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A study of environmental awareness amongst NSS volunteers of St. Johns College, Agra

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Abstract

The concept of National Service Scheme is started in the year 1969 to build a sense of social responsibility through teacher and student involvement in constructive service with the motto of "Not Me But You". NSS volunteers work in rural areas, adopted villages and school to the serving the cause of society through the survey, education and health awareness program. The study is undertaken to compare the environmental awareness of NSS volunteers of St. Johns College, Agra. By this research study, we have made an attempt to explain the design of the study, which includes details like locale of the study, variables of the study, tools used for the study, sample procedure and techniques employed for analysis of the data. For this study, the sample consisted of 45 NSS Volunteers of St. Johns College Agra taking all the above-selected parameters into consideration. The investigators selected Environment Awareness tool developed by Dr. Samar V.S, as a tool to estimate environmental awareness among the students. The tool comprised of fifty items, specifically highlighting the following five components, to measure the extent of awareness among the students for environmental pollution and its protection, cause of pollution, conservation of soil, forest, air etc., energy conservation, Human health and conservation of flora and fauna. The data collected was processed for statistical analyses using SPSS (version: 16.0). The outcomes of this study will permit recognizing the level of awareness of NSS volunteers of St. John's College, Agra and be contributing applicable information as to future intercessions identifying with environmental awareness.

Keywords: Environmental awareness, national service scheme, human health

Introduction

Man doesn't merely live within the environment encompassing him; however additionally keep interacting continuously with its varied parts. Man and environment are closely inter-related with one another as well as inter-dependant on one another. On one hand, environment influences the life of people at large and everyone their activities in one or different side, simultaneously on the opposite hand people at large additionally through their growth & development; and activities, wishes & intentions for modification or adjustment influences the environment. A harmonious equilibrium within the relationship of man and environment would be helpful for each altogether aspects.

Population explosion resulted in accumulated demand of basic amenities like air, water, food, housing and alternative economic activities at an exponential rate that leads to depletion of accessible limited stock of natural resources. Mahatma Gandhi has justly said that "Earth provides enough to satisfy each man's desires, but not every man's greed". Over the amount, this greed of man, ignorance of environment and its significance for therefore long and also the lack of respect for available natural resources across the globe resulted in overexploitation of environment in name of industrial enterprise, urbanization, and development and thus had put the life-sustaining environment in peril. It disturbed the fundamental composition of the environment.

It is presently all around perceived that financial development and improvement must be guided by the impulses of supportability, as we don't have the advantage of overlooking the financial and natural risk that a quick draining environment postures to our nation as well as to the whole planet. None of us are resistant from the difficulties of environmental change, biological corruption, ozone layer exhaustion and tainting of our freshwater. In the meantime, the quest for fast and comprehensive monetary development and improvement is a basic, particularly in creating nations, for example, our own, to lift the overflowing millions

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out of neediness, joblessness, lack of education and infection. It is the commitment of each general public and grave obligation of each government to seek after comprehensive financial improvement for the upliftment and prosperity of its people groups. The environment has influenced and shaped our lives since the time immemorial. The existence of human life is totally impossible without the existence of environment. On one hand, environment influences the life of human beings and all their activities in one or other aspect, simultaneously, on the other hand, human beings also through their growth & development; and activities, desires & intentions for modification or adjustment influences the environment. Over the period, the greed of man, ignorance of environment and its significance for so long and the lack of respect for available natural resources across the globe resulted in overexploitation of environment in name of industrialization, urbanization, and development and hence had put the life-sustaining environment in peril. This anthropogenic impact on the environment has posed danger to man's existence on this earth and hence 'Environment' has become the concern of all across the globe in the present era lead to larger or lesser changes in every alternative part of the whole complex" (Jha, 1998); and hence it disturbed all the elements of the environment that successively provide birth to problems like air, water, and soil pollution; eco-degradation; shortage or depletion of natural resources; acid rains; gas depletion; disturbance in food chains and food webs; extinction of wildlife and loss of biodiversity; greenhouse effect and global warming; unexpected climate changes and frequent occurrences of natural calamities and disasters etc. This anthropogenetic impact on the environment has display danger to man's existence on this earth and therefore „Environment“ has become the priority of all across the world within the present era.

The Council of Environment Quality sounded a warning for developing countries stating, "If the present trend continues, then the world at the end of the 20th century will be more crowded, more polluted, less stable ecologically and more vulnerable to disruption than the world we live in now." It further added to the gravity of the problem by stating, "For hundreds of millions of poor, the outlook for food and other necessities of life will be no better. For many, it will be worse." Obviously, time will not be kind because of rapidly increasing

According to Singh & Kaur (1992): "Environmental Awareness is defined as the sum total of responses that people make to various thematic aspects of the constructed environment, in a combination reaction to cognitive intent and action influences, reported on a paper and pencil instrument, employing attitudes and fact statement formats. It also entails practice in decision-making and self-formulating of a code of behavior about issues concerning environmental quality."

