



# ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

# Education

## AWARENESS ON ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

**KEY WORDS:** Awareness, Environmental Degradation, High School Students

**N. Malathi**

M.Ed Student, S.Veerassamy Chettiar College of Education, Puliangudi, Tirunelveli.

**Dr. S. Anandaraj\***

Assistant Professor, S.Veerassamy Chettiar College of Education, Puliangudi, Tirunelveli. \*Corresponding Author

### ABSTRACT

The intention of this research is to find out the awareness on environmental degradation among high school students. In order to study this problem, the survey method was used to collect the data. The population of the present investigation is all the high school students studying in Kadayannallur and Sankarankovil taluks from Tirunelveli district, Tamil Nadu. From the population, 300 students were randomly selected as the sample for the study. The finding reveals that the level of awareness on environmental degradation among high school students is found to be moderate with regard to gender and locality of the school. There is no significant difference between male and female students in their awareness on environmental degradation. Rural school students are better than the urban school students in their awareness on environmental degradation.

### INTRODUCTION

Education is important for enhancing the conscious of the public to give attention to their surrounding and development matters related to the surrounding. It gives awareness about various processes silently happening in surrounding and their significance in preserving the balanced ecology. The Ministry of Environment & Forests has been interacting with the MHRD, NCERT and State Departments of Education are to ensure that environmental components are adequately covered at the school levels by infusion into the school curricula at various levels. The major initiative has been taken by the ministry in this direction to strengthen environmental education in the formal school curriculum. Emergence of environmental education as a compulsory subject at school level is a welcome development. India can protect and restore ecological and natural resources by spreading awareness of such issues among its citizens. Teaching of environmental education can be an important instrument for importing the knowledge about environment. Therefore, the forms of environmental awareness & the conceptions of nature in different social and cultural context, and the implications of social and cultural differences need to have environmental education.

### Need and significance of the study

Today environmental degradation and preservation have emerged as major issues in globalization studies. Environmental degradation means the deterioration of the environment by reducing resources including air, water and soil; the destruction of ecosystems, wildlife and pollution. It is generally defined as any undesirable change or disturbance to the environment. The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction defines environmental degradation as "the reduction of the capacity of the environment to meet social and ecological objectives, and needs"<sup>[1]</sup>. Our environment is being deteriorated every now and then due to various factors like population explosion, uncontrolled and lavish consumption of precious environmental resources, industrialization, urbanization and exploitation of abiotic and biotic components of environment. These have resulted in the present day environment crisis condition. In the past because of lack of awareness about the environment, nations developed in science and technology, but at the expense of degradation of environment. From here it is not surprising that half of the environmental degradations are due to human activities. With the progress in science and technology man has made a lot of revolution in various fields. Man has made a lot of progress through science and technology but at the same time overuse and misuse of environmental resources is destroying the equilibrium of environment. Man in an effort to fulfill his demands has exploited the environment. The

environment has its own system of recovery but depletion of large amount of resources due to the activities of man has failed the self-recovery system of environment in many areas. So it has led to many adverse impacts on the environment.

One of the greatest challenges facing humanity is environmental degradation, including deforestation, desertification, pollution, and climate change – an issue of increasing concern for the international community. Environmental degradation increases the vulnerability of the societies it affects and contributes to the scarcity of resources.<sup>[2]</sup> Climate change will lead to an increase in the intensity and frequency of weather extremes, such as heat waves, floods, droughts and tropical cyclones. Environmental degradation can lead to a scarcity of resources, such as water and farmable. Extreme weather events, such as severe flooding, increase the spread of waterborne diseases, such as malaria and diarrhoea. The impact of environmental disasters can be devastating on the social, economic, and environmental systems of a country or region as well as the global ecosystem. Environmental disasters do not recognize man-made borders, and threaten the legacy left to future generations of a clean and supportive environment.<sup>[3]</sup> Because of the interdependency of earth ecosystems international co-operation is paramount to prevent, and when disaster strikes, respond to relieve quickly and effectively the effects of environmental disasters. Thus, Governments, International organizations and communities must work together – at all levels – to lessen the risks associated with environmental degradation and its contributing factors, such as climate change, and ensure that vulnerable people are prepared to survive and adapt. At the same time, companies, organizations and individuals must also ensure that their work is environmentally friendly and sustainable. In this view point the investigator wants to find out the awareness on environmental degradation among high school students.

