Introduction

The origin of life on the earth was divided and controlled by a set of environmental conditions. Through these past millions of years, environment has played a major role in the sustenance of life, and it will continue to be so for all times.

The great religious teachers in the past lived a simple life in harmony with nature, but scientific inventions or discoveries made mankind drift away from nature. Modernization changed lifestyles all over the world causing damage to human environment. The Mother Nature is rich and abundant, but now she became bankrupt thanks to the illogical luxury and irresponsible attitude of her children towards nature. Now, mankind shudders at the prospects of the thinning of the stratospheric ozone layer, melting of the ice cap, chilling and warming up of the planet beyond the endurance of living species, nuclear holocaust and chemical holocaust. This has compelled rethinking about living in harmonious relationship with nature and given rise to worldwide ecology movement. Hence environment has become the concern of all the academicians, intellectuals, scientists, policy makers and government across the continents.

In India Article 48-A, 51-A(g), 21, 47, the 42nd amendment to the constitution in the year 1974 and the recent Biological diversity Act of 2002 makes in the fundamental duty of every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment including forest, lakes, rivers and wild life and to have compassion for living creatures.

The Stockholm conference on human environment in 1972, the Earth Summit held in Rio De Janeiro in 1992, the Global forum in 1992, the Copenhagen climate council founded in 2007, Montreal Protocol, the Earth Summit 2011 to the Earth Summit 2012 which will be held on 20th - 22nd June 2012 shows that environment is on the agenda of the international community. All the above conferences emphasized the need for an environmental oriented education system which would resolve the environmental crisis by preparing environmentally conscious citizen.

Hence it becomes obligatory on the part of each individual citizen to develop environmental ethics that, while we aspire for good life, we should not sacrifice the future of the generation to come. Environmental ethics refers to the responsibility to understand the environmental consequences of our consumption and need to recognise our individual and social responsibility to conserve natural resources and protect the earth for future generations.
The UNESCO – UNEP congress on environmental education and training (1987) stated that environmental education should simultaneously attempt to create awareness, transmit information, teach knowledge, develop habits and skills, promote values, provide criteria and standards and present guidelines for problem solving and decision making.

Pollution, over exploitation of natural resources and lack of water harvesting and proper waste management practices are the chief environmental problems facing mankind today. All these problems can be rectified to a great extent by creating environmental awareness among the general public. Students as an enlightened group of energetic youngsters can play a major role in bringing about this awareness in the society. Thus the need to undertake the present study emerges from the above discussion.

**Review of related literature**

Review of related literature provides evidence that the researcher is familiar with what is already known and what is still unknown and untested. It provides necessary insight into the problem, widens the knowledge of the researcher and ensures the avoidance of unnecessary duplication. It provides the researcher framework within which findings can be interpreted.

**Research studies in India**

**Gopalkrishnan Sarojini (1992)** - studied the impact of environmental education on primary school children of standard V from schools of the Nilgiris Madras and Coimbatore. The study showed that the participatory learning approach could bring about better impact but the teacher in general, felt that there was not sufficient time to give importance to learner centred activities.

**Kidwai Zeenat (1991)** - studied the development of an environmentally-oriented curriculum in Geography at Secondary stage and presented an environmentally oriented Geography curriculum for Secondary stage. A critical study of the conception and perception of environmental education done by Sahook.C (1992) showed that the concept of the environment is broadly divided as natural and man-made types and environmental education is a broad concept and is perceived as life-long experience for all.

**Devi Susila A (1990)** - made a critical study of the environmental curriculum in Andhra Pradesh which showed that the environmental studies curricula did not cater to the essential needs of the learner for whom they were meant. The investigator highlighted that the EVS curricula should be more effective, comprehensive, sequential and full of experiences that link children’s school based learning with their environment and universe.