

A Study of the Awareness of Environmental Sanitation Among Women

B.R. Leelavathi¹, Prof. P. Adinarayana Reddy²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Adult Education, S.V. University, Tirupati-517502

²Former Director, Department of Adult Education, S.V. University, Tirupati-517502

Abstract

Environmental Sanitation promotes the health and wellbeing of the Humanity. It has many components, out of which the cleanliness, Health and Hygiene, drinking water and sewage and its disposal plays an important role in environmental sanitation. Promotion of environmental sanitation depends on the awareness possessed by the stakeholders and women in particular as they are directly involved in safeguarding it. In view of the above, the present study was conceived to understand the characteristics of self-help group women and to find out the awareness of the women in environmental sanitation in terms of cleanliness, hygiene, drinking water and sewage and its disposal. The study was conducted in the Ananthapuram District of Andhra Pradesh on a sample of 400 women. The investigator has designed an open ended schedule to identify the awareness of the women. The finding of the study revealed that the sample are represented from middle aged, Backward castes, married, low educated, with two children. The house hold head are male, married, low educated. The family background shows that more than half of the sample has 3-4 members in their family, middle income, nuclear families, wage earners, and have their own house with two rooms, half of the sample are aware of the purification of water and quantity of water to be taken per day. The knowledge in self-hygiene among the sample was found to be significant in case of utility of soap, cleaning of hands, best habits of bath etc. On the other hand, the sample does not have adequate knowledge in case of place and cleaning of hands, frequency of bath. The women are well aware about keeping the surrounding cleanly to avoid the bad smell and pollution, disposal of garbage, mosquito breeding due to storage of sewage, effect of sewage on village health, disposal of household garbage, keeping the lid on the solid waste storage pit, disposal of waste water to prevent the mosquitoes breeding etc. Hence there is a need to promote awareness among the community in the area where there is a need and should convert the awareness to healthy habits.

Keywords: Environmental Sanitation, Cleanliness, Hygiene, Drinking Water And Sewage And Its Disposal-

The pace of the development of any community or nation depends on its human resources. The quality of human resources depends on the education, competencies and health of its population. The status of education, competencies, and abilities of the population also depends on the population's health status. In view of this, it was rightly said that the population's health is the nation's wealth. India is one of the most populous countries in the world with a majority of its population are younger in age group. Half of its population of women, three-fourths of them live in rural areas, one-third of them are illiterates, and around 5% of them live below the poverty line. It has a very big educational network with 1113 universities and 43796 colleges. In spite of these achievements, the status of women in the India is marginal in all spheres of the society.

Women have primary responsibility of management of household water supply and health. They are involved in food production and preparation, care of domestic animals, personal hygiene, care of the sick, cleaning and washing, and waste disposal (U.N. WATER-2006). In many countries, school attendance by girls is lower and dropout rates are significantly higher in schools that have low access to safe water and no separate toilet facilities for boys and girls (SIDA, 2016). Women's participation in maintaining environmental sanitation depends on their attitude. Further attitude development also depends on their knowledge or awareness. Bad environmental sanitation affects the health of the people and quality of the human resources.

A survey by water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in India (2008) estimated that with regards to sanitation most of India's population (69%) did not use improved sanitation. In rural parts of India, 79% of the population used unimproved sanitation facilities. Over 50% of India's population defecated in the open field. The majority (88%) of the population in India had access to improved sources of drinking water. One-fourth of the population has water availability in their household premises. The majority (87%) of women used to collect water. Most (67%) of Indian household do not treat drinking water in any form. Hand washing with soap and water was practiced by 53% after defecation, 38% before eating, and 30% before preparing food. The report showed that most (80%) of the child's stool was not disposed of safely. The study stressed the importance of maintaining good sanitation facilities and develops hygienic practices.

