



THE ISSUE OF GLOBAL WARMING : A STUDY ON HOUSEWIVES IN PATNA DISTRICT, BIHAR

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, global warming has emerged as a great threat to the environment. Human beings play a vital role in contributing to global warming through various intentional and unintentional means ; the women folks and housewives also play an equally important role in triggering the mechanism leading to global warming in various ways. The present study has aimed at assessing the awareness/knowledge level of a group of housewives of Patna City, hailing from different educational and occupational background on global warming; an attempt has also been made to hasten their awareness towards climate change that would certainly have some positive influence on global warming. It was found that mass media played a major role in creating awareness among women/housewives; the common domestic factors like use of plastics, unregulated use of air-coolers, refrigerators along with open-drainage system, overcrowding etc. could be avoided or controlled to minimize the adverse effects on global warming. Therefore, there is a need to enhance the awareness/knowledge level of housewives to play a more significant role in influencing the community and effectively managing the menace of global warming.

In recent years, global warming has become a big challenge to the world community and the scientific society as a whole. It is a universal problem associated with an abnormal increase in the level of temperature of the earth and its atmosphere. The global average temperature near Earth's surface has risen by $0.74 \pm 0.18^{\circ}\text{C}$ during the last 100-years. The Inter-governmental panel on climate change in its climate models has projected that the global surface temperature is likely to increase by 1.1 to 6.4°C between 1990-2100 (Pondve H, 2007). The world's climatic condition is fundamental to support life on this planet and anthropogenic activities are altering the world's climate by increasing the atmospheric concentration of green house gases that lead to detrimental and deleterious effects. Overall, climatic change is projected to increase threats to human health, predominantly within tropical and sub-tropical countries. Climatic changes can affect the human health directly through weather extremes and indirectly through changes in the ranges of disease vectors, water-borne pathogens, epidemics-outbreak, changes in water, air and food quality. Climatic changes triggered by global warming can bring in their wake extreme conditions like storms, drought and floods and can prove a great threat to life (Haines A and Pat JA, 2002 and 2004).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study has been carried out in Khajpura locality of Patna township, Bihar on a total of 160 women, mainly spending time as home-makers/housewives and consented upon to respond critically. They were selected randomly with the purpose clearly explained to them in the beginning. A pre-tested and semi-structured proforma was developed to collect informations and was distributed to all selected women/housewives to answer to the questions. The proforma consisted of questions related to socio-economic particulars, awareness/knowledge about climate change/Global warming, common causes and consequences, means of mitigating the effects and suggestions for overcoming the outcomes. The data were presented as frequency distribution with appropriate percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results were given in Table1-4. The housewives were ranging from 25-55 years of ages, with good educational levels, i.e. Intermediate and above to the level of master's degree, having good number of science and professional backgrounds. The educational background reflected well on their awareness/knowledge level about climate changes and global warming perspectives. As high as 86 %

Table-1 : Distribution of Housewives (HW) according to age.

Age	Housewives	
	Nos.	%
25-35	37	23.12
36-45	42	26.25
46-55	48	30.00

Table-2 : Distribution of HW according to education.

Education		Housewives	
		Nos.	%
1.	Intermediate	62	38.75
2.	Graduation	60	37.50
3.	Ph & above	38	23.75
	Total	160	100.00

Table-3 : Distribution of HW according to type of education.

Education		Housewives	
		Nos.	%
1.	Arts	64	40.00
2.	Science	56	35.00
3.	Commerce	22	13.75
4.	Professional	18	11.25
5.	School Teacher/ Designers/beautician etc.		
	Total	160	100.00

housewives were very familiar and heard of the subject of global warming, with maximum % of informations (32.50%) gained from media followed by friends/relatives and their own experiences over the years. According to their perspectives, a number of factors were responsible for causing global warming such as deforestation, industrialization, increasing number of population, over-crowding, motor vehicles, domestic use of plastics/synthetic materials, open waste disposal systems within and adjacent to the township. The home appliances such as large number of air-coolers at homes, refrigerators, chimney stoves etc. were producing pollutions to the environment leading to global warming. The extreme weather events like heat/cold waves, droughts, floods, infections and diseases in plants, animals as well as human beings have been the adverse effects of global warming. But, they were also of the opinion that awareness among common public was yet to be created at large to mitigate the harmful effects of spreading pollution in the environment in which they were subjected to live. Hence, mass education through public awareness camps, imposing laws/bans on the use of harmful household articles – plastic bags, plastic bottles etc.

and Government's initiatives to control the preventable activities like open waste disposal, overcrowding, deforestation etc. were the suggested measures towards effectively handling the menace of global warming for days to come.

CONCLUSIONS

The study revealed that the level of knowledge about global warming among housewives was satisfactory. They were also well comprehended regarding the serious nature of the problem and the need to control it. To further improve the existing knowledge and attitude, it was felt imperative to expose the housewives for further knowledge gain through various public awareness camps and mass-media programmes, because they could be proved as valuable assets in enhancing the awareness of the entire family including children in the scenario of global warming. This could finally lead to community awareness, which is as important as anything else in playing a vital role towards mitigating the effects of global warming in days to come.

Table-4 : Awareness/knowledge of HW awareness regarding Global Warming Awareness/knowledge.

(A) Familiarity of the topic		Housewives	
		Nos.	%
(a)	Very familiar	44	27.50
(b)	Heard of it	84	58.75
(c)	not heard at all	22	13.75
	Total	160	100.00
(B) Source of Information			
(a)	Media	52	32.50
(b)	Friends & relatives	38	23.75
(c)	Own experience	29	18.13
(d)	All the above	41	25.62
	Total	160	100.00
(C) Weather changes Observed in last 05 years			
	Yes	160	100
	No	-	-
	Total	160	100.00
(D) Common causes of Global Warming			
Causes		Nos.	%
Deforestation		16	10.00
Industrialization		18	11.25
More Vehicles		27	16.88
Overcrowding/population		32	20.00
Use of More Plastic/Synthetic materials		28	17.50
Open system of waste disposal		18	11.25
All of the above		21	13.12
Total		160	100.00
(E) Contribution of home appliances for Global Warming			
Home appliances/items		Nos.	%
Air conditioners		12	07.50
Refrigerators		15	9.38
Plastic bags		63	39.37
Chimney stoves		25	15.63
Open Nala/Drainage		45	28.12
Total		160	100.00
(F) Common effects of Global Warming			
		Nos.	%
Extreme weather		82	51.25
Flood		22	13.75
Drought		34	21.25
Diseases		22	13.75
All of the above		160	100.00
(G) Remedy of Global Warming			
		%	
Improving laws/use of harmful households things		25.00	
Public Awareness Camp		48.75	
Government Initiatives		26.25	
All of the above		100.00	

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