CHAPTER-II

REVIEWOFRELATED LITERATURE

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2.1.0 INTRODUCTION

The growing concern over environmental degradation and climate change has led to a renewed emphasis on environmental education globally. Middle school, a critical phase in a child's development, represents a prime opportunity to cultivate environmental awareness and positive attitudes that can influence behaviour over a lifetime. Both students and teachers play integral roles in this educational process, making it essential to study their environmental awareness and attitudes. Understanding how these stakeholders perceive environmental issues, and the factors that influence their attitudes, can offer valuable insights for policy development, curriculum planning, and pedagogical strategies. This literature review explores key research studies, theoretical perspectives, and trends related to environmental awareness and attitudes among middle school students and teachers.

2.2.0 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Environmental education (EE) is more than just the dissemination of facts; it is a holistic learning approach that fosters environmental literacy—defined by **Roth (1992)** as the ability to understand environmental issues and take informed action. **Hungerford and Volk (1990)** outline three dimensions of environmental literacy: knowledge, attitude, and behaviour. These dimensions form the backbone of many studies on environmental awareness and attitudes. Moreover, **Ajzen's (1991)** Theory of Planned Behaviour provides a useful lens to examine how attitudes towards the environment may influence behavioural intentions and actions.

2.3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND ATTITUDES AMONG STUDENTS

Research consistently indicates varying levels of environmental awareness and attitudes among school students. According to **Bradley, Waliczek, and Zajicek (1999)**, middle school students who engage in hands-on environmental activities—such as school gardening and recycling projects—tend to exhibit greater

environmental concern and knowledge. Similarly, **Erdogan (2009)** found that experiential learning positively influences environmental attitudes among students, particularly when integrated into the formal school curriculum.

A study by **Tuncer et al. (2005)** in Turkey assessed the environmental attitudes and behaviours of primary school students and revealed that students generally showed positive attitudes but had moderate knowledge levels. The gap between awareness and action was attributed to insufficient practical exposure to environmental practices. In a similar vein, **Leeming et al. (1995)** highlighted the role of family and community in shaping students' environmental attitudes, stressing the importance of reinforcement outside the school environment.

Gender differences have also been observed in environmental attitudes among students. Research by **Zelezny, Chua, and Aldrich (2000)** indicated that female students tend to express stronger pro-environmental attitudes than male students. Additionally, age and grade level often correlate with environmental sensitivity, with older students showing more mature perspectives, as found in the studies by **Evans et al. (2007)**.

2.4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESSES AND ATTITUDES A TEACHERS

Teachers play a critical role in shaping the environmental consciousness of students. Their beliefs, knowledge, and instructional methods significantly influence how environmental education is delivered and received. According to **Ernst (2007)**, teachers who are well-informed and positively inclined towards environmental education are more likely to integrate environmental topics into their classrooms effectively. However, studies have shown that many teachers lack sufficient training or confidence to teach environmental content comprehensively**, Kennelly, Taylor, & Serow (2011)**.

In a comparative study, **Moseley, Reinke, and Bookout (2002)** found that while teachers generally support the idea of environmental education, their actual classroom practices do not always reflect this commitment. Barriers such as rigid curricula, lack

of teaching resources, and limited professional development opportunities hinder effective implementation. own educational backgrounds significantly impact their environmental attitudes. Research by **Pe'er, Goldman, and Yavetz (2007)** showed that teachers with exposure to environmental education during their training exhibit more favourable attitudes towards environmental issues and are more proactive in their teaching methods.

Furthermore, gender and subject specialization also affect teachers' environmental awareness. Science teachers, for instance, tend to show higher levels of environmental awareness than teachers of other subjects, as observed by **Alwan (2011)**. Female teachers, in some studies, have been found to express greater concern for environmental issues, echoing trends observed among students.

2.5.0 COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES: STUDENTS VS TEACHERS

Comparative studies highlight significant differences in environmental awareness and attitudes between students and teachers. For instance, a study by **Yilmaz, Boone, and Andersen (2004)** found that teachers generally exhibit higher environmental awareness than students, though the latter may demonstrate more idealistic attitudes. This suggests a potential disconnect between knowledge and passion, possibly rooted in generational perspectives and educational exposure.

