

Nature connectedness and subjective well-being in college students

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Humans remained inseparable from the natural environment until the upsurge of technological advancement. Access to the natural environment is significantly different when comparing people living in urban and rural areas. Previous findings have revealed the effect of the proximity to nature on the physical and mental well-being of humans. In the current scenario, where the government is investing sufficiently more on creating cities through government policies, it would be inevitable to understand the impact of individuals' attitude towards their environment and its impact on individual's well-being. This study aims to compare the relationship between the sense of connectedness towards nature and Subjective well-being among college students of rural and urban background. The sample (N= 200) consisted of both male (n= 100) and female (n= 100) students from rural and urban backgrounds. The participants were administered with, Connectedness to nature scale and The Flourishing Scale. The data collected was analyzed by using Pearson's correlation Coefficient and Independent sample t-test. The analysis of the data revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between Nature connectedness and subjective well-being among male and female students and the rural counterparts have reported to have a comparatively better connectedness to nature and thereby a better state of subjective well-being than their urban counterparts. The more a person feels connected to nature in his surroundings, the more is his sense of subjective well-being.

Keywords: connectedness to nature, subjective wellbeing, flourishing, rural, urban

The human species have been living a prosperous and purposeful life in connection with nature through ages. The human species has got a lot of benefits through its connection to nature including improvements in mood, cognition, and health (Capaldi, Dopko, & Zelenski, 2014). Subjective nature connectedness is a very strong indicator of subjective physical and mental well-being. Researches have indicated that the enhanced sensory impact of experiences in nature strengthen nature connectedness and mindfulness among individuals (Howell, Dopko, Passmore, & Buro, 2011).

With the arrival of the modern era, human beings started to rule the universe with the machines and inventions they have made. In their greed to enforce their laws of power and authority over other living beings, humans have forgotten the basic fact that they are just another living organism in this universe and they have lost their connection with nature. The phenomena of urbanization grew exponentially in the modern era and had alienated human beings from their natural living environment and had brought them to concrete jungles called cities. The cities that grew in their size did not have the basic connect to nature as they gave too little space for the other flora and fauna to thrive. This led to an ecosystem dysfunction

in cities ending up in impairments of physical and mental well-being of city dwellers (Howell, Dopko, Passmore, & Buro, 2011). In contrast our country sides with green spaces tend to promote Physiological and Psychological well-being (Pritchard, Richardson, Sheffield, & McEwan, 2019).

A large number of studies are now concerned with the amount of local-area green space available in the modern cities and its impact on hedonic and Eudaimonic well-being of city dwellers. Consistent results have revealed adequate evidence for an association between urban local-area green space and life satisfaction (Houlden, Weich, de Albuquerque, Jarvis, & Rees, 2018). It is time to awaken to the need for Green space in our cities. At least in the coming days designing and Development of City models should have inputs from various stakeholders. The list of stakeholders must include infrastructure providers, city planners, health professionals, landscape architects, engineers, parks developers, community-based organizations, and environmental activists, who could anticipate the mental health impacts of decisions they make relating to the environment (Pretty, Peacock, Hine, Sellens, South, & Griffin, 2007).

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Method

The aim of the present study is to find out the relationship between nature connectedness and subjective well-being among college students of rural and urban background. Further it is intended to find out the gender difference that exists in the study variables.

Participants

The undergraduate students (N = 200) studying in Arts & Science colleges of Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu were selected by stratified random sampling for the present study. The sample consisted of both male (n =100 including 50 participants of rural