

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS, KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTION AMONG FACULTY MEMBERS IN COLLEGES OF CHANDRAPUR CITY, CENTRAL INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The present study focused on faculty member's environmental awareness, knowledge and perception in colleges of Chandrapur city, Central India. The study was carried out in 2016. For conducting this study the accessible ten colleges in the city were selected. Sample size for the study includes 12 faculty members, which comprises of equal number of male and female (n=6, 50%) who were teaching UGC's Environmental Studies course. The data was collected from them through interview schedule which was specially designed and developed taking into consideration the objectives of the study. The results revealed that the variables like gender, area background and stream had significant impact on faculty members environmental awareness and knowledge. It was observed that level of environmental awareness was higher 60.37% whereas, knowledge was low with 27.00% among faculty members.

Keywords: Chandrapur, environmental awareness, environmental knowledge, environmental perception, faculty member

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Introduction

Today's the main area of human concern is environment, who are mockingly and almost certain naively, in charge for degrading, destroying and polluting the environment (Shobeiri & Prahallada, 2008). The stumpy level of awareness towards environmental issues is the origin source of enrichment of these problems (Kumari *et al*, 2012). Generating awareness among the general public, so that it grows into part of their lifestyle, lead to the protection of environment. The environmental education and its associated planned is the main key to achieve this goal (Singh *et al*, 2014). Out of the very few countries in the world, India is one of them who had pledge to environmental protection and improvement was enshrined in the constitution. The Ministry of Environment, and Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) of the Government of India, both had a major thrust in environmental education (Pandya, 2000). India greatly realizes that, the unparalleled enlistment of people's mentality, thoughts, institutions and resources to come up with a socially just and environmentally sustainable proposal for survival, moving towards sustainability lies in this strategy, in which a central role in this odyssey has been recognized to play by education (Ravindranath, 2012).

The accountability for environmental education at the formal level mainly depends upon schools, college and universities and other territory institutions (Kumari *et al*, 2012). If the teacher themselves have mastery over environmental awareness, then they can play a vital role in the formal system of education by educating their students about environmental related issues (Larijani, 2010).

For environmental education, instructors identified as a main target viewers since for long time. For example environmental education should include in pre-service and in-service teacher education as specially referred by the Belgrade Charter (1975) and recommendations 17 and 18 from the 1977 Tbilisi Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education (UNESCO, 1978) (Gough, 2009).

The present study was aimed at identifying the levels of environmental awareness, knowledge and perception towards UGC's compulsory Environmental Studies course among faculty

members of Chandrapur city in Central India. It hypothesized that teachers do differ in their levels of environmental awareness and knowledge. Demographic variables like gender, area and stream type will have significant influence on levels of environmental awareness and knowledge.

Methodology

For conducting this study a research tool faculty member's interview schedule was used. This interview schedule was especially designed and developed for this study. The interview schedule had the self efficiency to evaluate the environmental awareness and knowledge of faculty members and also determines the views of faculty members regarding the UGC's Environmental Studies course.

Sample size

The study focused on the faculty members of the senior colleges of Chandrapur city, Central India that offers UGC's six months compulsory course in Environmental Studies. For faculty member's sampling, those faculty members who were engaged in teaching and evaluation of this UGC's Environmental Studies course were identified and included for the study. In some colleges one faculty member was co-ordinator for all the aspects of this course while in selected colleges two faculty members were appointed for imparting this course. The data collected from the faculty member's was analyzed on the basis of comparison of response.

Results and Discussion

The results obtained from the study are presented in Figures 1, 2 and 3. These figures provide insight into environmental awareness and knowledge with respect to gender, area, background and stream and also revealed perception of faculty members towards this course.

Awareness

Among gender of the faculty members (Figure 1), female faculty members had 64.62% environmental awareness, whereas; male members had 58.12%. On the basis of background of the faculty members, rural background had this attribute at 66.75%, whereas; in urban background it was 59.12%. Among different streams, Science and Social Work faculty members had 62.5% environmental awareness followed by Arts faculties at 60.37% and least was in

Pharmacy 50.00%. It was observed that at different variables, environmental awareness was about on an average 60.00%.

Knowledge

Faculty member's environmental knowledge is an influencing factor among students environmental knowledge. Figure 2 depicts environmental knowledge of faculty members. Among gender, both male and female had environmental knowledge at 28% and 27% respectively which was comparable. The background of the faculty members showed that rural background had it at 27% and urban at 28%. It was observed that background of the faculty members had not influenced the environmental knowledge. Influence of stream on environmental knowledge reported that maximum environmental knowledge at 33.5% was observed in Arts faculty members followed by Science at 25.00%, whereas; Pharmacy and Social Work had 17.00% each. It was observed that stream influence environmental knowledge, however; other variables do not influence it and it was more or less similar and comparable.

