



Research Paper

## A Comparative study of Pro-Environmental behaviour between University Students and Professionals in India

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### ABSTRACT

In the present, it is necessary to adapt environment friendly behaviour to fight off ecological crisis and restore balance in the Nature. Pro-Environment Behaviour is based on voluntary and conscious choice an individual makes to sustain, conserve and protect the environment. It requires active engagement of citizens at both personal and civic level within a society to bring about desirable consequences. Present study attempts to understand the pro-environmental behaviour in terms of participatory actions and leadership actions of 212 University Students and Professional in India. Results suggest that University Students are more likely to be engaged in Participatory and Leadership Action to protect environment than young Professionals in India ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**KEYWORDS**- Pro-Environmental Behaviour, Participatory Actions, Leadership Actions

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Now, it is often observed that people across the globe are concerned about the impeding ecological crisis (Leiserowitz et al, 2005) and want to protect and preserve it before it is too late. In the past decade increased attention as been given to the conative factors behind the ecological crisis. (Giuliani, 2009; Winkel et al 2009). For better implementation of the ideas, it is important to understand that the pro-environmental behaviours have high impact (Geller 2002, Stern 2000), specificity (McKenzie-Mohr, 2000,2011) and potential to bring change. According to Stern (2000) actions favourable for environment can range from individual private practices like switching off the lights at micro-level to environmental activism at political level like organising a protest at macro-level.

In recent times, it is seen that younger generation has found to be more enthusiastic and highly concerned towards the environmental issues (Arcury & Christianson, 1993; Honnold, 1984–1985;). Movements against ecological crisis are led by young leaders which has gained momentum and creating a large impact at organizational and international level. Studies suggest that young teens are show more environmental concerns than older teens (Szagun & Mesenholl, 1993).

Pro-environmental behaviour can be influenced by demography, internal and external factors (Kollmus et al 2002) like personal responsibility (Dasi et al 2019), Connectedness to Nature (Geng et al 2015) and get engaged in specific set of skills for actions i.e. ‘action competence’ (Jensen and Schnack, 1997).

Many countries have assessed the environmental attitude, awareness and knowledge to understand the pro-environmental behaviour of their citizens, especially young people which includes school and university students. Studies show that school students display high concern for nature despite have less knowledge about it (Hausbeck,1992) where as university students show conscious concern about the environmental problem but are pessimistic about the future implications (Wong, 2003).

Pro-Environmental behaviour is defined as “voluntary intentional behaviour that results in the benefit of physical environment with greater sustainable development” (Susan Alisat and Manuel Reimer, 2015). It gives importance to sustainability, preservation, conservation and environmental protection with greater

efficiency (Schultz et al 2012). Where as Corral (2010) defines Pro-Environmental Behaviour as “*intentional, effective actions that correspond to social and individual demands and that result in the preservation of the physical environment*”.

There are insufficient actions taken to the conserve environment, even if people are concerned they practice at personal level which needs to be integrated at macro or social level. Hence this study attempts to compare the pro-environmental behaviour of University Students and young Professional in India.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This is a quantitative study to compare the pro-environmental behaviour of university students and professionals in India using participatory actions and leadership actions to gain insight about the citizen engagement.

Objective – This study intends to compare the Pro-Environmental Behaviour (in terms of Participatory Actions and Leadership Actions) of University Students and Professionals in India

## III. RESEARCH DESIGN

The study uses Ex-post facto Research Design

### Hypothesis –

1. There is significant difference between the means of Participatory Action of University Students and Professionals
2. There is significant difference between the means of Leadership Action of University Students and Professionals

**Sample-** 212 data were collected through incidental sampling with 60 professionals (engineers, lawyers, doctors) and 152 University Students with age range of 18-35.

**Data Collection** – Data was collected through online platform.

### Operational Definition –

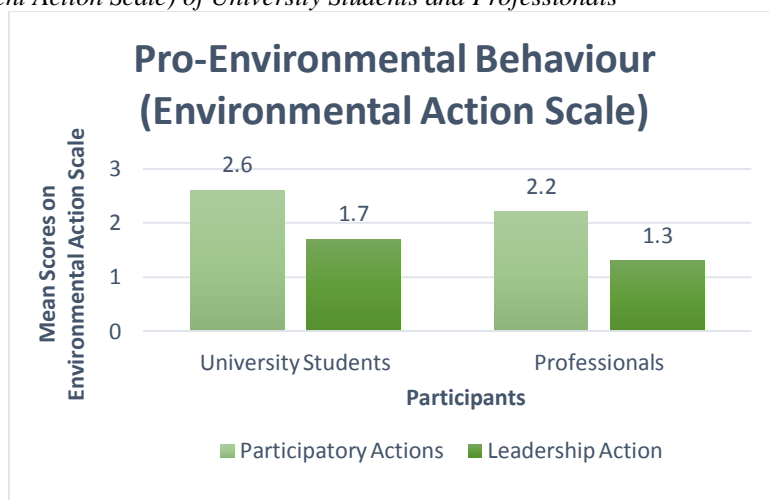
Pro-environmental Behaviour are the scores on the Environmental Action Scale (EAAS) which is developed by Susan Alisat and Manuel Reimer (2015).

