

# ENVIRONMENT AWARENESS

*Environmental awareness means being aware of the natural environment and making choices that benefit the earth, rather than hurt it. Some of the ways to practice environmental awareness include: using safe and non-toxic building supplies, conserving energy and water, recycling, activism, and others.*

## ▪ **What is the importance of Environment Awareness?**

*Considering the growing environmental concerns, the need for environmental science as a subject was the need of the hour. Not only are we polluting the environment, but the degrading health of our planet that can only sustain life is something to ponder upon. Environmental science as an emerging discipline has been accounting for all those growing environmental concerns and in the awareness creation process. The awareness creation will help us understand the fragile state of our environment and the importance of its protection. It's the only means by which we can ensure our descendants a clean and healthy environment to live in. In order to do that we must have a thorough understanding of environmental issues that's been troubling mother Earth. It is also required that we stay up-to-date on various environmental news. Attending environmental seminars also serves as a very good option.*

*After we are environmentally aware it is our duty spread the word and take up measures to combat the issue. Here are some environmental issues that have been rapidly on the rise:-*

*Oil Drilling, Deforestation, Plastic pollution, Waste disposal, climate change and the list goes on and on.*

*Now that we are well versed in environmental issues we must use that knowledge by taking up suitable measures to limit those issues. Some of the things that we can do are-*

- 1. Using public transport and carpooling.*
- 2. Starting to compost and recycle waste.*
- 3. Using cleaner fuel that does no harm to the environment.*
- 4. Planting more and more trees.*

*The beneficial activities towards the environment are sure to promote sustainable development and a brighter future for the generations to come.*

*I feel that environmental awareness make us realize the pressing need to take immediate action to stop harming the environment and start restoring the damage we have done to it. Unless there is awareness, there is no action – or at least no proper action. And this action must start from the individual level and spread through the people and organizations we know.*

*Once we have a thorough understanding of the environmental issues such as deforestation, environmental pollution, water crisis, global warming and climate change, loss of biodiversity etc. every one of our actions will come out of a place of concern for our surroundings, out of love for mother nature, out of the willingness to contribute towards sustainable development and make a positive change in the world.*

*For example, according to the World Bank, roughly 163 million Indians lack access to safe drinking water, 210 million Indians lack access to improved sanitation, 21% of communicable diseases are linked to unsafe water and 500 children under the age of five die from diarrhea each day in India. More than half of the rivers in India are highly polluted with numerous others at levels considered unsafe by modern standards. The waters of the Yamuna, Ganga and Sabarmati flow the dirtiest with a deadly mix of pollutants, both hazardous and organic. Knowing these statistics will make us remember to turn off the sink while brushing our teeth, not to leave the bucket to fill unattended or not to just throw a glass of water into the basin to fill up 'new' water.*

*Another issue is that, a lot of us have not experienced the adverse effects of environmental degradation due to humans first-hand. For example, most of us who have the access to read this blog probably have not had to walk a mile in the scorching heat to fetch a bucket of water and walk a mile back home with the weight. In all probability, our crops have not perished totally due to the droughts this year. Our homes have not been cut down to fulfill some more advanced species' purpose. Our habitats are not melting into the sea, and the sea is not rising a foot higher and drowning our native island home. But we can feel the summer heat, due to global warming and climate change, right? It is affecting us too, and can destroy all life on Earth, no matter how long we turn on our ACs and worsen the condition even more, or get potable running water at the turn of a tap in our sinks and basins. Therefore, environmental awareness also has to do with empathy.*

*This environmental awakening must happen at the school level in the brain development stages of an individual, so that it remains as a fundamental learning and aspect that comes into every act of his. As one person acts out of such environmental consciousness, others around him also become aware and this goes on, ultimately making a great difference. One must also come in close contact with the natural*

environment which has become hard for us these days, to understand actually how closely we are all associated and how much we are dependent on it.

- **ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDE**

*Environmental attitudes are important because they often, but not always, determine behavior that either increases or decreases environmental quality. Traditionally, attitudes have cognitive, affective, and conative elements, but environmental attitudes might be better described as having preservation and utilization dimensions. Pro-environmental attitudes rise and fall with current events and vary with age, gender, socioeconomic status, nation, urban-rural residence, religion, politics, values, personality, experience, education, and environmental knowledge. Environmental education aims to improve environmental attitudes but has mixed results. The mass media have been both helpful and harmful. Two prominent theories for explaining environmental attitude-behavior relations are the theory of planned behavior and value-beliefs-norm theory, which offer the benefit of parsimony and the shortcoming of incompleteness. Researchers have, for example, suggested additions to the theory of planned behavior, noting that pro-environmental behaviors vary in their effort to complete, which influences the attitude-behavior relation, and that many barriers to behavior change exist.*