The Hindu newspaper reported that out of 2.26 lakh rural households, almost seven and half lakh (7,758) households in Udipi Taluk, 13,395 households in Kundapura Taluk, and 4,084 household in Kerala Taluk do not have toilets. The survey stressed on the importance of toilet. Deshpande K., Kakkar R. and Diwan V reported that the majority (84%) of households did not have water sources within their household area. Most of the females in the household (58%) spent 1 hour 25 minutes to collect water from a stored vessel. Almost all (100%) practiced filtering water by cloth or plastic sieve. The study concluded that people were not aware of water purification. In other words, the women who are aware on the aspects like cleanliness, hygiene, drinking water and sewage and sewage disposal will be able to maintain environmental sanitation. The above clearly highlights that the women who are the custodians and caretakers of the health in the families should be accessed to adequate health facilities and awareness to make use of them. Hence, there is a need to create awareness among them about environmental sanitation and its effect on their family. In order to provide that there is a need to assess the extent of awareness possessed by the women in selected areas of environmental sanitation.

In view of the above an effort has been made to review the literature and the studies conducted in the area of environmental sanitation and the survey of studies indicates that a studies have been undertaken in areas such as environmental health, environmental knowledge, sanitation and sanitary practices mostly in terms of KAP studies on various issues such as Reshma, Mamatha, Pai and Manjula (2016), Mohd R, Malik (2017), Rima Kumari Sah, Prem Kumar Sah, Jitendra Kumar Sah, Sudip Chiluwal, Sanjeev Kumar Shah (2017), Sangita Singh (2019), Anita Dewi Moelyaningrum (2019), Almasi, A., Mohammadi, M., Azizi, A., Berizi, Z., Shamsi, K., Shahbazi, A. and Mosavi, S.A. (2019), Godfred Safo Adu, Ruby Hanson (2019), Khushbu Yadav, Basant Kumar Yadav, Satyam Prakash (2020), Seth Senyo Osafo, Nelson Kojo Brany, Wisdom Kwaku Yegbe (2020), Maria Zakria, Sumaira Raiz, Muhammad Afzal and Syed Amir Gilani Abdul Majad (2021), Sushma Katkuri (2021), Muiz Uddin Ahmed Choudhury, Monowar Ahmad Tarafdar, Md. Abdul Majid Miah, Shila Rani Das, Tonim Amir Haque, Syed Shawkat Ahmed (2021), Manisha B Sinha, Surabhi Sahay (2023), Raza R, Khan R, Ahmed F, Urooj S, Khan N, Chishti DK

(2023), The review of the literature shows that not many attempts have been made to study women's awareness in different aspects of environmental sanitation. Hence present study was taken up to understand the level of awareness possessed by the women in environmental sanitation. The specific objectives of the study are as follows

Objective of the study

1. To identify the profile of the women participating in the Self-Help Groups
2. To study the awareness among the women on environmental sanitation in the areas of Cleanliness, Self- Hygiene, Drinking water, Sewage and Sewage Disposal.

Methodology

The study was conducted in the Ananthapuram District of Andhra Pradesh. The district was divided into 3 Revenue Divisions viz., Ananthapuramu, Gunthakal, and Kalyanadurg, which are further subdivided into 32 Mandals. There are about 36 thousands of Self Help Groups in the district. For the present study, a random sampling method was adopted for the selection of the sample. Out of 32 mandals, 10 mandals, 10 Self-help Groups from each mandal and 4 members from each group were drawn randomly. Thus, the sample of the study includes 400 women self-help members.

Research Tools

The present study aims to study the personal profiles and awareness towards Environmental Sanitation with special reference to Cleanliness, Self- Hygiene, Drinking water, Sewage and Sewage Disposal among the Self-Help Group women. As there are no readily available standardized tools, the investigator developed a tool consisting of two sections. section I is designed to identify the personal background of the sample. The part II is intended to identify the awareness of the sample towards Environmental Sanitation. The items were drawn from the review of the literature and supplemented from the sample of the study. Initial there were 50 items. The list was submitted to a panel of five experts to review the items. The panel has deleted 5 items and suggested to include a simple check list of yes or no to know their awareness. The items were classified into 4 groups i.e., Cleanliness (11), Self- Hygiene (12), Drinking water (9), Sewage and Sewage Disposal (13). The sample has to go through the knowledge items and should indicate their awareness with yes or no.

