



## **PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOR AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS**

**Dr. Anuradha Sindhvani**

Associate Professor,  
K.M. College of Education, Bhiwani (Haryana)

### **ABSTRACT**

*Environment sustains us all. The relationship between the environment and human beings has reached at a critical stage. A point has been reached in history when we must shape our action throughout the world with a more prudent care for their environmental consequences. It is therefore, desirable to achieve wider societal change to catalyze, support and reinforce pro-environmental behaviour. The research objectives of the study are to find level of pro-environmental behavior of college students and to study effect of gender, category, locality and medium of education on the pro-environmental behavior of the college students. The present study was carried out on 352 college students of Haryana. For the collection of data, the tool used has been developed by the researcher herself. Significant differences have been found among Pro-environmental behavior of the students in relation to their gender and category. The study reveals that locality and medium of education has no significant effect on the behavior of the students. Education is a powerful medium for changing our behaviour. The agencies of education, particularly colleges and family should motivate the students to realize the nature of environmental problems and ensure their participation in conservation of the environment.*

## INTRODUCTION

The world scenario has undergone great upheaval during the last fifty years due to technological advancement, rapid industrialization, urbanization, developmental projects and unprecedented growth in population. This has resulted in irrecoverable destruction of natural resources affecting biosphere's environmental quality such as soil erosion, freshwater availability, food production, energy utilization, pollution loading, deforestation, desertification, global warming, ozone depletion, acid rain etc. Nature is threatening to the mankind in the form of drought, floods, earthquake, landslides, epidemics, glacier melting, super cyclones etc. Environmental problems have reached up to a level where almost everyone is conscious of them. This raising consciousness has also given rise to a widespread responsiveness to the idea for the need to do something about it (Chhokar-2000). There is a great need that the society should not only be aware of the present deteriorating environmental conditions but it should also feel the responsibility to save the environment. Education is a powerful medium for changing our behaviour. When students learn about the functioning of eco-system and about environmental action strategies that contribute to their maintenance they develop more environmentally responsible behavior (Marion & Mary – 1994).

The concerns have been reflected at different levels particularly in University Grants Commission, and the Ministry of Human Resource Development. UGC has made it compulsory to all universities and colleges in India to introduce a compulsory paper of environmental studies at undergraduate level as per the directives of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India (UGC DO No. F.13-1/2000(EA/ENV/COS-1) 24 July 2002). Though at present a fair amount of information about the environment is being given through textbooks but the question is: whether or not it has succeeded to generate a concern that may lead to effective action for conserving and improving the environment? To what extent the youth participate in Solving Environmental Problems? What is the status of Pro-environmental behavior among college students? Keeping in view, the discussion made in the preceding paragraphs, the researcher set forth the following objectives of the study:

- (i) To assess the present state of Pro-environmental behavior among college students.
- (ii) To study the influence of gender, category, locality and medium of education on the environmental behavior of the students.

- (iii) To recommend measures to combat the magnifying threat to environment.

## **Methodology**

The paper presents a survey about the Pro-environmental behavior of college students. The survey is explorative and diagnostic. Knowing exactly how students perceive of environmental problems is an important first step. The identification of obstacles in effective implementation of environmental conservation programmes will permit to take specific actions for effective implementation of the conservation programmes. Knowing exactly how students feel and participate in environmental management programmes will help in establishing support structures and strategic development of environment friendly behaviour among the citizens of our country.

## **Sample and Tool Used**

The study has been carried out on a sample of 500 college students studying in various colleges of Haryana. Cluster random sampling technique was employed to for the collection of data. The tool used was been developed by the researcher herself. It consists of 36 statements spread over seven dimensions related to pro-environmental behavior of students:

- (i) Prevention of Pollution
- (ii) Conservation of Natural Resources
- (iii) Energy Conservation
- (iv) Conservation of Wild-life
- (v) Use of Eco-friendly products
- (vi) Management of Wastes
- (vii) Administrative Intervention

Five response categories have been provided for responding to each statement such as always, frequently, sometimes, rarely and never. The range of scores varies from 36 to 180. The test was given to 500 colleges students in informal setting out of which only 322 students returned the completely filled in test. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics of the sample.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Sample**

|                            | <b>Demographic Variable</b> | <b>N</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| <b>Gender</b>              | Male                        | 104      | 32.30             |
|                            | Female                      | 218      | 67.70             |
| <b>Locality</b>            | Rural                       | 140      | 43.48             |
|                            | Urban                       | 182      | 56.52             |
| <b>Category</b>            | General                     | 214      | 66.46             |
|                            | Reserved                    | 108      | 33.54             |
| <b>Medium of Education</b> | Hindi                       | 241      | 74.84             |
|                            | English                     | 81       | 25.16             |

### **Data Analysis**

Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test were employed to analyze the data.