Perception towards the course

Faculty members who were imparting this course to students play a significant role in success and failure of the course. Faculty member's perception towards this course is essential to make certain improvements so as to make the course more effective and to achieve the objectives for which it was developed. Faculty members perception towards the course is presented in Figure 3. The variables that were studied includes the achievement of the aim for which the course was developed, 50% faculty members felt that it was too some extent, whereas; 33% had reported as not achieved and only 17% had opinion that it was achieved. All the faculty members were in opinion that the course need to be changed. Given the options for change to be made 83% faculty members stated that the examination should be university based rather than existing college based and other 17% felt modification in theory paper setting. At present, the examination pattern is theory examination of MCQ type and each college has liberty to conduct its own examination for this course. However, it was observed that no uniformity in such situation can be maintained and hence need to be modified.

Faculty member's perception towards student's involvement in this course was poor involvement at 75%, moderate involvement by 17% and good involvement by 8%. Towards quality of the course, it was reported to be very good by 8%, good by 33%, average by 50% and poor by 8%. About more than half of the faculty members had reported the quality of the course as average and poor which gives an indication that the course quality needs to be improved at large.

Conclusion

Among faculty members, female faculty members had more environmental awareness, whereas; Pharmacy faculty member had minimum and in other faculty members this attribute was comparable in nature. Rural background faculty members had more environmental awareness than urban background. Faculty member's environmental knowledge was not affected by gender, area background, whereas; affected stream wise and found that Arts faculties had maximum environmental knowledge followed by Science, Pharmacy and Social Work. Faculty members were also in the opinion that the course did not achieve the aims for which it was designed and developed. All faculty members were in opinion that the course need to be modified and it should be in the form of conduct of examination and theory paper setting. Student's involvement as reported by faculty members was poor (75%). Quality of the course rated by faculty member was average (50%).

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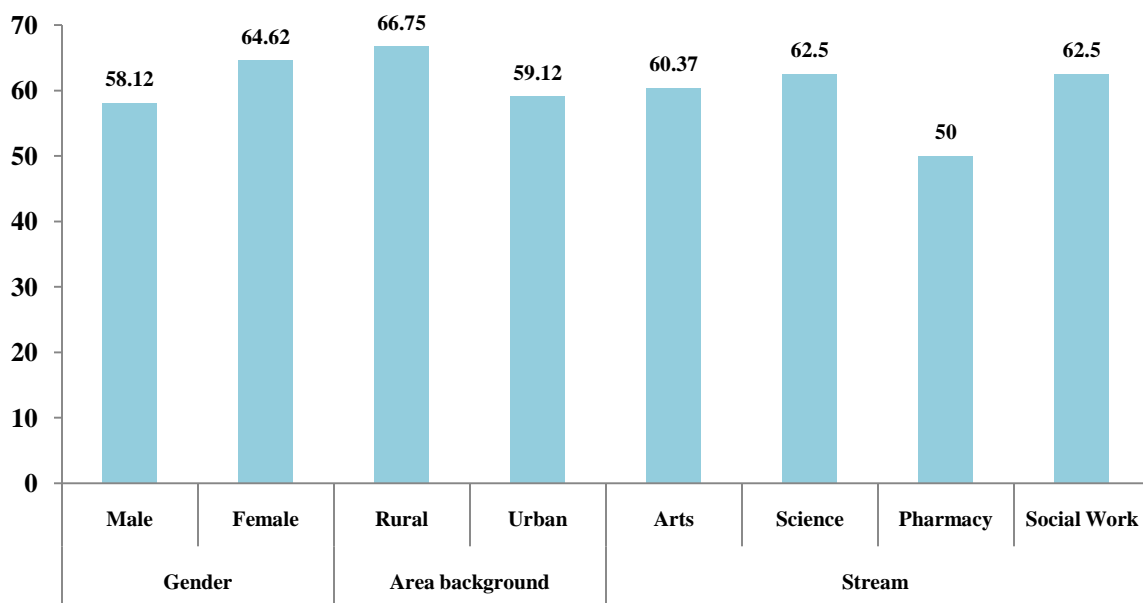


