

A STUDY ON UNDERGRADUATES' AWARENESS OF SUSTAINABLE WATER USAGE: A CASE STUDY ON MIHINTALE HOSTEL PREMISES OF RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

A.R.W.M.B.W.W.M. Abeykoon ¹, A.L.W.M. Perera ²

The efficient use of water can be a powerful tool to promote environmental sustainability among undergraduates. With that, this study aims to identify the awareness of sustainable water usage among undergraduates at the Mihintale hostel premises at the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. A structured questionnaire was distributed to 75 undergraduate students of different faculties, including all the hostels, with information about their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to water use in the hostel premises. Survey data provided valuable insights regarding challenges like lack of proper water conservation facilities, limited awareness, and low motivation, which might limit undergraduates' sustainable water usage. Further, results revealed that 88% of the undergraduates showed an understanding of the concept of sustainable water usage, as measured by their ability to define the term and identify key practices associated with it. Only 18.7% mentioned their knowledge as outstanding, while 52% expressed their understanding as average. 70.7% were aware of specific practices for sustainable water use. That includes turning off the tap, taking short showers, using a soapy sink to wash dishes, reporting leaks, choosing water-efficient foods, etc. 70 undergraduates know to turn off the water until they needed. The biggest challenges identified were inadequate water conservation facilities (51.6%) and inadequate information (50%). Despite these challenges, 61.3% of respondents supported the installation of water conservation devices and 64% encouraged regular repair of water infrastructure. Therefore, this study shows a considerable gap between awareness and actual practice. It also underlines the necessity for institutional assistance to promote water-saving behaviors. In conclusion, specific interventions such as awareness campaigns, seminars, and infrastructure improvements are needed to overcome this gap and develop sustainable water use among undergraduates at Mihintale hostel premises. Thus, these findings provide a basis to develop approaches to increase water conservation practices in university contexts.

Keywords: Water, Sustainable, Undergraduates, Awareness, Practices

¹ Department of Environmental Management, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. wasu.abeu@gmail.com

² Department of Environmental Management, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. manoriperera95@gmail.com