### **Results**

#### ➤ **Overall Status of Pro-environmental Behavior of College Students**

On the basis of evaluation of students' responses and scores obtained, they have been categorized in five groups. Group I includes students scoring 36-63 (Not Active), Group II 64-92, Group III 93-121, Group IV 121-150 and Group V 151-180 (Highly Pro-active) environmental behaviour. The analysis of data reveals that out of 322 students studied, none of them is placed in Group I; 92 are in Group II; most of them i.e. 153 are placed in Group III; 66 are in Group IV and only 11 of them are classified in Group V. In other words, out of 322 students, only 23.9% students' exhibit high pro-active behavior with respect to environment and its management; 47.5% show moderate pro-active behaviour while 28.6% students do not behave in a pro-active manner with respect to environment.

#### ➤ **Status of Pro-environmental Behavior by Gender**

The results pertaining to status of pro-environmental behavior of college students with respect to their gender have been presented in table 2.

**Table 2: Mean, S.D. and t-value of Male and Female college students On Pro-environmental Behavior**

| <b>Groups</b> | <b>N</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>S.D.</b> | <b>t-value</b> |
|---------------|----------|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| <b>Male</b>   | 104      | 101.24      | 8.7         | <b>3.28 S</b>  |
| <b>Female</b> | 218      | 115.56      | 9.6         |                |

A study of table 2 reveals that Out of 322 students, 218 girls and 104 boys have been subjected to assessment for their pro-active environment behavior reveals that the mean and S.D. value for the girls is 115.56 and 9.6 whereas the same for the boys has been computed 101.24 and 8.7. The differences in mean scores indicate significant differences in the pro-environmental behavior of girls and boys. The scores when compared with t-test are significant at 0.01 level of significance. This means girls exhibit more pro-active environmental behavior than boys. Therefore, it can be concluded that gender affects pro-environmental behavior of students.

➤ **Status of Pro-environmental Behavior by locality**

The results pertaining to status of pro-environmental behavior of college students with respect to their place of residence have been presented in table 3.

**Table 3: Mean, S.D. and t-value of Rural and Urban college students On Pro-environmental Behavior**

| <b>Groups</b> | <b>N</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>S.D.</b> | <b>t-value</b> |
|---------------|----------|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| <b>Rural</b>  | 140      | 112.62      | 8.13        | <b>0.72 NS</b> |
| <b>Urban</b>  | 180      | 114.18      | 10.2        |                |

The mean scores of urban and rural students have been found to be 114.18 and 112.62 with S.D. 10.2 and 8.13 respectively. No significant difference, thus, appeared between the Pro-environmental behavior of urban and rural students. The calculated value between these two groups 0.72 being less than the table value of 't' at 0.05 level of significance also shows little difference between them. Though the students residing in urban areas have a little edge over their counterparts residing in rural areas, there is no remarkable effect of the locality on the environmental behavior of the students.

➤ **Status of Pro-environmental Behavior by Category**

The following table presents results pertaining to status of pro-environmental behavior of college students with respect to their category.

**Table 4: Mean, S.D. and t-value of General and Reserved category students  
On Pro-environmental Behavior**

| <b>Groups</b>   | <b>N</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>S.D.</b> | <b>t-value</b> |
|-----------------|----------|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| <b>General</b>  | 214      | 113.46      | 8.7         | 3.02 <b>S</b>  |
| <b>Reserved</b> | 108      | 103.34      | 9.5         |                |

Table 4 reveals that t-value for difference in mean scores of general and reserved categories of students is significant at 0.01 level of significance. The mean and S.D. Values for students belonging to General Category are 113.46 and 8.7 respectively whereas for those pertaining to the Reserved Category, it was counted to be 103.34 and 9.5 in the same order. When results are compared in the context of means scores it is found that the mean scores of pro-environmental behavior of students belonging to general category are higher by 10.12 than that of their counterparts belonging to reserved category. Therefore, it can be concluded that the students belonging to General Category exhibit better pro-active environment behavior than their counterparts.

