



# ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN RELATION TO GENDER AND LOCALE

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## **ABSTRACT:**

*Environmental awareness is an essential part of education that has gained prominence in recent years. The main purpose of the present study was to explore the level of environmental awareness among secondary school students in relation to gender and locale. The study was carried out in Kangra, Himachal Pradesh and the sample consisted of 100 students in the ninth and tenth grades. The descriptive Survey method was used to collect data. Data were gathered by using the Environmental awareness scale developed and standardized by the researcher. The data interpretation was done with the help of mean, standard deviation and t-test. According to the findings, male students had a higher level of environmental awareness than female students. Furthermore, it also infers that rural secondary school students had a better level of environmental awareness than their urban counterparts.*

**KEYWORDS:** Environmental awareness, Gender and Locale.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Environmental awareness is an ideology that instils in humans an urge and responsibility to respect, protect and preserve the natural environment from anthropogenic afflictions (Rai & Rai, 2021). Environmental awareness is a recognition and understanding of the natural world. It includes understanding the environmental consequences of human actions such as pollution, deforestation, energy crisis, climate change and destruction of natural resources. Environmental awareness motivates people and societies to take proactive measures to safeguard and preserve the environment for future generations. This involves implementing sustainable practices, decreasing waste, boosting renewable energy and assisting with conservation initiatives. Fostering environmental awareness has become essential for addressing serious global concerns and creating a healthier, more sustainable world.

Environmental awareness is critical for society's long-term growth because it fosters positive attitudes, values and behaviours toward the environment. Environmental education is just one way to improve students' environmental knowledge while simultaneously enhancing their skills, values and viewpoints toward the environment. Students in secondary school are an important target group for environmental education because they are at an essential stage in their cognitive, affective and social development. They are also future citizens

and decision-makers who will shape tomorrow's environmental policies and practices. As a result, it is critical to comprehend the level of environmental awareness among secondary school students, as well as to find out the most effective ways to improve their environmental awareness. The purpose of this study is to investigate environmental awareness among secondary school students in relation to gender and locale. Gender and locale are two major factors that can influence students' environmental awareness because these variables influence their exposure to environmental information, media, and activities.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Several studies have been conducted to assess environmental awareness among secondary school students. The investigator attempted to review current works that are closely associated with the research under consideration.

**Das, N. (2013)** has conducted a comparative study of environmental awareness among the students of rural and urban colleges at Gauhati University Assam. The finding of the study revealed that rural college students are more aware towards the environment than their urban counterparts whereas there was no significant difference between the environmental awareness of male and female students.

**Sandhu (2015)** investigated the environmental awareness of secondary school students in connection with gender and locale. The study's sample included 200 students of Government Senior secondary school from the Ludhiana district. Jha (2004) standardized the Environmental Awareness Ability scale, which was used to collect data. The study's findings indicated that female students had much higher levels of environmental awareness than male students, while urban secondary school students had significantly higher levels of environmental awareness than their rural counterparts.

**Biswas (2017)** conducted a study to know the environmental awareness of secondary school students in relation to gender, locale and medium of instruction. The current study employed the survey research method. The "Environmental Awareness Ability Scale (EAAS)" developed and standardized by Dr Praveen Kumar Jha (1998) was used to collect data and assess secondary school students' environmental awareness. The investigator chose 158 secondary school students at random from the Murshidabad area of West Bengal for this research. The mean, standard deviation and t-test were used to examine the data. It is reported that female students are more environmentally aware than male students. According to the survey, urban students were substantially more environmentally conscious than their rural counterparts. The findings of the study also revealed that Bengali medium pupils are more aware than English medium students.

**Gupta (2017)** carried out a study in Raipur, Chhattisgarh, to learn about the environmental awareness of urban and rural school children. The researcher used Haseen Taj's "Environmental Awareness Scale" to gauge Environmental Awareness. A sample of 120 (60 boys and 60 girls) senior secondary students from urban and rural schools was drawn. The investigator discovered that boys and girls in urban and rural schools exhibited equal environmental awareness.

**Bhowmik and Anju (2019)** investigated a comparative study on Environmental Awareness among Senior Secondary School Students. The study was conducted on Xth class students of the East district of Sikkim. In the present study, a descriptive survey method was used. The data was collected through a standardised tool, the Hasin Taj environmental awareness scale (2012). According to the study, senior-secondary students have an elevated amount of environmental awareness. There was no substantial difference in environmental awareness between rural and urban students nor among students from science and non-science streams. However, the computed t-value indicated a significant difference in environmental awareness among girls and boys whereas, girls are considerably more aware than boys.

**Gummadi et al. (2020)** investigated the environmental awareness of secondary school students. The researcher chose 240 children from 6 different schools in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh, using a random sampling technique. The normative survey method was utilized to measure the degree of environmental awareness among students. The investigator created and standardized the Environmental Awareness Scale for the purpose to collect data. The findings revealed that there is no significant amount of environmental awareness among students and that it varies by gender and location.

