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# NATURE CONNECTEDNESS AND WELLBEING

Ankit Rana\* and Kalpana Jain\*\*

## ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to study the correlation between nature connectedness and psychological well-being. The sample consisted of 600 adolescents (14-19 years) taken randomly from twenty schools of Saharanpur, UP, India. Connectedness to Nature Scale (CNS) developed by Mayer and Frantz (2004) and Well-being Scale developed by Sisodia and Choudhary (2012) were used to collect the data. Significant positive correlation between nature connectedness and well-being was observed.

**Keywords;** Connectedness with Nature, Well-being, Satisfaction, Mental health.

## INTRODUCTION

For sustainable development connection of human being with nature is important. Modern technological advances have led to significant changes in the life style of an individual and patterns of social conduct resulting in excessive use and exploitation of resources. Because of urbanization and changes in lifestyle patterns individual is slipping away from the natural environment. Psychosomatic disorders are also on rise in modern time. Therefore, it is necessary to address this global problem by studying the extent to which nature connectedness and well-being are related. Connectedness with nature (CN) is seen as a personal disposition relevant for environmental as well as human health. Nature connectedness is the extent that an individual includes nature as part of their identity (Schultz, 2002). It includes an understanding of nature. Schultz (2002) describes three components of nature connectedness construct: first is cognitive components that is the care of nature connectedness and refers to how integrated one feels with nature, second is affective component that refers to an individual's sense of care for nature, and the third is behavioral component that refers to an individual's commitments to protect the natural environment. These three components make up nature connectedness and are required for a healthy relationship with nature.

Well-being (WB) can be categorized as an umbrella- term that includes experiences of positive emotional states and processes ranging from short term to long term, from current positive feelings (positive affect) to habitual dispositions (personality factors). It keeps pleasurable affect as well as general life satisfaction. Diener (1984,; 2000) and Diener et al. (2002), defined subjective WB as a combination of positive affect, the absence of negative affect and general satisfaction with life (SWL).

Research studies have been done on the nature connectedness with variables like life satisfaction, well-being, physical and psychological health. Howell., Dopko., Passmore., & Buro, (2011) in their research found positive relationship between connectivity with nature and well-being i.e.

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the construct of trait nature connectedness is associated with well-being. Individuals who are highly connected to nature also reported higher psychological well-being (i.e. greater acceptance of self), and social well-being (i.e. socially integrated), emotional well-being (i.e. positive emotion and life satisfaction). Weinstein, Przybylski, & Ryan, (2009) reported that subtle nature manipulations can increase well-being and indicators of well-being. Mayer et al., (2009) found in their experimental studies significant relation of connectedness with nature to positive affect and the ability to cope with life problems. Abraham et al., 2007; Frumkin, 2001; Groenewegen et al., 2006, Laforzezza et al., 2009, also highlighted positive effect of natural environments on health and well-being. The literature demonstrates the positive relationship between nature exposures, feeling connected to nature and subjective well-being but only few researches have been done to see relationship of nature connectedness with several aspects of psychological well-being in India, which plays significant role in happiness and positive mental health. Therefore, the following objective is framed in this research.

**Objective:** To study the correlation between nature connectedness with psychological wellbeing and its areas namely: satisfaction, efficiency, sociability, mental health and interpersonal relations among adolescents.

**Hypothesis:** There is positive relationship between nature connectedness and psychological well-being and its various areas namely: satisfaction, efficiency, sociability, mental health and interpersonal relations of adolescents.

### Methodology

**Sample:** The sample of the study consisted of 600 adolescents. The subjects were taken randomly from 20 different schools (10 from rural areas and 10 from urban areas) of Saharanpur, U.P, India. The respondents belonged to the age group of 14 to 19 years and 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> classes where 246 were males and 354 were females.

**Design:** Correlation design was used for the study.

**Tests:** Standardized tests were administered for the study. Connectedness to Nature Scale (CNS) by Mayer and Frantz, (2004) and Psychological Well-being Scale (PWBS) by Sisodia and Choudhary (2012) were used. CNS measures the extent to which participants generally feel a part of the natural world and emotionally connected to it. This measure consists of 14 items rated on a 5-point Likert Scale, with rating ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The internal consistency of the CNS using Cronbach's alpha and is .84. Test-retest reliability is  $r=.78, p<.01$ . The validity of the CNS was examined by looking at correlations between measures. The correlation between the CNS and the NEP was high,  $r=.52, p<.01$ . The CNS was also correlated with all three lifestyle scales (*lifestyle A:  $r=.55, p<.01$ ; lifestyle B:  $r=.37, p<.05$ ; and lifestyle C:  $r=.43, p<.01$* ). In addition, the correlations between the CNS and Lifestyle indices remained significant when controlling for the NEP (*lifestyle A:  $r=.46, p<.01$ ; lifestyle B:  $r=.30, p<.05$ ; and lifestyle C:  $r=.36, p<.05$* ).

Psychological Well-being Scale (PWBS) consists 50 statements with a view to measure several aspects of well being like Satisfaction, Efficiency, Sociability, Mental Health and Interpersonal relations. Items rated on a 5-point Likert Scale, with rating ranging from 1 (strongly disagree)

to 5 (strongly agree). The reliability of the scale was determined by (a) test-retest method and (b) internal consistency method. The test retest reliability was 0.87 and the consistency value for the scale is 0.90. Besides face validity as all the items of the scale are concerned with the variable under focus, the scale has high content validity. The scale was validated against the external criteria and coefficient obtained was 0.94.

