

## ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS OF POST-GRADUATE STUDENTS-A STUDY

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### **ABSTRACT**

*(Environmental ethics indicates moral principles and moral behaviour in relation to the environment. It is concerned with the questioning and rethinking of relationship of humans with natural environment. In the present study an attempt has been made to know the level of environmental ethics of post graduate students. As sample of the study 33 post graduate students studying in Kumar Bhaskar Varma Sanskrit and Ancient Studies University, Assam has been selected. For collecting primary data 'Environmental Ethics Scale' developed by Dr. (Mrs.) Haseen Taj has been used. The result of the study is found to be satisfactory. Most of the post graduate students (69.70%) are found to have extremely high environmental ethics. Also it is revealed that there is no significant difference between female and male students regarding their environmental ethics.*

**Key terms:** *Environmental Ethics, Environmental Degradation, Environmental Awareness, Environmental Attitude.)*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Environment is the surrounding conditions and situations of living and non living things. It is the environment which provides us all requirements for our survival. It means our survival is depended on the survival of the environment. Hence protection and preservation of our natural environment has become one of our prime liabilities. In this connection a new concept "Environmental Ethics" has been emerged as an academic discipline in the 1970s. 'Ethics' means moral principles that govern a person's behaviour. Thus, environmental ethics indicates moral principles and moral behaviour in relation to the environment. The physical, chemical and other natural forces constitute the environment. There are animals, plants, soil, water and other living and non

living things. Having superior characteristics than other things of the environment, humans are considered as the superior to all other living and non-living things. Man has the capacity to utilize natural resources to fulfill their needs. But in utilizing the natural resources there must have a limit. But, people have forgotten this limit which has caused environmental degradation. Environmental degradation has been identified as one of the ten threats officially identified by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenge of the United Nations. In such circumstances the environmental ethics has emerged as a subject of ethical concern towards the environment. Environmental ethics can enhance environmental quality which is necessary for quality of human life.

As such the youths are to be properly oriented with environmental ethics where universities have to play a key role. Higher education has its responsibility for sustainable development. In the first World Conference on Higher Education considered that renewal of higher education is essential for the whole of society to be able to face up to the challenges of the twenty first century. The Declaration of the World Conference on Higher Education emphasizes, since society is increasingly knowledge-based, higher education and research now act as essential components of cultural, socio-economic and environmentally sustainable development of individuals, communities and nations.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In the present study the problem has been stated as “ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS OF POST-GRADUATE STUDENTS-A CASE STUDY”

## **JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY**

In the recent times, the earth has been threatened by various environmental hazards. This has raised the question of survival of the environment. Hence humans need to include nature in their ethics. Also humans need to include themselves in nature. Somewhat ironically, just when humans with their increasing industry and technology seemed further and further from nature, having more knowledge about natural processes and more power to manage them, the natural world has emerged as a focus of ethical concern. (Bunnin & James, 2003)

Environmental ethics has created the room for questioning and rethinking of the relationship of humans with the natural environment. Education is such an instrument which can promote the moral grounds for the preservation and restoration of the environment. Especially higher educational institutions i.e. universities should try to promote an environmental awareness among the students to build a positive environmental attitude who are going to represent the society in different fields. The present study is a case study. The post graduate students of

Kumar Bhaskar Varma Sanskrit and Ancient Studies University, Assam have been selected for the study. The present study has been considered as significant because it is an attempt to know the environmental ethics of post graduate students which will help to assess the students' environmental awareness and environmental attitude.

### **ABOUT KUMAR BHASKAR VARMA SANSKRIT & ANCIENT STUDIES UNIVERSITY**

Kumar Bhaskar Varma Sanskrit and Ancient Studies University is the first ever Sanskrit University in Assam, India established in the year 2011 by the Govt. of Assam. It is situated at Namati , Nalbari District of Assam. Though it is a Sanskrit University, but there is the provision for studies in Humanities and Ancient Studies also. Accordingly there are three schools- School of Sanskrit Studies, School of Ancient Studies and School of humanities. There is also the provision of a Five Years Integrated Course in Sanskrit under the School of Sanskrit Studies. The university has taken part in rigorous exercise of bringing the best potentialities within the students so the society could have resourceful contributor in quality enhancement in different phases of social life.

### **OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

**Environmental Ethics:** Environmental ethics is a branch of applied ethics which is concerned with the moral grounds for preservation and restoration of the environment. It is a part of environmental philosophy which considers extending the traditional boundaries of ethics from solely including human to including the non-human world. It exerts influence on other disciplines like Environmental Law, Environmental Geography etc.

**Environmental Degradation:** Deterioration of environment has been defined as environmental degradation. It refers to the depletion of the natural resources such as air, water and soil. Destruction of the ecosystem, extinction of the wildlife and pollution are the outcomes of environmental degradation.