Data Collection and Analysis

Before administering the research tool, the investigator contacted the mandal level officials, taken their permission and help to contact the selected sample for collecting the data. The schedule thus prepared was administered to the selected sample individually. The data thus collected from the women representing self-help groups had been pooled and percentages were calculated for all the items and arranged them in descending order in the all the areas and interpreted.

Section- I: Personal characteristics of the sample

The selected sample were categorized into different groups based on their personal characteristics viz., Age, Caste, Education, Marital status, No of children. The background of the household head, and Family back ground of the sample to prepare the profile of the women participating in the self-help groups were used to segregated the sample. The findings of the classification shows that 34.8% were in the age group

of 31-40 years followed by 41-50 years and >51 with 27% each and 11% with less than 30 years. The overall trend shows that majority of the sample were from middle aged (31-40). The Caste wise classification shows that majority of the sample represented from Backward communities (57.5%) followed by SC & ST and OC groups with 24% and 18.5% respectively. The sample based on education shows that they were illiterates(41%), approximately an equal number of them(23%) have attended five years schooling and 6 to 10 years of schooling, intermediate (8%) and graduates (4%). The marital status of the sample revealed that all the sample are married except one and 8.10 % of them were widows. Further 39.8% them have two children, one child (35%),no children(12.50%) and three and more children(11.80%).

The background of the household head indicates that one third (33%) of them were in the age group of 41-50 years followed by 51-60 years (30.2%),31-40 years (27%), 6.85% above 61 years and only 2.25% of them were younger age group (less than 30 years). The gender of the head of the family revealed that majority of the households were headed by the male (90%) and only 10% females. The marital status shows that 91% were married and only 0.2% of the sample were unmarried and 8.8% were widows. The education of the head of the household shows that 35.50% of them were illiterate and 64.50% were literate. Under the literate group, 20.75% were studied 6th to 10th class and 18.75% with intermediate, 11.70% of the household heads completed their graduation and above. Contrary to this,13.25% were low educated. The family background of the sample shows that the number of members in a family shows that 4 members (37.8%) followed by 3 members (28%),2 members (18.8%), 5 members (10.2%), one member (3.5%) and 6 members (1.8%) in the family. The occupation wise more than half of them were daily wage earners (53.50%), Private employees (78%) and agriculturist (76%) respectively and 8% of them depends on business. The type of residence shows that 93.50% were having their own houses and 6.50% of them in rented accommodation. Income point of view 4 % of them were from low income group(<Rs.50,000. PA) and majority of them were middle income groups (Rs.50,001 -1,00,000/-) and 11.8% of them are from high income groups (above one lakh). The size of the accommodation shows that it is ranged between one to five rooms. Majority of the families (89.5%) having two rooms and smaller proportion of the families possessed 3 and more than 5 rooms i.e. 4.2% and 3.5% respectively. Further only 2% of them were having 4 rooms.

Section-II: Knowledge on Environmental Sanitation

The Environmental sanitation safeguards the health of the humanity and importance was given to the environment at various intervals of the history and by different sections of the society. The women are the custodians of environmental sanitation and is guarded at the community and at domestic levels. The extent of preservation of the environmental sanitation at the domestic sector depends on the women. Further the health of the family depends on the sanitary conditions at the home and at the community. Realizing the importance of the environmental sanitation, invisible efforts have been made in the community to create awareness among the various stakeholders to preserve and maintain it at the family and community level. Among the various stakeholders' women comes in forefront

The success of any developmental initiatives and welfare programs largely depends upon the participation of the stakeholders for whom these were designed. The extent of the participation is also governed by the knowledge about the area and facilities available to them. Keeping this in the background an attempt has been made in this section to identify the knowledge of the beneficiaries on environmental sanitation. In order to understand in a better way, the environmental sanitation has been classified into four areas viz

cleanliness, self-hygiene, drinking water, sewage, and sewage disposal. The area wise findings relating to the knowledge of the sample were presented below.