The overall aim of National Service Scheme as envisaged earlier is to give an extension dimension to the higher education system and orient the student youth to community service while they are studying in educational institutions. The educated youth who are expected to take the reins of administration in future are found to be unaware of the problems of the community and in certain cases are indifferent towards their needs and problems. Therefore it is necessary to arouse the social conscience of the students and to provide them an opportunity to work with the people in

the villages and slums. It is felt that their interaction with the common villagers and slum-dwellers will expose them to the realities of life, and bring about a change in their social perception.

In present scenario environmental damages is causing loss to the national economy in billions in the form of deforestation and soil erosion only. On the other hand, water air and noise pollution are causing havoc to the health of the nationals. In spite of government policies and a number of laws, nothing concrete has been done at the individual level to fight the environmental pollution. The role of N.S.S. becomes very important in this context as the constitution of India also envisages that it is the fundamental duty of every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment [Art. 51A (g)]. NSS activities will create awareness on the protection of the environment.

The Study Area

St. Johns College, Agra is situated in the Agra district, which is situated in western U.P. between 27.11' degree Latitude North and 78.0' degree to 78.2' degree Longitude East. Its Altitude is 169 meters above sea level. On the North it is bounded by Mathura District, On the South, it is bounded by Dhaulpur District, On the East, it is bounded by Firozabad District and On the West, it is bounded by Bharatpur. Agra is situated on the bank of Yamuna River. According to Census 1991, the area of Agra district is 4027.00 square km., Where Rural area is 3838.60 sq. km. and Urban area is 188.40 sq. km.. Its Total Population is 27, 51,021 out of which Males are 15, 01,927 and Females are 12, 49,094. Of the Total Population, 16, 39,935 constitute the Rural Population and 11, 11,086 makes the Urban Population.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

1. To study the level of environmental awareness among undergraduates of various streams.
2. To study the significant difference between NSS boys volunteer and NSS girls volunteer regarding environmental awareness.
3. Investigate NSS volunteer participation and level of engagement in environmental activities and protection.
4. Prosper recommendations on the basis of the results obtained from the study.

Methodology

Primary Data

The study employed questionnaire survey method, a structured form of the questionnaire to obtain information and responses of the sampled Population to examine their environmental awareness level and roles towards the environment and environmental protection. A total of 74 questionnaires were administered out of which 45 questionnaires were retrieved. NSS volunteers participated in this research after will full consensus. The questionnaire contains four sections; the bio-data part, environmental attitudes towards the environment and participation level.

Secondary Data

The study also reviewed a number of relevant literature and previous research works, sourced from published and unpublished sources, journals, books, and so on, to enrich

the introductory and the literature review aspects of the research work

Sample Size

The sample consists of 45 undergraduate NSS volunteer. The sample was collected from various Departments of Science, Social Science, Arts, and Commerce streams of St. Johns College, Agra.

Variables Used in the Study

In the present study, independent variables were Type of course and Stream, while environmental awareness was a dependent variable.

Tool used in the Study

The investigator's aim was to study the attitude of students towards environmental awareness. For this purpose, Environment Awareness Tool developed by Dr. Samar Vir Singh Rathore tool was selected. The tool was developed by referring to Environment Awareness Ability Measure (EAAM), developed by Dr. Praveen Kumar Jha. Tool has questions which relate to A) Understanding of problems related to Environmental degradation B.) Impact of Environmental degradation on life (C) Managing the Environment. The researchers considered various factors like area, age group, and grade of the students. In view of time, cost, resources available, nature of population and purpose of the study, the length of the questionnaires, type and nature of the test-items and method of scoring of the test was planned in advance. It was decided to include open-ended questions in both the questionnaires so as to encourage the respondents to structure their answers according to their knowledge and state their own frame of reference. Tool questionnaire contains 50 questions. The questions were of multiple choice types. Each question had four options (a, b, c, d.). Out of these four, they have to opt only one and tick mark the response which they considered correct. There was no fixed time-limit for answering it but try to finish fast

The final draft was then printed and administered on a sample of 74 NSS Volunteers and 50 questionnaires were retrieved.

Result and Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to assess the Environmental Awareness of undergraduate NSS Volunteers of St. Johns College, Agra. The study examined whether or not Environmental Awareness is differentiated by factors like type of course and academic stream. Since, the statistical technique depends each upon the character of information and purpose of the study, thus during this study the- T-test was applied to seek out the variations within the degree of awareness of NSS Volunteers towards environmental awareness. 'SPSS 16.0' was used for Descriptive and Differential statistics for knowledge analysis.

