

Effect of Environmental Education on the Attitude of College Students

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ABSTRACT

Over recent decades, global problems relating to degradation of natural resources and pollution have increased dramatically. Natural resources are depleted by excessive use. The problem is becoming worse due to ever expanding population of the world. The cry of the time is that we need to change the basic attitude of people towards the nature only than any step towards preserving the environment will become effective and here Environmental Education can play a very crucial role. Environmental Education is a continuous, life-long process involving education about the environment. The objective of the study is to find out the Environmental Attitudes of undergraduate students before and after studying environmental education. A sample of 25 students from Dayalbagh Educational Institute, Agra city was selected. Taj Environmental Attitude Scale (TEAS) developed by Taj, 2001 was used to measure attitude of the students. Data was analyzed by Wilcoxon Sign rank Test, and result indicated that value of $Z = 4.376$ was found to be significant. The findings reveal that subject of environmental education increases the awareness and help in developing the favourable attitudes towards environment.

Keywords: *Environmental Education, Attitude. College Students*

A delicate balance exists between man and environment. The race for development, coupled with the greed of man, has led to the pollution of the environment in several ways, threatening the precarious equilibrium between all objects on the planet, living and non-living. Rabindranath Tagore expressed his views about the environment in this way, “In the ancient times forest and natural resources gives direction to the human lives. Human and nature are in a perfect harmony. At that time humans have realized the importance of relationship between man and nature and that is why the environment was in a calm state.” Man’s capability to transform his surroundings can bring to one and all the benefits of development and also an opportunity to enhance the quality of life. Wrongly or heedlessly applied, the same power can do incalculable harm to

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human beings and to human environment. Unfortunately, there exist a growing evidence of man-made harm in many regions of the earth; dangerous levels of pollution in water, air, earth and living beings, major and undesirable disturbances in the ecological balance of biosphere, destruction and depletion of irreplaceable resources and gross deficiencies harmful to physical, mental and social health of men (Yashodhara, 2003). It is an important first step in changing attitude would be to provide realistic information about environmental problems. The assumption here is that rational people will alter their attitudes appropriately when they are informed of the negative environmental consequences of their actions. Environmental education can take many forms such as media campaign, distributing information leaflets or introducing environmental issues into formal educational curricula. Research has shown that educational efforts can significantly increase awareness and improve attitudes towards environment (Jha, 2014).

Education is particularly important when individuals are simply lacking in relevant knowledge about environmental issues and is more likely to be effective in changing attitude of young adults. Almost everyone today recognises the urgent need for environmental education. The chief objectives of environmental education are that individual on social group should acquire awareness and knowledge; develop attitudes, skills and abilities to participate in solving real life problems with practical bias; various kinds of pollution their sources and effects on the environment and energy situations particularly in own country. The spectrum of environmental education falls in four measure components; awareness, real life situation, conservation and sustainable development. The instructions in the general area of environment cannot be confined to the class room, but more importantly feel or out of school activities through nature and eco development camps have to be encouraged.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A study found that environmental education increases the environmental awareness and helps in developing favourable attitudes among the undergraduate students (Sra, 2012). A study reveals that undergraduate females were more sensitive toward environment than male students (Panth, Verma & Gupta, 2015). A study investigated the relationship of Awareness and Attitude of Environmental Education among B.Ed. college students. The findings indicated that girls have high level of Awareness and Attitude towards environmental Education than the boys. Students those who were economically categorized in high level, their attitude of environmental education are better than the other categorized students (Choudhary, 2010). In one of the studies done by (Poyyamoli & Alexander, 2014) found that active teaching learning approach is more effective than the traditional teaching method as it facilitates the environmental education in a more better way, because experimental group was scored significantly higher knowledge, attitude and behavior in terms environment. Formal environmental education helps students to develop more favourable attitudes towards environment (Lee, 2008). By keeping in view the importance of Environmental Education, environmental education should be given proper attention (Rabia, 2010).

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Problem

- To compare the environmental attitude of the students before and after studying the environmental education.

Objectives

1. To find out the Environmental Attitudes among undergraduate students.
2. To compare the difference in the Pre-Post test attitude scores of the students studying in the Dayalbagh Educational Institute, Agra.

Hypothesis

1. There is a significant difference in the Pre-Post test attitude scores of the students studying in the Dayalbagh Educational Institute, Agra.

Tools Used

Taj Environmental Attitude Scale (TEAS):- The Taj Environmental Attitude Scale was developed by Taj in 2001. Following the Likert's summated rating procedure, TEAS was developed with 61 items consisting six areas. The six areas dealt with the scale are attitude towards:-

1. Wildlife
2. Health and hygiene
3. Forest
4. Pollution
5. Population explosion
6. Environmental concerns

Each item alternative is assigned a weight age ranging from 4 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree) for favourite items. In case of unfavourable items the scoring is reversed, i.e. from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). The attitude score of an individual is the sum total of item score on all the six areas. The range of scores is from 61 to 244 with the higher score indicating the more favourable attitude towards the environment and vice-versa. Reliability of the scale is estimated by the Split-Half is 0.82, which is highly significant. The scale also possesses high content and item validity. Norms are in stanine grade.