Cleanliness

The area of cleanliness has 11 items indicating the knowledge of the respondents in the area. Each item was presented with two alternatives as yes and no indicating the respondent's acceptance for the item. The results of the item-wise awareness shows that the respondents are well aware of the need for cleaning their hands after defecation, keeping the toilets inside the house, cleaning the house, healthy habit of urination, flushing out the toilets, utility of community toilets, governmental support for sanitation, effects of defecating outside, cleaning of the urination of the children, awareness of the Swachh Bharath, effect of the urination outside etc. It is understood from this that the sample are well aware about the various aspects of the cleanliness as part of environmental sanitation.

Table No.1.Awarness in the area of Cleanliness

S.No	Item	N	%
1.	Clean the hands after defecation	365	96.20
2	The toilets should be kept outside the house to avoid bad smell	383	95.80
3	Bad smell can be eliminated by cleaning of the toilet daily	361	95.20
4	Not to urinate outside is healthy	372	93.00
5	Healthier to flush out toilet waste into a septic tank.	366	91.50
6	Community toilets keep the environment clean	363	90.80
7	The government is supporting the construction of toilets	339	90.00
8	Good to defecate outdoors for everyone	322	80.50
9	One can wipe out the urination of small children at any place	203	50.80
10	Aware of the Objectives of Swachhaa Bharath Programme	197	49.20
11	Outdoor urination does not spread infections	40	10.00

Self-Hygiene

Self-hygiene is the healthy practice one should adopt to overcome future health problems. To maintain good health, one should clean their hands before eating, takes regular bath and use the tissue to clean their hands etc. The practice of self-hygiene helps a person to avoid future health complications. The knowledge of the self-hygiene plays an important role in practicing it in their day-to-day life. In the light of the above, an attempt has been made to understand the awareness possessed by the sample in the area of self- hygiene. The responses provided was found to be significant in case of utility of soap, cleaning of hands, best habits of bath etc. On the other hand, the sample does not have adequate knowledge in case of place and cleaning of hands, frequency of bath. Hence the health administrators should take steps to promote health awareness among the community and women in particular to lead a healthy life.

Table.2. Knowledge in the self-hygiene

S.NO	ITEM	N	%
1	Utility of soap	398	99.50
2	Better place for bath	386	96.50

3	Bath is to keep the body clean	386	96.50
4	Clean clothing after bath	374	93.50
5	When to clean the teeth	298	74.5
6	Benefits of teeth cleaning	274	68.50
7	Uses of soap	266	66.50
8	When hands should be cleaned	227	56.70
9	Method of cleaning hands	168	42.00
10	Use of brush for cleaning the teeth.	156	39.00
11	Place of cleaning hands	117	29.20
12	Frequency of bath	29	7.20

Drinking Water

The clean drinking water helps to overcome a number of contiguous diseases. Promoting healthy drinking habits requires not only supplying potable drinking water but also require to create awareness about the need for healthy drinking water. The provision of potable water may not serve the purpose if the target is not aware about the use of pure drinking water. Hence an attempt was made to study the awareness of the sample in the drinking water through selected items. The awareness in the drinking water among the sample are presented in the table shows that more than half of the sample are aware of the purification of water and quantity of water to be taken per day, type of vessel to be used for drinking water (46.20), need for healthy water for drinking (40.80), source of water where ever there is no tap (36.50) and source of pollution (26.80) etc. Only less than one-fifth of the sample are aware of cleaning of water containers, storing of water and source of water. In other words, more than 80% of the sample were not aware about the above. Hence, it is necessary to provide the awarness on the above to the women. The level of awareness of the women in drinking water reveals that they need further awareness on the filtering of the water, storage and cleaning of the water containers and sources of pollution of the drinking water. In order to promote the awareness, there is a need to organize water awareness programmes for the benefit of the women specially living in the rural areas.