Figure 1: Faculty member’s environmental awareness

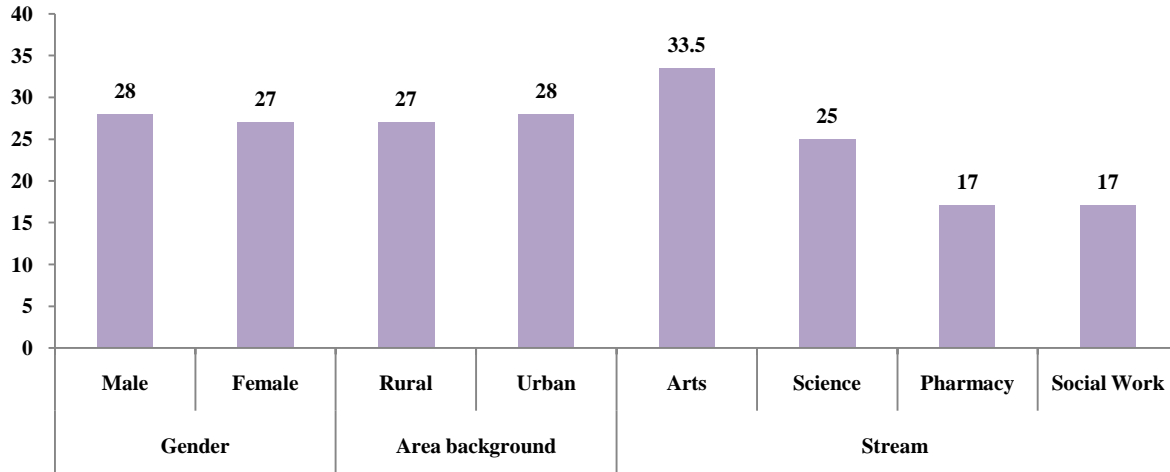


Figure 2: Faculty member’s environmental knowledge

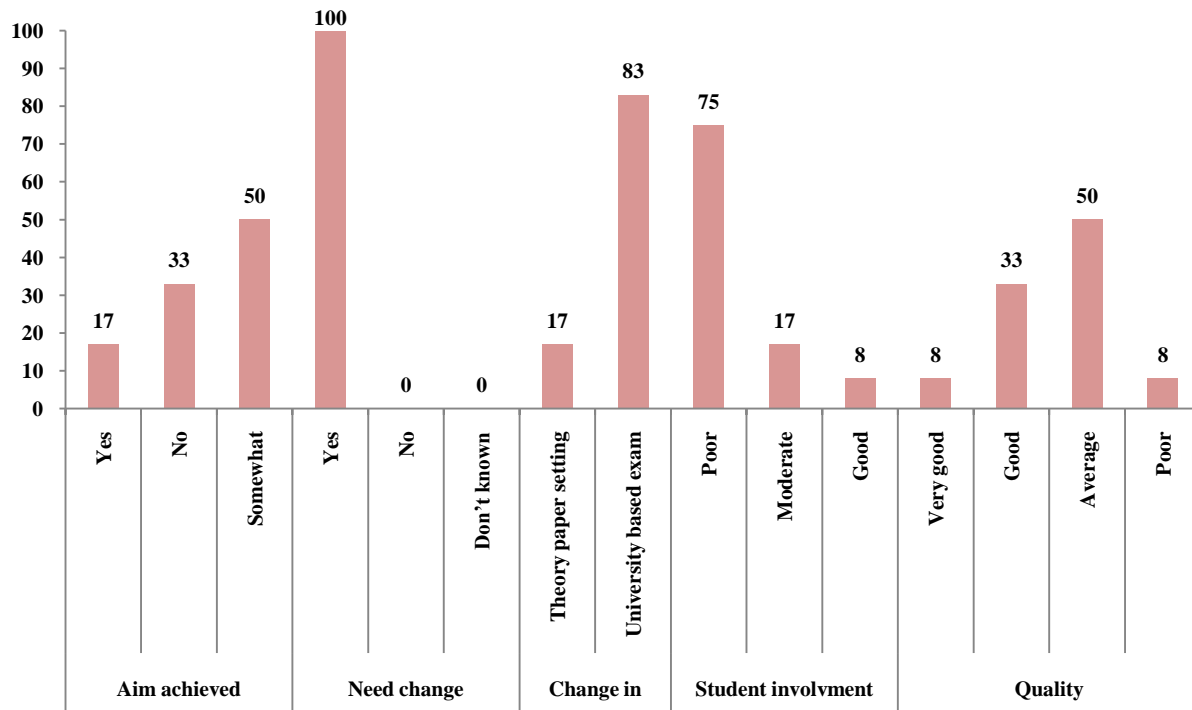


Figure 3: Faculty member’s perception towards the course