Objective

To compare the Environmental Awareness of the NSS Volunteers of Arts and NSS Volunteers of Science.

1. Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the Environmental Awareness of the NSS Volunteers of Arts and NSS Volunteers of Science.

In order to find out the significance of the difference between the Environmental Awareness of the NSS Volunteers of Arts and NSS Volunteers of Science. Mean and S.D. of two groups were obtained. The no. of subjects in each group was 15. 't' value was calculated which is 3.7757.

Table 1: Significance of difference between the Mean Environmental Awareness scores of the NSS Volunteers of Arts and NSS Volunteers of Science.

Group	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	t-value
Arts	15	27.61	3.89	3.7757
Science	15	33.27	4.31	

Table- 1

Data Analysis of Table -1: Confidence interval: The mean of Group One minus Group Two equals -5.6600, 95% confidence interval of this difference: From -8.7307 to -2.5893, Intermediate values used in calculations: df = 28, standard error of difference = 1.499, t = 3.7757

Table-1 shows that the T value for the difference in the mean scores of the NSS Volunteers of Arts and NSS Volunteers of Science is significant at 0.05 level but insignificant at 0.01 level. So, the null hypothesis stands rejected. When results were compared in context of mean scores, it was found that mean environmental awareness scores in case of NSS Volunteers of Science (M=33.27) is higher than that of NSS Volunteers of Arts having mean environmental awareness score as =27.61

It means that the NSS Volunteers of Science have higher Environmental Awareness as compared to the NSS Volunteers of Arts.

The two-tailed P value equals 0.0008. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant.

Objective

To compare the Environmental Awareness of the NSS Volunteers of Arts and NSS Volunteers of Commerce.

1. Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the Environmental Awareness of the NSS Volunteers of Arts and NSS Volunteers of Commerce.

In order to find out the significance of the difference between the Environmental Awareness of the NSS Volunteers of Arts and NSS Volunteers of Commerce. Mean and S.D. of two groups were obtained. The no. of subjects in each group was 15. 't' value was calculated which is 1.2458.

Table 2: Significance of difference between the Mean Environmental Awareness scores of the NSS Volunteers of Arts and NSS Volunteers of Commerce.

Group	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	t-value
Arts	15	27.61	3.89	1.2458
Commerce	15	29.63	4.93	

Data Analysis of Table -2: Confidence interval: The mean of Group One minus Group Two equals -2.0200, 95% confidence interval of this difference: From -5.3414 to 1.3014, Intermediate values used in calculations: df = 28, standard error of difference = 1.621, t = 1.2458

Table-2 shows that the T value for the difference in the mean scores of the NSS Volunteers of Arts and NSS Volunteers of Commerce is not very significant at 0.05

levels so, the null hypothesis stands rejected. When results were compared in context of mean scores, it was found that mean environmental awareness scores in case of NSS Volunteers of Commerce (M=29.63) is higher than that of NSS Volunteers of Arts having mean environmental awareness score as =27.61 which is very less and thus it could be inferred that the arts and commerce students have little more knowledge related to environmental awareness. When results were compared in the context of mean scores, it was found that mean environmental awareness scores in case of NSS Volunteers of Commerce (M=29.63) is higher than that of NSS Volunteers of Arts having mean environmental awareness score as =27.61. It means that the NSS Volunteers of Commerce have higher Environmental Awareness as compared to the NSS Volunteers of Arts. The two-tailed P value equals 0.2232. By conventional criteria; this difference is considered to be not statistically significant. It may be due to the reason that NSS Volunteers of Arts and NSS Volunteers of commerce both groups have the similar scientific knowledge and scientific temperament.

Objective

To compare the Environmental Awareness of the NSS Volunteers of Commerce and NSS Volunteers of Science.

1. Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the Environmental Awareness of the NSS Volunteers of Commerce and NSS Volunteers of Science.

In order to find out the significance of the difference between the Environmental Awareness of the NSS Volunteers of Commerce and NSS Volunteers of Science. Mean and S.D. of two groups were obtained. The no. of subjects in each group was 15. 't' value was calculated which is 2.1529

Table 3: Significance of difference between the Mean Environmental Awareness scores of the NSS Volunteers of Commerce and NSS Volunteers of Science.