### 3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Environmental awareness is of paramount importance in today's society because human activities have caused serious damage to the environment, threatening the existence of all living species. Environmental protection demands community effort, but unfortunately, many people lack the essential knowledge and enthusiasm to address these serious concerns.

To address this issue, it is critical to instil environmental awareness in individuals, particularly children in their earliest years. Environmental education should emphasize practical skills that allow students to notice and solve environmental issues. Students may play an essential role in bringing about positive change in their surroundings and communities by developing a sense of responsibility and proactive citizenship.

The active participation of civil society is also essential in preventing environmental deterioration, as local actions can have far-reaching global consequences. To ensure the well-being of our planet for the next generation, everyone must recognize that our current way of life will determine our destiny. We can collaboratively work toward a sustainable future by actively promoting environmental awareness and protecting the Earth's ecosystems and biodiversity.

Environmental awareness should be an inherent part of every school curriculum, with the goal of inspiring pupils to actively participate in environmental protection. We may maintain the important balance between mankind and nature by instilling in children a sense of responsibility for their surroundings. Environmental education is important in the curriculum because it emphasizes the consequences of unchecked and unplanned development, such as pollution of air, water and soil, which directly endanger our existence. In light of the present state of our ecosystem, it is critical to instil environmental awareness and sensitivity in young people. As a result, the researcher finds it valuable to investigate the level of environmental awareness among secondary school students. The purpose of this study is to determine how well pupils are aware of environmental issues in their daily lives.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study and compare environmental awareness between rural and urban secondary school students.
2. To study and compare environmental awareness between male and female secondary school students.

#### 3.2 HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. There will be no significant difference between rural and urban secondary school students in environmental awareness.
2. There will be no significant difference in environmental awareness between male and female secondary school students.

#### 3.3 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

1. The present study was delimited to the students studying in the Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh.
2. The present study was delimited to 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> secondary school students only.

**3.4 RESEARCH METHOD:** Descriptive Survey method.

**3.5 Variables:** Environmental Awareness is considered an Independent Variable and Gender and Locale are considered as Dependent variables.

#### 3.6 Population and Sampling

All the secondary school students of district Kangra constitute the population of the study. The researcher collected data from 100 students studying in classes 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> class of the two selected schools namely government senior secondary school Rait, district Kangra and Government high school Parei, District Kangra. For this purpose, a random sampling technique was used.

**3.7 Tool Used:** Environmental Awareness Scale constructed and standardised by the researcher.

**3.8 Statistical techniques to be used:** mean, standard deviation and t-test.

#### 4. ANALYSIS OF DATA:

##### 4.1 Environmental Awareness of Rural and Urban Secondary School Students

In order to find out the significance of difference among rural and urban senior secondary school students, t-values were computed. Table 4.2 presents the computed results:

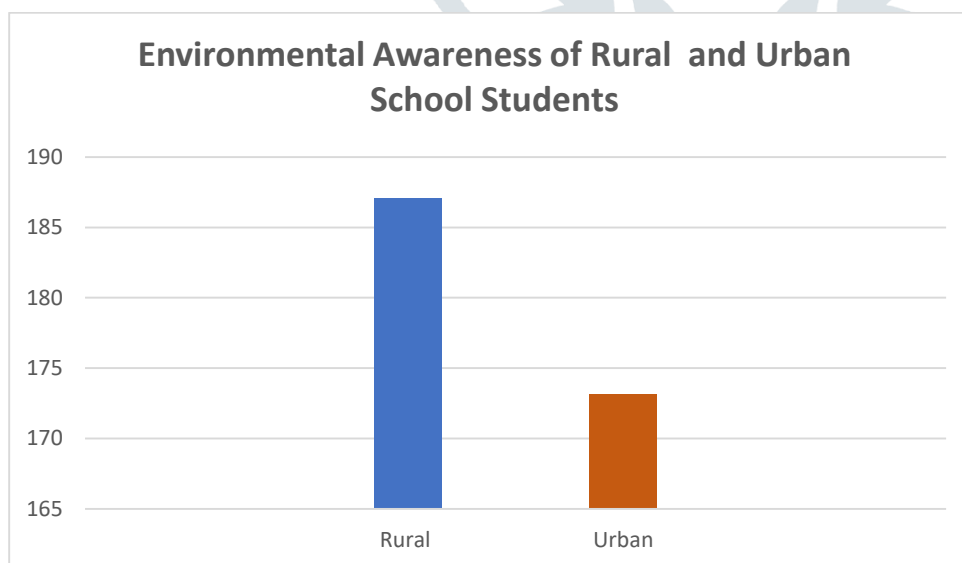
**Table 4.1: Significance of difference between Mean scores of rural and urban country school students on environmental awareness:**

Area	N	Mean	SD	t-Value	Result
Rural	50	187.08	14.47	4.84*	Significant
Urban	50	173.14	14.32		

\* Significant at 0.01 level

The above table shows the computed t-value corresponding to the comparison of rural and urban Secondary School students on environmental awareness came out to be 4.84 at df98 which is greater than the table value of 2.63 at 0.01 level of significance. Hence hypothesis that there will be no significant differences in environmental awareness of rural and urban secondary school students was rejected. It can be inferred from Table 4.1 that rural students had significantly higher mean scores of 187.08 in environmental awareness compared to the mean scores of urban secondary school students of 173.14. The result of the study reported that rural students possess a greater environmental awareness as compared to urban students, aligning with the findings of Das (2013). Hence, Sandhu (2015) and Biswas (2017) studies are contradictory to the present study that urban secondary school students had significantly higher environmental awareness than their rural counterparts.

