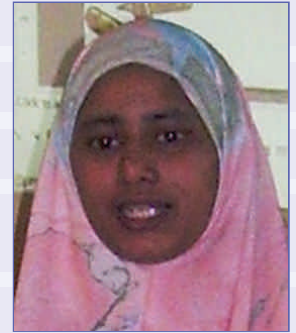


SAWA PGD Fellow	:	M.R.F. Nazreen
Institution	:	PGIA
Designation	:	Asst. Director/ Export Agricultural Department, Peradeniya
Title	:	Assessment on awareness of school children on water and water conservation
Email	:	nazreenrizan@yahoo.com



Background:

Water pollution is a serious environmental issue in Sri Lanka. The primary problems concerning water resources in Sri Lanka are the depletion and degradation of the resource caused by various anthropogenic activities. Surface inland waters in urban areas are polluted heavily with domestic sewage and industrial effluents, and in rural areas with agricultural runoff. Unawareness of society is one of the main causes for water pollution. Therefore, a change in the attitudes of the society to protect the water is an essential concept. Changing the attitudes of children would be more effective in water resource management. School children acquire knowledge about water conservation mainly via two ways; one through the society in which they are brought up in and the second is in schools.

This study is made in such a way to identify the extent to which our school curriculum and environment accomplish an impact on the knowledge of water management, in our future generation, at present. Bringing water issues into education programs encourages young people to understand not only the wider water concepts, but also the effects of their own behavior on water, its quality, and eco systems. The water education initiative is a strategic entry point to bringing about positive attitudinal changes among both water consumers and providers and in the long term, can help develop new water-use ethics in society. Children and youth are the best ambassadors to bring about these attitudinal changes.

Objectives

- To assess the current background knowledge about water conservation among school children and villagers
- To identify the contribution of school curriculum towards the water conservation, and to identify the gaps between the curriculum and integrated water resource management.

Study Area

The students from “Kurukuttala Muslim Maha Vidyalaya” were selected for this study as this school is situated close to Nanu oya, a tributary of Mahaweli River in Kandy district. It is identified that there is poor water resource management in the study area. This may be due to lack of awareness and carelessness among the community. School education can act as vital role to change the attitude of the society therefore, school education about water management should be enhanced to change the behavior of the society.

The detailed study was carried out to identify the contribution of school curriculum to water conservation. Therefore, all subject books from grade 1 to 11 were analyzed in this regard. It was found that there are lessons which are relevant to water in school books. Generally many lessons about water were included in English, Geography, Religion and Environment books. However, there are no properly organized lessons about water education because different subjects (English, Tamil, Buddhism, Geography etc) consist of water and are planned to achieve relevant subject targets. The curriculum provides knowledge about water to the students throughout school and more knowledge is imparted at the secondary level than primary level. The syllabus consists of few skill development modules. The primary level consists of more attitude change development courses than secondary classes. Guide books from the United State of America and South Africa were selected to study how they educate their students about water. Following aspects have been taken in to consideration in designing the curriculum for school children: Water education needs in the community, Goal of education about water, Strategies to implement, Key topics for water education, Outcome of content about water, Selection of content about water and teaching strategies according to the student grade level.

Research Methodology

It is identified that there are gaps between local school curriculum and integrated water resource management. These gaps can be mitigated by introducing “Water education” as a new subject for primary and secondary level students in order to achieve sustainable water management system in Sri Lanka. And also value based water education is a current need in the country, which will be an innovative approach that not only seeks to impart information on water, sanitation and hygiene but also inspires and motivates learners to change their behavior and adopt attitudes that promote wise and sustainable use of water.