**Procedure:** The data was collected through standardized questionnaires. After distribution of both Questionnaire instructions were given to respondents as per the manual of respective tests. Scoring of responses was done according to the manual. Product moment Correlation was used for analysis of data and partial correlation method was used for partialling out the effects of area and gender.

### Result and Discussion

From the Result Table 1 it is clear that correlation and partial correlation ( after partialling out the effect of area and gender) between CNS and PWB and its different aspects namely satisfaction, efficiency, sociability, mental health and interpersonal relation were significantly highly positive. The high significant positive correlation between CNS and Satisfaction ( $r=.52$ ;  $rpart=.52$ ,  $P<.01$ ) shows that people who scored high on CNS scored high on satisfaction as well. Adolescents who had high nature connectedness showed more satisfaction with their life. They think had meaning and purpose of life and consider conditions of their life good. They are satisfied with things in life. Mayer and Frantz (2004) in their study found that the connectedness to nature measure was positively correlated with life satisfaction. One possible interpretation of this finding is that feeling connected to nature makes us more satisfied with life.

**Table 1:** Pearson correlation after partialling out the effect of area (A) and gender (G) between CN and PWBS and its areas.

PWBS and Areas	CNS	Controlled for
Satisfaction	$r=.520$ ( $p=.01$ )	----
	$rpart=.518$ ( $p=.01$ )	A, G
Efficiency	$r=.625$ ( $p=.01$ )	----
	$rpart=.622$ ( $p=.01$ )	A, G
Sociability	$r=.495$ ( $p=.01$ )	----
	$rpart=.492$ ( $p=.01$ )	A, G
Mental Health	$r=.484$ ( $p=.01$ )	----
	$rpart=.479$ ( $p=.01$ )	A, G
Interpersonal Relation	$r=.602$ ( $p=.01$ )	----
	$rpart=.599$ ( $p=.01$ )	A, G
PWBS	$r=.665$ ( $p=.01$ )	----
	$rpart=.663$ ( $p=.01$ )	A, G

Correlation for efficiency ( $r=.62$ ;  $rpart=.62$ ,  $P<.01$ ), indicates that people who scored high on CNS scored high on efficiency as well or vice versa. Respondents who were high on CNS used to feel more efficient in their works and tend to feel positive and creative. They were quite good at managing responsibilities of their daily life. High positive correlation between sociability ( $r=.49$ ;  $rpart=.49$ ,  $P<.01$ ) area of PWB and CNS shows that people who scored high on CNS scored high on sociability as well and more connected with the society. It indicates that respondents who have high connectivity with nature feel that they should do what others expect from them to do, maintaining close relationship gives pleasure to them. On mental health high

correlation ( $r = .48$ ;  $r_{part} = .48$ ,  $P < .01$ ) indicates that people who scored high on CNS scored high on mental health or vice versa. The people who are high on mental health feel rested when they wake up in the morning and remain energetic, active and vigorous whole day, their level of cognitive or emotional well-being is high. In this state of well-being a person is able to cope with every day events, think clearly, be responsible, meet challenges and have good relationship with others. Results with interpersonal relation ( $r = .60$ ;  $r_{part} = .59$ ,  $P < .01$ ) indicates that people who scored high on CNS scored high on interpersonal relationship also or vice versa. People who feel more connection with nature and have individual respect, trust, open lines of communication, open mindedness, patience, empathy, love and many other attributes which add up to a strong interpersonal relationship. People who scored high on interpersonal relations enjoy company of other people and have no hesitation in talking to anyone and have good relations with relative and friends. CNS is also found to have high positive correlation with perceived well being (PWB).

Howell, et al. (2011) also reported positive relationship between connectivity with nature and well-being i.e. the construct of trait nature connectedness is associated with well-being. This means that individuals who are highly connected to nature also reports higher psychological well-being (i.e. greater acceptance of self), and social well-being (i.e. socially integrated), emotional well-being (i.e. positive emotion and life satisfaction). From the result table it is also clear that CN is significantly correlated with overall PWBS ( $r = .665$ ,  $P < .01$ ) and after partialling out the effect of area and gender, it is also significantly correlated with PWBS ( $r_{part} = .663$ ,  $P < .01$ ). It indicates that there is not so much difference in correlation after partialling out the effect of area and gender. Howell, et al. (2011) also found that nature connectedness is related to subjective well-being and other indicators of positive functioning such as solving a problem in one's life. Nisbet et al. (2009) found nature relatedness, which is quite similar to CN, to be positively correlated with several personality variables like agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness. Based on their results they assumed 'that high nature connected people may be more adventurous and easy going... more able to contemplate possible future outcomes, even if those outcomes are ambiguous. Mayer et al., (2009) found in their experimental studies significant relation of connectedness with nature to positive affect and the ability to cope with life problems. Abraham et al., 2007; Frumkin, 2001; Groenewegen et al., 2006, Laforteza et al., 2009, also highlighted positive effect of natural environments on human health and well-being.

**Conclusion:** There is positive significant correlation between connectedness with nature and psychological well-being were found after partialling out the effect of area and gender.

**Implications and Suggestions:** The study has been conducted only on adolescents of rural and urban areas of Saharanpur. Before, generalization of the result study should be conducted in other areas and on other population as well. The study indicated significant positive correlation of nature connectedness with well being and its different aspects. Therefore, nature connectedness should be promoted in educational institutions. Nature visits, experiential nature education may be helpful in it. Enhancement in nature connectedness can be utilized to improve health, mindfulness and healing. Green care, gardening, nature walk, nature closeness can be used to contribute in well being of different groups in the society.

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