➤ **Status of Pro-environmental Behavior by Medium of Education**

The results pertaining to status of pro-environmental behavior of college students with respect to their medium of education have been presented in table 5.

**Table 5: Mean, S.D. and t-value of Hindi and English Medium students  
On Pro-environmental Behavior**

| <b>Groups</b>         | <b>N</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>S.D.</b> | <b>t-value</b> |
|-----------------------|----------|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| <b>Hindi Medium</b>   | 241      | 107.48      | 9.2         | 0.63 <b>NS</b> |
| <b>English Medium</b> | 81       | 109.32      | 8.1         |                |

Table 5 reveals that the mean and S.D. value for the students have English medium background has been calculated as 109.32 and 8.1 respectively whereas the same for the students coming from Hindi medium was found to be 107.48 and 9.2 in the same order. It was found that there is no significant difference between the environmental values of the students belonging to the above mentioned mediums of their education. It may therefore be concluded that medium of

education of the students does not play any role in their pro-active behavior with respect to environment conservation and management. However, apparently students from English medium have an edge over those who are studying in Hindi medium.

## **Discussion**

The results obtained suggests that girl students have better pro-active environmental behavior than the boys; students of general category have better pro-active environmental behavior than the reserved category; while there are marginal difference between students belonging to rural or urban setting and studying in Hindi or English medium. The study reveals that the students studying in different colleges in Haryana exhibit intermediate pro-active environmental behavior. It could be prescribed due to various reasons which are as follows:

- i. The problems of Environmental Education are universal in nature and directly related to the complex problems of development process, persistent poverty, growing population and environmental degradation.
- ii. Environmental themes are widely integrated into formal education courses. Yet we do not know how effective they are in real-life situations, or if formal education is the best way to achieve a sustainable society, a society that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generations. Research is necessary to provide the answers.
- iii. Numerous NGOs and other organizations are involved in the field of Environmental Education. Any organization can boast that it is successfully undertaking Environmental Education activities. Nevertheless, there is also duplication of activities and competition among different organizations. When this is so, then it is necessary to determine their status and synergize their strengths in promoting Environmental Education in the region.
- iv. Finally, merely raising awareness is not enough to promote Environmental Education. Environmental Education must go beyond raising of awareness. It must inspire interest and encourage people to pilot-test new ideas and then, based on their evaluation, adopt them as integral parts of their lives. For this, more projects and actions are required to provide role models for successful Environmental Education efforts.

## Conclusion

Environmental Education has obtained momentum but has not been able to make the quantum leap towards preventing, stopping and reversing environmental degradation. In other words, there is a gap between theory and practice of environmental education being imparted in our educational institutions. Change in mental attitude, way of thinking, living styles can contribute in shaping behaviour in an eco-friendly direction. The researcher opines that the students need to be given intensive training in environmental education so that they could acquire, sustain and develop relevant skills to impart the same to their students for making them aware of, and concerned about the environment and its associated problems, besides having the knowledge, awareness, skills, attitude, values, motivations and commitment to work individually and collectively for the restoration, conservation and improvement of environment with zeal and enthusiasm.

## References

- Chhokar, K.B. (2000) “Sharing Concerns in Environmental Education”. University News Vol. 38 (26), 1-3.
- Efrat Eilam & Trop Tamar. (2012), ‘Environmental Attitudes and Environmental Behavior—Which Is the Horse and Which Is the Cart?’ Sustainability Vol. 4, 2210-2246.
- Ohler, A.M.& Billger, S.M.(2014) Does environmental concern change the tragedy of the commons? Factors affecting energy saving behaviors and electricity usage. Ecological Economics, Vol. 107, 1-12.
- Sindhvani, Anuradha & Sharma, Hemant Lata (2007) “Study of Responsible Environmental Behaviour among Prospective Teachers in relation to Gender and Category”. Maharashi Dayanand University Research Journal, Vol.6, No. 1.
- Siddiqui, Faisal Z (2006) “Analysis of Policies and Strategies for Promotion of Environmental Education in India”. University News, Vol. 44 (12), 60-62.