### Tool –

**Environment Action Scale-** was developed by Susan Alisat and Manuel Reimer in 2015, to measure the engagement of citizens in environmental issues ranging from micro (Participatory actions) to macro (Leadership Actions) level. It is an 18-item scale having a Coefficient  $\alpha$  0.9 and Item-total correlation that is between 0.43 – 0.8.

## IV. RESULTS

*Graph 1 – Descriptive Chart of Pro-Environmental Behaviour in terms of Participatory Actions and Leadership Actions (Environment Action Scale) of University Students and Professionals*



**Table 1 – Comparing t-test of Pro-Environmental Behaviour in terms of Participatory action of Leadership action of Students and Professionals**

Environment Action Scale		Mean Difference	t	Sig.
Participatory Action	University Students Professionals	0.366	4.507	0.000*
Leadership Action	University Students Professionals	0.412	5.548	0.000*

\*Significant at 0.05 level

**Table 2 - The mean score of participants on Environmental Action Scale where 0 is minimum and 4 is maximum**

	EAS_1	EAS_2	EAS_3	EAS_4	EAS_5	EAS_6	EAS_7	EAS_8	EAS_9	EAS_10	EAS_11	EAS_12	EAS_13	EAS_14	EAS_15	EAS_16	EAS_17	EAS_18
<b>N</b>	212	212	212	212	212	212	212	212	212	212	212	212	212	212	212	212	212	212
<b>Mean</b>	2.5	1.4	0.76	2.59	1.68	.76	.34	.89	1.19	.69	.40	.47	.55	.89	1.30	.70	1.56	1.14

## V. DISCUSSION

From *Graph 1*, it is inferred that the University students scored an average score of 2.6 and Professionals scored 2.2 as their **Participatory Action** on each item of Environment Action Scale where 0 was minimum and 4 was maximum score. This shows that university students are more inclined to perform and participate in actions related to awareness about environmental crisis.

It is also indicated from *Graph 1* that the University students scored an average of 1.7 where as Professionals scored 1.3 on each item which assessed **Leadership Actions** of the Environment Action Scale ranging from 0 to 4.

It can be seen that all the participants are more inclined to perform **participatory actions** like informing oneself about the issues, educating self about ecological crisis, participating in workshop and community events related to conservation and sustenance of nature. They spend time working with groups that are promoting awareness about the climate change which can be considered as small steps towards a giant leap. Few of the actions like using online platform to raise awareness and spending time in organization that works for cause can be the beginning of **leadership** actions in both Students and Professionals

Results indicate that –

- *There is significant difference between Participatory Action of University Students (M = 2.6 SD = 0.788) and Professionals (M = 2.2 SD = 0.671), t(194) = 4.5071, p < 0.05.*
- *There is significant difference between the Leadership Action University Students (M = 1.7 SD = 0.877) and Professionals (M = 1.3, SD = 0.562), t (194)= 5.548, p < 0.05.*

**Hence the hypothesis is accepted.**

There is significant difference between the means of Participatory Action of University Students and Professionals

There is significant difference between the means of Leadership Action of University Students and Professionals

*In the present study, it was found that the University students are more motivated to perform participatory and leadership actions than working Professionals in India.*

From Table 2 – It is seen that Item number **4** (2.59), **1** (2.5), **5** (1.68), **17** (1.56), **2** (1.4), **9**(1.19), **15** (1.30) and **18** (1.14) have higher response means that people like to “Talked to others about environmental issues”, “Educated myself about the environmental issues”, “Use online tools to raise awareness about the environmental issues”, “Participating in nature conservation event like planting trees”, “Participated in an educational event related to environmental concerns”, “Financially supported a cause” and “spent time working with a group / organization that deals with the connection of the environment to other societal issues such as justice or poverty.”

This study implies that University students and Professionals in India are involved more in Participatory Action which is less intense citizenship behaviour towards preservation of environment where they realise the environmental issues. (Alisat et al 2015) but have to develop more intense citizenship behaviour like organizing community events, protests and rallies to spread awareness at societal level.

The university students’ enthusiastic involvement and greater leadership actions in comparison with professionals can be supported by studies where age and environmental concern are inversely related (Honold, 1984) due to the differences in socio-biological process of aging and occurrence of important historical events which have affected the generation differently.

## VI. CONCLUSION

It is concluded that there is significant difference in Pro-Environmental Behaviour measured in terms of Participatory Action and Leadership Action between University Students and Professionals in India. University students are more inclined to perform actions for protecting and preserving the environment than

Professionals in India. Currently citizens are engaging more in micro level of activities which needs gain momentum and reach macro-level to bring the desirable change.

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