**Environmental Awareness:** Environmental awareness means knowledge and perception of the surrounding environment and its issues. It is a concern about and well informed interest in environment.

**Environmental Attitude:** Environmental attitude means the outlook or inclination towards the environmental condition and issues. It is a settled way of thinking or feeling about the environment.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has been conducted with the following objectives-

1. To know the level of environmental ethics of post graduate students.
2. To find out the difference between male and female students regarding their level of environmental ethics.

## HYPOTHESES

A null hypothesis has been formulated in connection to the Objective-2 as follows-

There is no significant difference between male and female post graduate students regarding their level of environmental ethics.

## DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present study has been delimited to post graduate students of School of Humanities, Kumar Bhaskar Varma Sanskrit and Ancient Studies University, Assam.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Benjamin, et. al. (2000) made a study to find out the factors affecting environmental awareness among Head Start families in Mississippi. Significant association existed between both education and race/ethnicity and the responses of survey participants. Higher education was commonly and positively associated with indicators of heightened environmental awareness.

Mifsud and Mark (2011) conducted a study on the environmental knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of Maltese Youth. The results from the research indicated that students are more knowledgeable about the global environment than about local environment and those students receive most information from school, television and internet. The overall attitudes of students towards the environment appears to be strongly positive.

## METHODOLOGY

**Research Method:** Keeping in mind the nature of the present study Descriptive Method has been adopted.

**Population and Sample:** All the Post-Graduate Students of the School of Humanities, Kumar Bhaskar Varma Sanskrit and Ancient Studies University are the population of the study. The sample of the present study consisted

of 33 Post-Graduate Students. Out of these, there are 18 female students and 15 male students as sample of the study.

**Sampling:** For selecting the sample of the present study Purposive Sapling has been used.

**Tool used:** For collecting primary data to conduct the present study “*Environmental Ethics Scale*” developed by *Dr. (Mrs.) Haseen Taj* has been used. There are all total 45 items out of which 8 are meant to assess ethics in favourable (Positive) direction and 37 in unfavourable (negative) direction. The range of scores is from 1 to 135 with the higher score indicating the positive environmental ethics and vice-versa. The levels of environmental ethics are interpreted as Extremely High Ethics, High Ethics, Above Average Ethics, Average Ethics, Below Average Ethics, Low Ethics and Extremely Low Ethics.