In some contexts, students have demonstrated higher engagement in environmental practices than their teachers, particularly when peer influence and community involvement are strong, **Lander et al. (2013)**. This indicates that while teachers possess the theoretical knowledge, students may be more active in practical initiatives due to school programs or youth organizations.

The alignment between students' and teachers' attitudes is crucial for fostering a sustainable school culture. Studies by **Tilbury (1995)** and **Monroe et al. (2000)** emphasize that a consistent message from both educators and the school environment enhances students' pro-environmental behaviours and attitudes.

2.6.0 ROLE OF CURRICULUM AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY

The integration of environmental education into the formal curriculum varies widely across countries and regions. In India, the **National Curriculum Framework (2005)** emphasizes environmental education as a cross-curricular theme. However, studies**, Sharma & Sharma, (2017)** suggest that its implementation remains inconsistent due to a lack of training and instructional materials for teachers.

Globally, the **UNESCO** framework for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) promotes an interdisciplinary approach to environmental education. **Tilbury (2011)** argues that effective ESD requires systemic change in curriculum design, teacher education, and school culture. Unfortunately, many schools treat environmental education as an add-on rather than a core subject, limiting its impact.

In middle schools, curriculum constraints often limit the scope and depth of environmental education. Research by **Ballantyne and Packer (2002)** stresses the need for curriculum reforms that promote inquiry-based, project-based, and community-linked environmental learning.

2.7.0 TEACHING METHODS AND PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES

The method of teaching greatly influences students' environmental attitudes. Traditional didactic teaching methods may not engage students effectively. Active, participatory methods—such as outdoor learning, simulations, role-plays, and community projects—have proven to be more effective in fostering environmental awareness and attitude change.

Simmons (1998) argues for constructivist approaches in environmental education, where students build knowledge through exploration and reflection. A study by **Ricketson (2001)** also supports this view, finding that experiential learning and real-world problem-solving are key to internalizing environmental concepts.

Teachers' choice of pedagogy is influenced by their own comfort level with the subject. Teachers with positive attitudes towards the environment are more likely

to use innovative and student-centred teaching methods. Therefore, professional development programs must focus not only on content knowledge but also on teaching strategies.

2.8.0 INFLUENCE OF SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS

Environmental attitudes and awareness are not shaped in isolation; they are deeply influenced by cultural, socio-economic, and geographical contexts. In developing countries, where environmental degradation often directly affects livelihoods, awareness may be more practical and immediate, but not necessarily grounded in formal education.

Rural vs. urban disparities have been noted in various studies. Students and teachers in urban areas may have better access to educational resources, but rural populations often demonstrate more sustainable practices rooted in traditional knowledge, **Palmer (1998).** This dichotomy underscores the importance of context-sensitive approaches to environmental education.

2.9.0 GAPS IN THE LITERATURE

Despite substantial research, several gaps remain. First, there is limited longitudinal data on how attitudes change over time. Second, most studies treat students and teachers separately, missing the opportunity to explore their dynamic interactions. Third, there is a lack of research in specific cultural contexts, particularly in regions like South Asia, where traditional values and environmental practices coexist.

Moreover, few studies evaluate the effectiveness of interventions aimed at improving environmental attitudes. There is also a need for mixed-method research that combines quantitative assessments with qualitative insights to gain a fuller understanding of the environmental attitudes of both teachers and students.

2.10.0 CONCLUSION

The literature reveals that both students and teachers play vital roles in shaping environmental awareness and attitudes within the middle school context. While

students generally exhibit curiosity and idealism, their knowledge often lacks depth. Teachers, on the other hand, possess the knowledge but face constraints in translating it into effective pedagogy. The alignment of attitudes between students and teachers is essential for building a sustainable environmental culture in schools.

Environmental education, when effectively integrated into the curriculum and supported by well-trained educators, has the potential to cultivate lifelong environmental stewardship. However, challenges such as curriculum limitations, insufficient teacher training, and socio-cultural barriers continue to hinder its full impact. Future research should focus on collaborative approaches that bridge the student-teacher gap, use context-specific strategies, and evaluate long-term outcomes of environmental education.

By deepening our understanding of how awareness and attitudes are formed and influenced, educational institutions can develop more effective programs that not only inform but also inspire action for a more sustainable future.