Table :3. Knowledge in Drinking Water

S NO	Item	N	%
1	Purification of the water	234	58.50
2	Quantity of water to be taken per day	205	51.20
3	Vessel to drink fresh water	185	46.20
4	Need for healthy water for drinking	163	40.80
5	Source of water, If there is no tap	146	36.50
6	Source of pollution	107	26.80
7	Cleaning of fresh water storage containers	85	21.20
8	Storing of water	75	18.80
9	Filtering of the water	31	7.80

Sewage and sewage disposal

Disposal and waste water generated at the domestic and community level commonly known as sewage

and it has to be disposed of systematically or otherwise it will become a breeding ground for the mosquitoes and leads to health hazard. The common way of disposal of sewage is through drainage system and the collecting through dustbins. The community should be aware about the types and source of sewage, the methods adopted for disposal of sewage so as to make use of the existing system to keep the environment clean and healthy. In view of its importance, the knowledge of the women on sewage and sewage disposal was collected.

Table :4. Knowledge on Sewage & Sewage

S.NO	Item	N	%
1	keep the clean surroundings to avoid bad smell and pollution	398	99.50
2	Disposal of garbage on regular basis to keep the house clean	390	97.50
3	Role of Sewage storage for mosquito breeding	369	92.20
4	Effects of sewage on the village health	350	87.50
5	Disposal of household waste	285	71.20
6	Need to place the lid on the solid garbage pit	233	58.20
7	Responsibility of cleaning the drain	219	54.80
8	Disposal of Waste water to avoid the pollution and bad odor	202	50.50
9	Usage of Domestic Sewage for plantation	200	50.00
10	Prevention of infections	174	43.50
11	Stroage of solid waste	165	41.20
12	Frequency of cleaning the drainage to prevent mosquitoes	113	28.20
13	Better place to dispose the household sewage	98	24.50

The findings presented in the above table shows that more than half of the women were not aware about the prevention of infections, stage of solid waste, need for the cleaning of the drainages regularly to prevent the mosquitoes and better place to dispose the house hold sewages etc. On the other hand, the women are well aware about keeping the surrounding cleanly to avoid the bad smell and pollution, disposal of garbage, mosquito breeding due to storage of sewage, effect of sewage on village health, disposal of household garbage, keeping the lid on the solid waste storage pit, disposable of waste water to prevent the mosquitoes breeding etc. In view of the above there is need to promote awareness among the women through special drives on the sewage and sewage disposable to maintain the good environmental sanitation. Hence the authorities should take the note of the above and inculcate the awareness on the above among the women.

Conclusion

The representation of the sample shows that majority of the women have been from age group 31-40 years, and 27% of each from 41-50 and above 51 years. In other words, 90% of the sample were above 31 years. Further, samples from Backward caste, low educated, Married, and having one to two children were represented in the sample. The background of the household head shows that the majority of them are above 31 years, male and low educated. The family background shows that more than half of the sample has 3-4 members in their family, middle income, nuclear families, wage earners, and have their own house with two rooms, half of the sample are aware of the purification of water and quantity of water to be taken per day. The

awareness in self-hygiene e was found to be significant in case of utility of soap, cleaning of hands, best habits of bath etc. The sample does not have adequate knowledge in case of place and cleaning of hands and frequency of bath. The women are well aware about keeping the surrounding cleanly to avoid the bad smell and pollution, disposal of garbage, mosquito breeding due to storage of sewage, effect of sewage on village health, disposal of household garbage, keeping the lid on the solid waste storage pit, disposable of waste water to prevent the mosquitoes breeding etc. Hence there is a need to promote awareness among the community in the area where there is a need and should convert the awareness into healthy habits.