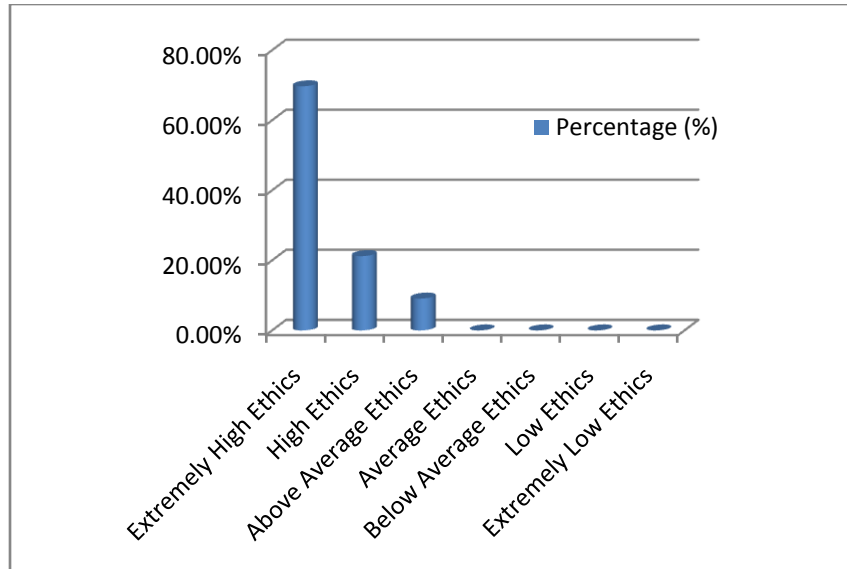
**Statistical Techniques used:**

Simple percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation and T-test

**ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

**Table-1: Data showing the percentage of level of environmental ethics of post graduate students.**

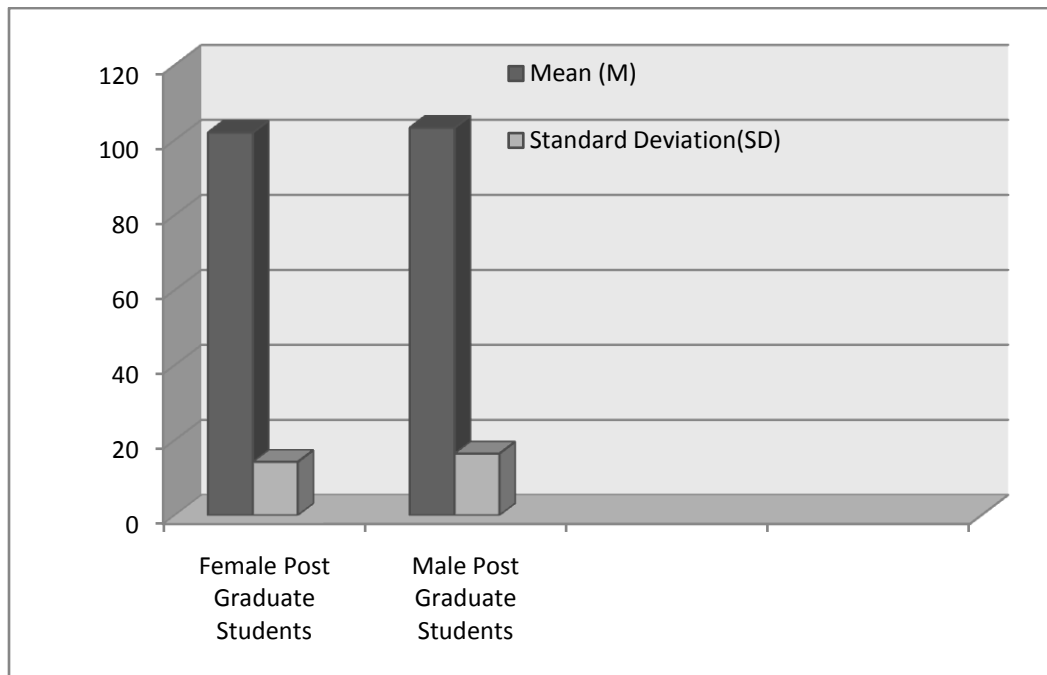
Level of Environmental Ethics	Total no. of Post Graduate Students	Percentage (%)
Extremely High Ethics	23	69.70%
High Ethics	7	21.21%
Above Average Ethics	3	9.09%
Average Ethics	-	-
Below Average Ethics	-	-
Low Ethics	-	-
Extremely Low Ethics	-	-



**Fig-1: Data showing the percentage of level of environmental ethics of post graduate students.**

**Table-2: Data showing the Mean, Standard Deviation and t-Value regarding level of environmental ethics between female and male students.**

Gender of Post Graduate Students	Total No. of Post Graduate Students	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation(SD)	t-Value	Result
Female	18	102.05	14.23	0.236	Not significant at 0.05
Male	15	103.33	16.45		



**Fig.-2: Data showing Mean and Standard Deviation of Female and Male Post Graduate Students.**

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the present study are found to be satisfactory. The major findings are mentioned below-

- 69.70% of the post graduate students have extremely high level of environmental ethics.
- 21.21% of post graduate students are found to possess high level of environmental ethics.
- Only 9.09% of the post graduate students are found to have above average level of environmental ethics.
- It is found that no post graduate students are found to have average environmental ethics, below average environmental ethics, low environmental ethics and extremely low environmental ethics.
- It is also found that there is no significant difference between female and male post graduate students regarding their level of environmental ethics.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Environmental ethics helps in making ethical discussion related to the environment. Promoting a sustainable environment is decided by the environmental ethics possessed by people. It is the responsibility of the universities to develop proper environmental ethics by promoting moral principles regarding the environment. In this regard the universities can undertake the following initiatives-

- At the university level attempt should be made to explore moral, social and other basic human values required for inculcating environmental ethics.
- To develop environmental ethics, environmental awareness and understanding is required to be developed. For this, institutional authority should make attempt to involve the students in diverse environmental issues of the surrounding.
- University education should undertake a holistic approach to interrelate the environmental issues to all areas of understanding and experience.
- At the university level ample opportunity should be provided on the part of the students to establish a link between personal lives and wider environment. It will help the learners to develop an understanding of themselves and the world around them.

## CONCLUSION

There are many ethical decisions that have to be made by humans with respect to the environmental issues like what are the environmental obligations that is to be kept for future generation, how to make best use and to conserve the environment to secure and expand life, what role can planetary boundaries play in reshaping the human-earth relationship etc. In the present study the analysis has shown a satisfactory result. In this study the post graduate students are found to have satisfactory level of environmental ethics. Higher level of environmental ethics indicates environmental awareness and positive environmental attitude on the part of the post graduate students. As such in order to maintain this level of environmental ethics university education should orient the students with the critical thinking and reflection for understanding the environmental issues and to develop environmental ethics.

## REFERENCES

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