

Study of environmental awareness among post graduate students of Punjab University, Chandigarh

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Abstract

Present study aimed to find out the environmental awareness among the post graduate students of Panjab University, Chandigarh. For this a sample of randomly selected 30 students belonging to different streams of Panjab University, Chandigarh was collected. A self prepared questionnaire comprising of 20 questions was distributed by the investigators. Raw data was obtained, mean scores were calculated and then percentage analysis was done to find out the results. The findings of the study showed that most of the students surveyed were aware of the basic and simple aspects regarding environment. Results were interpreted in terms of high, average and low Environmental awareness. The data was also analyzed to find out the awareness among PG students from Humanities and Science group. The results revealed that science students were found to be more aware about environment than their counterparts in Humanities.

Keywords: *Environmental Awareness, Environmental Education, Science and Humanities Streams*

1. Introduction

India - the world's largest democracy with population of over 1.2 billion is diverse country with number of languages, religions, cultures etc. Like most developing countries, India is confronted with the daunting challenge of developing itself rapidly, while at the same time preserving and protecting its environment. India is amongst the first few countries, which has made provisions for the protection and improvement of environment in its Constitution and to have enacted reasonable good environmental laws and regulations.

It has rightly been said "*The environmental crisis is an outward manifestation of the crisis of mind and spirit*". It all depends upon how do we think and act. If we want to check the environmental crisis, we will have to transform our thinking and attitude. That in turn would transform our deeds, leading to a better environment and better future.

Sustainable development is only possible where economic growth, social justice and equity, and environmental integrity are achieved. Any government at its own level cannot achieve the goals of sustainable development until the public has a participatory role in it. Public participation is possible only when the public is aware about the ecological and environmental issues. We must have to arouse public by addressing their needs, emotions and values, whether, moral, sacred, nationalistic, or other. Changing public opinion can bring changes in governmental policies, which transform into action later.

Environmental education sensitizes the minds of people. Consequently, effective Environmental Education —both formal and non-formal—is seen as a vital component of the fight against environmental degradation globally. Any government at its own level cannot achieve the goals of sustainable development until the public has a participatory role in it.

Environmental education relies on both formal and non-formal teaching techniques to accomplish the ultimate goal of encouraging citizens to make informed and positive actions toward the environment. Environmental education provides students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences essential to become successful community leaders, as well as making

intelligent decisions pertaining to the management of their natural resources.

The United Nations has declared the decade (2005-2015) as a 'Decade of Education for Sustainable Development'. Sustainable development concentrates on aspects of the economy, society and environment in order to achieve its goals. The Hon'ble Supreme Court on Environmental Education directed that through medium of education, an awareness of the environment and its protection should be taught as a compulsory subject.

The term 'Environmental Awareness' has a broad connotation, it not only implies knowledge about environment but also attitude, values and necessary skills to solve environment related problems. Moreover, environmental awareness is the initial step ultimately leading to the ability to carry on responsible citizenship behaviour.

The present study is an effort to find out the level of environmental awareness among the post graduate students of Panjab University, Chandigarh. The sample of the study was taken keeping in mind that they have already passed their Environmental Study paper at graduation level. Hence, it is imperative to find out how far environmental education has been effective in changing their mindset towards environment.

2. Objectives of the Study

The present study is aimed on the following objectives:

- (1) To find out the level of Environmental Awareness among the Post Graduate students of Panjab University, Chandigarh.
- (2) To find out whether there is any significant effect of educational streams on Environmental Awareness among the students.

3. Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses were framed for the study

- There is no significant difference in the level of environmental awareness among the Post Graduate students of Panjab University, Chandigarh.
- There is no significant difference in the environmental awareness among Post Graduate students of Science and Humanities streams of Panjab University, Chandigarh.

4. Delimitations of the Study

- The present study is confined to Post Graduate students of Panjab University, Chandigarh only.
- The present study is be carried out over a sample of 30 Post Graduate students of Panjab University, Chandigarh.

5. Statistical Techniques Used

Percentage analysis was used to interpret the results of the study. Mean values were calculated to find out the differences in the Environmental Awareness among Post Graduate science and humanities students of Panjab University, Chandigarh.

6. Actual Carrying Out Of the Project

This is a survey type descriptive research. Students were interacted to gain their perception and level of awareness regarding environment. A questionnaire was designed containing 20 questions related to general environmental awareness. The open ended questions were avoided and preferably close ended questions were included in the questionnaire for survey. However, some open ended questions were also included in order to allow enough flexibility to keep the flow of interview going according to the comfort level of the interviewee and helped us to understand the problems in the existing system from different perspectives. This also allowed the participants to share their personal concerns and perspectives on the environment. The questionnaires were then evaluated by the investigators to find out the percentage of the environmental awareness among students.

7. Analysis and Interpretation

For the analysis of the results the scores obtained by the students were then classified into class intervals which are depicted in the following Table 1:

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of scores among different class intervals.