- **Environment Values**

*Every human being has a great variety of feelings for different aspects of his or her surroundings. True environmental values go beyond valuing a river for its water, a forest for its timber and NTFPs, or the sea for its fish. Environmental values are inherent in feelings that bring about sensitivity for preserving nature as a whole. This is a more spiritual, Eastern, traditional value. There are several writings and sayings in Indian thought that support the concept of the oneness of all creation, of respecting and valuing all the different components of nature. Value system has been altered with time and circumstances. With enormous numbers of people throwing away large quantities of non-degradable waste, it is damaging to the environment and value system must prevent all this through a strong environmental value education system. Pro-environmental actions must begin to move from the domain of individuals to that of a community. Environmental values must stress on the importance of preserving ancient structures. The characteristic architecture, sculpture, artworks and crafts of ancient cultures are invaluable environmental assets.*

*Valuing nature: We must learn to value and respect diverse human cultures. We have a great responsibility to protect life in all its glorious forms and must therefore respect the wilderness with all its living creatures. On one hand, we need to protect natural ecosystems; while on the other hand, we must protect the rights of local people. We must also attempt to restore degraded areas to their former natural ecological state. We*

*Valuing cultures: Every culture has a right to exist. Tribal people are frequently linked closely with nature and we have no right to disturb and disrupt their life. We need to appreciate that many ancient and tribal cultures have a wisdom and knowledge of their own environments that is based on a deep sense of respect for nature. Tribal have produced unique art forms, such as painting, sculpture and crafts, which are beautiful and can enrich living experiences for everyone. The world will be culturally impoverished if we lose this traditional knowledge.*

*Human heritage: The earth itself is a heritage left to us by our ancestors. Heritage preservation is now a growing environmental concern, because we have undervalued much of this heritage during the last several decades and is vanishing at an astonishing pace. Though we admire and value the Ajanta and Ellora Caves, Taj Mahal and environmentally-friendly colonial buildings, we have done little to actively preserve them. As environmentally-conscious individuals, we need to lobby for the protection of the wilderness and our glorious architectural heritage.*

*Equitable use of resources: The equitable use of resources is seen as an essential aspect of human well-being and must become a shared point of view among all socially and environmentally-conscious individuals. In spite of the great number of people in the more populous developing countries, the smaller number of people in the developed countries uses more resources and energy than those in the developing world. Similarly, the small number of rich people in poor countries whose per capita use of energy and resources, and the generation of waste based on the one-time use of disposable products leads to great pressures on the environment. We need to discourage this kind of consumption and need more sustainable lifestyles.*

*Common property resources: There are several commonly-owned resources that all of us use as a community. The water that nature recycles, the air that we all breathe, the forests and grasslands which maintain our climate and soil, are all common property resources. Managing local forests through village-level FPCs has shown that if people know that they can benefit from the forests, they will begin to protect them. This essentially means sharing the power to control forests between the Forest Department and the local people.*

- **Pro Environmental Behavior**
- Pro-environmental behaviors (PEBs), defined by Kollmuss & Agyeman (2002: 240) as “behavior that consciously seeks to minimize the negative impact of one’s actions on the natural and built world”, can be adopted in workplaces committed to effective workplace sustainability programs (WSPs). Implementing WSPs can lessen negative environmental impacts caused by company operations

by greening its operations; however, if PEBs adopted by employees engaged in WSPs become lifestyle habits beyond the workplace, workplaces could be critical forums for addressing environmental issues in the greater community. This case study investigates whether adopting PEBs in workplaces can lead to employees integrating these behaviors in their personal lives. The study provides an in-depth review of the WSPs of four companies based in Victoria, BC: Abe Books, Advanced Solutions, Archipelago Marine Research, and Smart Dolphins IT Solutions. Employee participation in each company's WSP is not mandatory; however, each company employs various strategies such as role modeling, empowerment, peer-to-peer learning, and incentives to encourage employee participation.

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- To investigate whether adopting behaviors at work can transfer to the everyday lives of employees, this case study used Bem's Self-Perception Theory (1972). Bem's theory explains that people identify their beliefs and attitudes based on the behaviors they perform. In accordance with this theory, if employees are induced or strongly encouraged to engage in PEBs in the workplace, they may alter their everyday beliefs and behaviors to align with the PEBs they perform in their work lives. In this manner, workplaces potentially can act as important leverage points for government and NGOs in changing development pathways to more sustainable transitions.

## ▪ **Barriers to pro-environmental behaviour**

Pro-environmental behavior is behavior that a person consciously chooses in order to minimize the negative impact of their actions on the environment.[1] Barriers to pro-environmental behavior are the numerous factors that hinder individuals when they try to adjust their behaviors toward living more sustainable lifestyles.

Generally, these barriers can be separated into larger categories: psychological, social/cultural, financial and structural. Psychological barriers are considered internal, where an individuals' knowledge, beliefs and thoughts affect their behavior. Social and cultural barriers are contextual, where an individual's behavior is affected by their surroundings (e.g. neighborhood, town, city, etc.). Financial barriers are simply a lack of funds to move toward more sustainable behavior (e.g. new technologies, electric cars). Structural barriers are external and often impossible for an individual to control, such as lack of governmental action, or locality of residence that promotes car use as opposed to public transit.