### Objectives of the study

The researcher has framed the following objectives for the present study.

1. To find out the level of awareness on environmental degradation among high school students.
2. To find whether there is any significant difference between male and female students in their awareness on environmental degradation.
3. To find whether there is any significant difference between rural and urban school students in their awareness on environmental degradation.

### Null Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between male and female students in their awareness on environmental degradation.

- There is no significant difference between rural and urban school students in their awareness on environmental degradation.

### Methodology

The researcher used the survey method for the present study. For data collection, 'Awareness on environmental degradation scale' comprises of 60 statements, which was developed and validated by Malathi and Ranjithkumar in 2018. The investigator has selected the sample by random sampling technique for the present study. It comprises of 300 high school students studying in Kadayannallur and Sankarankovil taluks, from Tirunelveli district, Tamil Nadu. The data were analysed by using Mean, Standard Deviation and 't' test.

### Analysis of the Data

The data were subjected to statistical treatment leading to the findings which may satisfy the requirements of the objectives of the study.

**Table 1: Level of awareness on environmental degradation among high school students with regard to gender and locality of the school**

Variable		Low		Moderate		High	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
Gender	Male	17	15.6	79	72.5	13	11.9
	Female	23	12.0	139	72.8	29	15.2
Locality of the school	Rural	10	8.2	93	76.2	19	15.6
	Urban	30	16.9	125	70.2	23	12.9

It is inferred from the above table that 15.6% of male students have low 72.5% of them have moderate and 11.9% of them high level of awareness on environmental degradation. 12.0% of female students have low, 72.8% of them have moderate and 15.2% of them have high level of awareness on environmental degradation.

8.2% of rural school students have low 76.2% of them have moderate and 15.6 % of them high level of awareness on environmental degradation. 16.9% of urban school students have low 70.2% of them have moderate and 12.9 % of them have high level of awareness on environmental degradation.

**Ho1:** There is no significant difference between male and female high school students in their awareness on environmental degradation.

**Table 2: Difference between male and female high school students in their awareness on environmental degradation**

Male		Female		Calculated 't' value	Remarks
Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
108.15	7.731	108.73	7.402	0.649	NS

(at 5% level of significance the table value of 't' is 1.96, NS- Not Significant)

It is inferred from the above table that the calculated 't' value (0.649) is less than the table value (1.96) for df 298 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. This shows that there is no significant difference between male and female high school students in their awareness on environmental degradation.

**Ho2:** There is no significant difference between rural and urban school students in their awareness on environmental degradation.

**Table 3: Difference between rural and urban school students in their awareness on environmental degradation**

Rural		Urban		Calculated 't' value	Remarks
Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
109.66	6.918	107.74	7.824	2.180	S

(at 5% level of significance the table value of 't' is 1.96, S-Significant)

It is inferred from the above table that the calculated 't' value (2.180) is greater than the table value (1.96) for df 298 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that there is significant difference between rural and urban school students in their awareness on environmental degradation.

While comparing the mean scores of the rural and urban school students, rural school students (109.66) are better than the urban school students (107.74) in their awareness on environmental degradation.

### Findings of the study

The major findings derived from the study are:

- The level of awareness on environmental degradation among high school students with regard to gender and locality of the school are found to be moderate.
- There is no significant difference between male and female high school students in their awareness on environmental degradation.
- Rural school students are better than the urban school students in their awareness on environmental degradation.

### CONCLUSION

Environmental degradation is one of the largest threats for all living organisms that are being looked at in the world today. The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction characterizes environmental degradation as the lessening of the limit of the earth to meet social and environmental destinations, and needs. In this research the investigator found that rural school students are better than the urban school students in their awareness on environmental degradation. This may due to the fact that the rural area students are living together with nature. Instead of plastic bags, they are using coconut leave and palm leave products for their healthy life. They are using banana leaf to eat which is easily decomposed. Therefore the rural area students are living in a healthy lifestyle without getting out of environmental spells. Therefore, every school should organize a training programme to give awareness about the environment and climate change and to mobilize them participate for conservation of environment. Teachers and parents try to encourage their child to actively participate the programmes namely National Green Corps, Tree plantation, Swatch Bharat for protection of their surrounding environment.

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