Groups	Class Intervals	No. of students	% of students
G I	0-5	0	0
G II	6-10	6	20
G III	11-15	19	63
G IV	16-20	5	17
Total		30	100

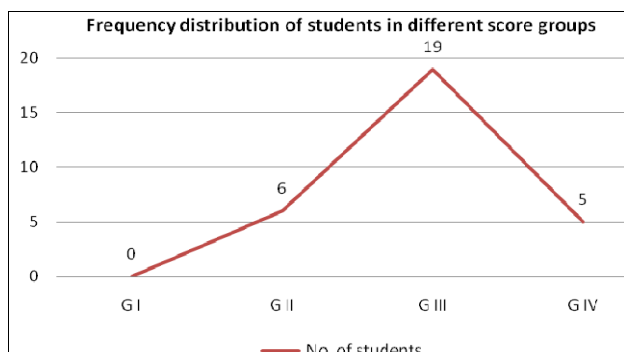


Fig 1: Frequency distribution of students in different score groups.

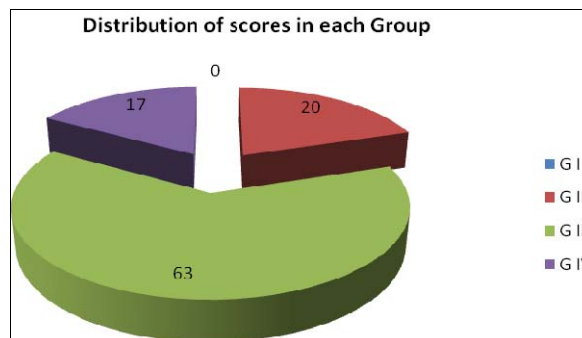


Fig 2: Percentage distribution of students in different score groups.

Table 1, Figure 1 and 2 indicate the frequency and percentage distribution of scores obtained by the students on Environmental Awareness. Group I refers to score below 25%, Group II refers to scores between 25% and 50%, Group III is refers to 50 to 75% and Group IV represented scores above 75%. Data analysis revealed that 17% of the students fall in the Group IV with scores above 75%. On the other hand 63% of the respondents fall in Group III by scoring 50-75% of the scores. Out of the total sample 17% were in Group II scoring below 50%. No student scored less than 25% of the total score.

Therefore, the hypothesis stating no significant level of environmental awareness among the Post Graduate students is not accepted.

Table 2: Average scores of students from Sciences and Humanities Streams

Streams	Average Scores
Sciences	13.95
Humanities	10.55
Both Streams	12.70

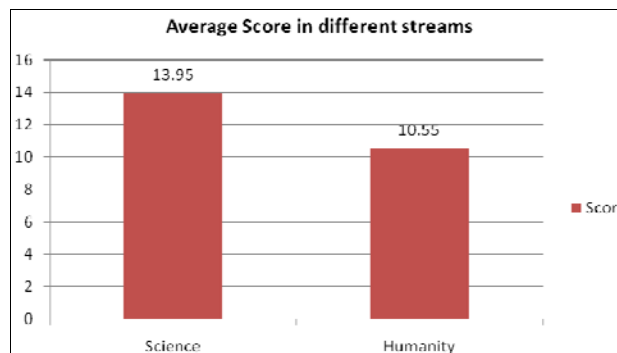


Fig 3: Bar graph showing average score of Post Graduate students of Sciences and Humanities Streams of Panjab University Chandigarh.

Table 2 and Fig. 3 show the mean scores of Post Graduate students from Sciences and Humanities streams. The mean score calculated for all the students is 12.70. The Mean score of Sciences streams is 13.95 and the mean score of Humanities stream is 10.55. The results revealed that the mean score of students from Sciences stream is higher than the students from Humanities streams, so it is concluded that Sciences Stream

students were found to have higher environmental awareness as compared to their counterparts in Humanities.

Therefore, the hypothesis stating no significant difference in the environmental awareness of Post Graduate students of Sciences and Humanities Streams is also not accepted.

This finding is also supported by the studies conducted by Simmons (1998) ^[5], Yilmaz *et al.* (2004) ^[6], Sebastian and Nima (2005) ^[2], Lenka (2005) ^[1] and Siddiqui and Fatima (2015) ^[4]. However, this finding is inconsistent with the results of the study conducted by Sengupta *et al.* (2010) ^[3]. They found that Science students' scores on environmental awareness was less than that of Arts students.

8. Conclusions

The study was conducted to find out the level of environmental awareness among post graduate students. The results revealed a significant level of environmental awareness among post graduate students of Panjab University, Chandigarh. The findings further revealed that students of Sciences streams were having more environmental awareness than the students from the Humanities streams. The results may be so for the reason that the students of Sciences Stream are very much associated with Environmental Education than the students of Humanities Streams, as many environment related topics are already incorporated in the Science subjects. Environmental Education at school level should be emphasized and its objectives must be achieved. The government policy in this regard is very explicit as environmental education has been made compulsory at school level as well as college level of education. This type of research is thus important in the sense that it would point out how far objectives have been achieved or the introduction of environmental education has turned into futile and fruitless curricular exercise.

9. References

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