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A Study of State University Students' Knowledge of Forests and Their Importance

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Abstract

A way to protect natural resources is to educate citizens in order to help them know these resources and their importance better. The first step to start such education, it is necessary to know the current level of public knowledge of the issue. The general goal of this study is to grasp public knowledge of natural resources and its importance. The focus of this study is toward the awareness of the students of state universities in Tehran about the forest and its importance. The study method is a two-stage cluster sampling in which 975 students of different faculties were randomly questioned through a questionnaire containing 50 questions with four answer choices. The students questioned divided into six groups, including medicine, technical and engineering, humanities, agriculture and natural resources, basic sciences and art. The questions covered eight different fields such as forest geography, knowledge of natural environment and botany, effect of forests on air and atmosphere pollution control, effect of forests on soil erosion prevention, forest products, forest administration and organization, forest protection and socioeconomic issues, forest management, harvesting, and conservation. Answers of the students in the six categories were analyzed and the extent of knowledge of the issue in each group was determined. The result of the study shows that the differences of knowledge between the students of natural resources and other five groups are significant, while this difference among other groups is not significant. Regarding the students' low knowledge of the issue, the study emphasizes the need to improve students' knowledge.

Key Words: The level of knowledge, Forest, Students, Education