References

1. Reshma, Mamatha S, pai and Manjula (2016), A Descriptive study to assess the Knowledge and Practice regarding Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene among women in the Selected village of Udipi District, NIHE University journal of Health Science, March 2016 Vol,6, No.1, pp.21-27.
2. Mohd R, Malik I (2017) Sanitation and Hygiene Knowledge, Attitude and Practices in Urban Setting of Bangalore: A Cross Sectional Study. J Community Med Health Educ 7: 540.
3. Rima Kumari Sah, Prem Kumar Sah, Jitendra Kumar Sah, Sudip Chiluwal, Sanjeev Kumar Shah (2017). Assesment of the knowledge, Attitude and Practices regarding water sanitation and mother of under five children in rural household of Saphthagiri District, Nepal, American Journal of Public Health Research,2017, vol.5, no5, pp.163-169.
4. Sangita Singh (2019), A Study to assess the Knowledge and Attitude of women regarding household waste management in Urban population of Patna, Int. J. Nur. Edu. and Research.2019; vol. 7(3). 318-324.
5. Anita Dewi Moelyaningrum (2019), Women and Household Waste Management: Knowledge, Attitude, Practice and Economical Perception International Journal of Advances in Social and Economics (IJASE) 2019, Vol 1, No 5 PP---
6. Almasi, A., Mohammadi, M., Azizi, A., Berizi, Z., Shamsi, K., Shahbazi, A. and Mosavi. S.A. (2019) Assessing the Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of the Kermanshah Women towards Reducing, Recycling and Reusing of Municipal Solid Waste. Resources, Conservation and Recycling, 141329-338.
7. Godfred Safo Adu, Ruby Hanson (2019) Practices and Knowledge about Environmental Sanitation and Hygiene Among Urban Dwellers in Gomoa East District, Ghana, European Journal of Earth and Environment. January 2019, Vol.6, No. 1, pp 1-11.
8. Khushbu Yadav, Basant Kumar Yadav, Satyam Prakash (2020) Knowledge, Attitude and Practice on Hygiene and Sanitation among population of selected districts in Province No. 2, Nepal South East Asia j. med. sci. 2020, vol.4 (4) pp.1-9.
9. Seth Senyo Osafo, Nelson Kojo Brany, Wisdom Kwaku Yegbe (2020), Attitude of Traders towards Environmental Sanitation In Ghanaian Market Case a Study of Hohoe Main Market. American Journal of Environmental Protection,2020, Vol.8, No. 2, PP.58-69.
10. Maria Zakria, Sumaira Raiz, Muhammad Afzal and Syed Amir Gilani Abdul Majad (2021), To Assessed The Knowledge, Attitude And Practices Of Water Sanitation and Hygiene in the Community, International Journal of Medical Science, Engineering and Technology: A Refereed Research Journal Vol 10 / No 1 / Jan-Jun 2021, pp. 2319-8958.
11. Sushma Katkuri (2021), Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices on Sanitation, Water, and Hygiene among mothers of under five children in rural area A cross-sectional study, Journal of Health Sciences,

April-June 2021, Volume .9, Issue 2, pp.51-55.

12. Muiz Uddin Ahmed Choudhury, Monowar Ahmad Tarafdar, Md. Abdul Mojib Miah, Shila Rani Das, Tonim Amir Haque, Syed Shawkat Ahmed (2021). Study on Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Personal Hygiene among selected rural people, Volume 2, Number 1, January 2020, pp.1-15.
13. Manisha B Sinha, Surabhi Sahay (2023), Health and Hygiene in pubertal girls of Chhattisgarh: Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices, Indian Journal of Clinical Anatomy and Physiology, 2023 vol,10(1),pp.32–36.
14. Raza R, Khan R, Ahmed F, Urooj S, Khan N, Chishti DK (2023), A study to assess the Knowledge and Practice regarding Sanitation and Hygiene among women in parts of Delhi, India Journal of Drug Delivery and Therapeutics. 2023; 13(9):28-32