As shown in graph 4.1:



**Graph: 4.1 Showing mean difference between Environmental Awareness of Rural and Urban School Students**

## 4.2 Environmental Awareness Scores of Male and Female Secondary School Students

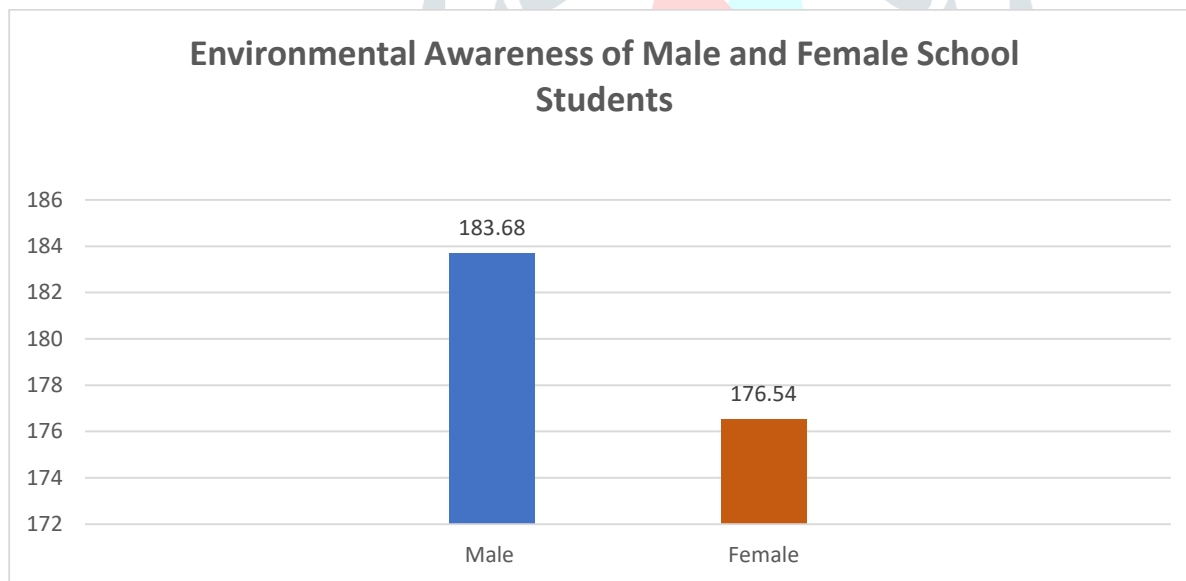
A comparison of the means and standard deviations of environmental awareness scores of male and female secondary school students is shown in the Table 4.1 given below:

**TABLE 4.2: Significance of difference between mean scores of male and femaleschool students on environmental awareness:**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-Value	Result
Male	50	183.68	17.99	98	2.29*	Significant
Female	50	176.54	12.80			

\* Significant at 0.05 level

The above table shows that the obtained t-value corresponding to the comparison of male and female secondary school students on environmental awareness came out to be 2.29 which is greater than the table value of 1.99 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence hypothesis that there will be no significant difference in environmental awareness of male and female secondary school students was rejected. It is inferred that the mean score of male students 183.68 was greater than the mean score of female students (176.54). It conveys that male students have higher awareness regarding the environment. Hence, Sandhu's (2015), Biswas (2017), Bhowmik & Anju (2019) studies are contradictory to the present study that female students are more aware than male students. However, Gupta (2017), reported that male and female students have equal environmental awareness. As shown in Graph 4.2:



**Graph:4.2 Showing the mean difference between Environmental Awareness of male and female School Students**

## Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that rural secondary school students had a better level of environmental awareness than their urban counterparts but there is not enough evidence to conclude that rural students have higher environmental awareness than urban students. It is possible that rural students have a stronger connection with nature and encounter environmental issues like water scarcity, soil erosion, and deforestation in their daily lives. This can inspire them to learn more about the environment and take steps to protect it. Additionally, research has indicated that male students tend to have a higher level of environmental awareness as compared to female students, as girls tend to be more concerned about the environment.



**Educational Implications:**

1. Government should make environmental education compulsory in every school.
2. Awareness programs should be practiced in small towns as well as remote places.
3. Advertisements on environmental education should be there to catch the concern of people.
4. Books related to the environment must be distributed to students and concerned teachers.
5. Environment awareness should be spread through television radio and print media.

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