Group	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	t-value
Science	15	33.27	4.31	2.1529
Commerce	15	29.63	4.93	

Data Analysis of Table -3: Confidence interval: The mean of Group One minus Group Two equals 3.640, 95% confidence interval of this difference: From 0.1766 to 7.1034, Intermediate values used in calculations: df = 28, standard error of difference = 1.691, t = 2.1529

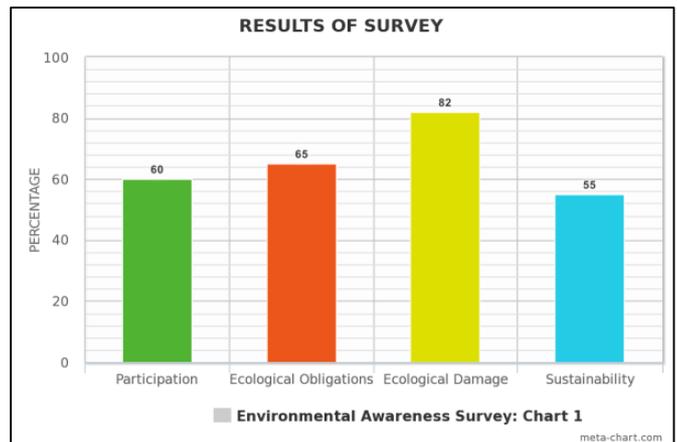
Table-3 shows that the T value for the difference in the mean scores of the NSS Volunteers of Arts and NSS Volunteers of Science is significant at 0.05 level but insignificant at 0.01 level. So, the null hypothesis stands rejected. When results were compared in the context of mean scores, it was found that mean environmental awareness scores in case of NSS Volunteers of Science (M=33.27) is higher than that of NSS Volunteers of Commerce having mean environmental awareness score as =29.63.

It means that the NSS Volunteers of Science have higher Environmental Awareness as compared to the NSS Volunteers of Commerce.

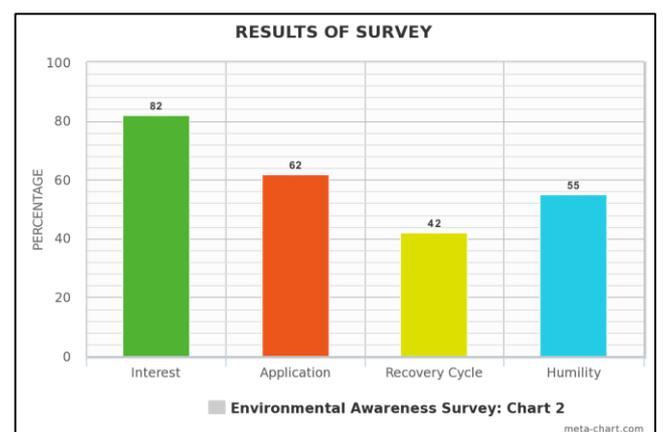
The two-tailed P value equals 0.0401. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be statistically significant.

Analysis of item wise awareness

To the extent concept of environmental awareness was concerned, the majority of the NSS Volunteers appeared to realize that ecological awareness is the need for being volunteers of NSS Program and this study was critical as they have to regard the earth (60% of Volunteers), knowing our ecological obligations as people (65%), perceiving ecological issues caused by individuals, for example, environmental change, cataclysmic events, contamination or social foul play (82%), and imbibing the concept of sustainability, that future era have a similar right to do as such (55%).



NSS volunteers likewise checked choices that uncover want of volunteers to take an interest in issues identified with ecological issues (82%), understanding that natural practices must be advanced in their working environment, establishments (62.3%). In a similar route, to devour at a rate changed in accordance with normal recovery cycles of Earth assets (42%), having a preservation disposition towards the earth and understanding that every living being are equivalent (55.6%)



Suggestions

The investigation analyzed undergrad NSS Volunteers of St. Johns College, Agra in environmental awareness level NSS Volunteers, particularly of premier institutions are the expectation for future improvement approaches and henceforth ecologically reasonable strategies and advances important to achieving natural sustainability.

Accordingly, result from the survey uncovered that understudies have high environmental awareness and uplifting states of mind towards Condition. This infers, understudies monitoring condition, and condition related

issues alone, and does not influence them to partake effectively in the assurance and change of condition. Subsequently, this implies, there could be factors other than being educated about the condition that may fortify NSS Volunteers investment level.

Summary and Conclusion

The study surveyed and investigated undergraduate NSS Volunteers of St. Johns College, Agra environmental awareness level, as well as their level of participation in environmental activities. Results from the study revealed that a significantly higher proportion of students exhibited high awareness level.

Thus, this study has identified an important gap for further studies in order to find out more of what other factors if any could induce students actively participating in environmental protection and improvement activities. This may apply to the larger community as well since students form an educated part of the community, and hence the future leaders and policymakers.

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