Along with the questionnaire wherever necessary, interviews were conducted with different categories of respondents, for clarifying their doubts, for answering their queries, as well as to elicit additional responds.

Statistical Technique

In the present study statistical techniques Wilcoxon Sign Rank test was used.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

This section deals with the results of Wilcoxon Sign test to assess, whether there is significant difference in Pre-Post Test attitude scores of students after studying the subject of Environmental Education at undergraduate level.

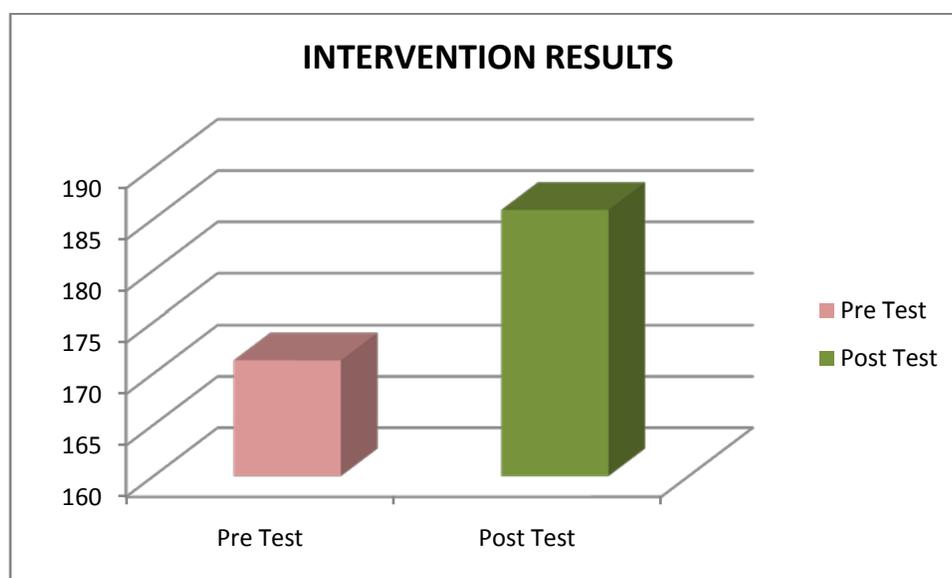
Table 1, Showing the Results of Mann-Whitney “U” test for Environmental Attitude of the Students

Pretest (A1) & Posttest Scores (A2)	N	Mean	SD	Z (Wilcoxon signed test)	Level of Significance
A1	25	171.28	19.38	4.376	P<0.01
A2	25	185.88	13.98		

****Significant at 0.01 level**

Table 1 indicates that the difference between pre test and post test score of environmental attitude is significant. The Z value is 4.376 which is significant at 0.01 level. The post test scores were significantly higher than the pre-test scores indicating that the attitude score of the students have increased after studying the subject of Environmental Education at undergraduate level. The obtained Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test value (Z= 4.376, p< 0.01) .Thus the hypothesis that “There is significant difference in the Pre-Post Test attitudes scores of the students studying in the Dayalbagh Educational Institute, Agra” stands accepted.

Figure shows the graphs of mean scores of results of pre and post test of all subjects who have low environmental attitude. And it is clear through the figure that environmental attitude increases after giving intervention.



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The ideology of environmental education is based on the fact that environment affects the human lives in many ways. The different parameters and objectives can be set up. One has to understand the system of natural environment and participation of man in the present scenario. For this a particular type of psyche reasoning and attitude must be developed. So that students must aware about the factors which make imbalances in the environment (Steg & Vleg, 2009). The serious steps should be taken with the help of environmental education so that student became environmentally conscious.

With the study of environmental education a sense of responsibility will inculcate in the students, they develop the mental as well as social sensitivity. Besides, this environment is related to cultural heritage to some extent which automatically related to conservation.

CONCLUSION

The attitude of students have become more favourable towards the Environment after studying the subject of Environmental Education as the post test attitude scores of the students studying in were more than pre test attitude scores. Education is a social process or growth in the senses of producing desirable changes in the behavioural components of human behavior; the behavioural components include knowledge, skill and attitude. For a self-change, three things need to be changed inevitably and they are attitude, thinking and behavior. Effort has been made to make students realise that modernity is just an illusion, a condition achieved by exploitation of a huge amount of resources and degradation of environment. The traditional values and simple living is the only way to save the environment from further determination (Purang & Jaisingh, 2008).

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Conflict of Interests

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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