32	12	2
Business sites	44	16	22	8	10
	32	22	21	19	6

Data presented in Table 7 indicates the most liked environmental programmer by the residents of Rohtak city is advertisement by any media followed by wall writing. Nearly half of the respondents liked to see, hear and read the, programs like Speech, advertisement, wall writing, banner, hoarding, music and poems, talks/Ideas/discussion/articles on any media. A little less than one-half liked the programs like socialites, websites, cultural programs, pamphlet, posters letter to editor and news /views. The Exhibition, Agricultural programs, business sites, drama/serial/story, public meting and prayers were found to be least satisfied media. Interviews program on environmental issues were liked by mere respondents.

**Table 8: Media Role in Creating Awareness and Efforts
Required on Environmental Issues**

Environmental issues	Awareness (Frequency)	Focus (Frequency)
Pollution related (industrial, air, water noise, vehicle, soil, fuel misuse ,use of plastic)	25	36
Protection and plantation of trees	34	24
Save natural resources	12	10
Wild life animals	15	22
City cleanliness	14	8

The statistics presented in Table 8 reveal the awareness created by media and the special efforts to be made through media regarding environmental issues. The issue of protection and plantation of trees was mostly covered and the respondents got more information on it than other issues. Pollution occupied the next place with one-fourth respondents claiming it. Next in the row is to save the life of wild animals followed by city cleanliness and to save natural resources that the respondents got aware of through media. When asked about the special efforts to be made through media regarding environmental awareness pollution turned out to be the most important issues. More than one-fourth of the respondents suggested that media should put more emphasis on pollution related issues followed by plantation of trees and wild life animals by respondents.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Residents of Rohtak City are not adequately aware about what exactly environment means but partially understand it. The respondents are aware about the environment problems and even expressed that media is playing a very crucial role in creating awareness. Institutions are the prime source of information on environmental issues. Electronic media and print media both turned out to be the popular modes among respondents. Advertisement on environment issues was watched/heard/read more than various other programs. Protection and plantation of trees out numbered other issues that people got aware about other issues. The pollution is the most focused environment issue identified by the respondents in solving environment issues.

CONCLUSION

Majority of people are aware about the presence of environmental problem to the human and/or to nature. It is found that people are aware, willing and having a positive attitude towards environmental issues. It shows an urgency to solve the issues which are significant, tangible, dangerous and complex. People as an individual or in a group interested in solving environmental problems become urgent day by day. The concept like re-use, recycling and minimization of waste are the way to cope with the problem to sustainable growth. We all have responsibility towards environment problem. These problems can be solved to a large extent if people are fully involved. Individual, family, peer group, Institution, films, dramas, music, poems etc. should encourage and take their responsibility in solving environment problems. It is only then these problems can be solved. To follow the principle of 'Think globally, act locally will give a long way in solving the serious environment problem. People involvement in environment related awareness activities rather simply to memorization of concepts and generalizations will not do. The emphasis must be on concrete solution of the environment problems. The same study can be repeated with a large sample on different aspects. The experimental research can be conducted on this issue. This study can be broadened into the direction that can be linked with the green world.

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