

## A Study On Environmental Awareness Of College Students In Relation To Sex, Rural-Urban Background And Academic Streams Wise

Neeraj Kumar Sharma

Govt. College of Teacher Education  
Dharamshala, District Kangra  
Himachal Pradesh (India) -176215  
Sharma.neeraj.neeraj03@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

The pristine environment was so pure, virgin, undisturbed, uncontaminated and quite hospitable for all life forms to exist. Man for the first time in his entire cultural history is facing one of the most horrible problem i.e., of ecological crisis. Though the destruction of environment in the past may be excused from the point of view of ignorance but it can't be now. Therefore the environmental education is socially more relevant today than the past. There is a urgent need for new approach to environment which cuts across barriers of class, color, creed and nationality. Everybody has to contribute its share for protection of environment before it is too late. In the present research paper an attempt has been made to assess the environmental awareness of students of Govt. Degree College Dharamshala Himachal Pradesh (India).

**Keywords:** Environment, environmental education, college student, sex, area, academic streams etc.

### Introduction

Environment has influenced and shaped our lives since the time immemorial. It is from the environment that we get our food to eat, water to drink, air to breath and all the necessities of day today life, thus constituting it as a life support system. Through the process of natural selection and elimination it is environment only which has caused the evolution of biological spectrum, the biosphere as it exists today. Today environment has become the concern of all; the academicians, intellectuals, scientists, policymakers and government across the continents (Kant and Sharma, 2013).

For the first time in his entire cultural history man is facing one of the most horrible ecological crisis i.e., the problem of pollution of his environment which some time in past was so pure, virgin, undisturbed, uncontaminated and quite hospitable for all life forms to exist. Man's ignorance, greed and lack of respect for the 'Mother Earth' has drawn all of us into one of the very serious problems of today i.e., of over population, dwindling natural resources and environmental crisis that are threatening air, water and soil along with the vast number of beautiful life forms which are the very foundation of life existence on this wonderful planet '*The Earth*'.

Though the destruction of environment in the past may be excused from the point of view of ignorance, however now we have access to knowledge and information and therefore it becomes imperative on our part that we re-examine ethically as well as morally what we have inherited, what we are responsible for and what we will pass to our coming generations. Many of earth's habitats, animals, plants, insects and even micro organisms that we know of today as rare or endangered may not be known at all by future generations. We have the capacity and responsibility that is we must act before it is too late.

Since the environmental education is the application of knowledge from different disciplines to study and manage the environment Arunkumar (2012) and it is socially more relevant today than the past as it helps us to know how unchecked and unplanned development pollutes our air, water and soil and therefore threatens our subsistence and existence. On the other hand environmental awareness helps social groups and individuals to acquire an awareness of sensitivity to the total environment and its allied problems. It is not only a question of air and water pollution but also includes elimination of diseases, hunger, malnutrition and poverty, destruction of forests, extermination of wildlife, erosion of soil and accumulation of waste and many more. Hence, there is an urgent need for the proper management of environmental crisis before it threatens our existence. World educators and environmental specialists have repeatedly pointed out that a solution to environmental crises will require an

environmental awareness which should be deeply rooted in the education system at all levels of school education (Khan, 2013)

The most relevant to the subject is Chinese perception about education which says-

*“If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people”*

There is a urgent need for this new approach to education which not only cuts across various subjects at schools and higher educational levels but even the boundaries of class, color, creed, community and nationality. Environmental concerns are to be brought in all subject area rather than to introduce a mare new subject. It is therefore to be clearly understood that environment and development are not contradictory to each other, but there is a need of ‘Holistic Development’ i.e., taking the process of development and environment as a unit. People should be persuaded to adopt environment friendly life style. Information should be properly passed on to the grass root level for real action to happen. Environmental education should lead for gathering mass awareness which should bring environmentally wiser policies. Thus, in order to protect and conserve the environment, enabling people to lead quality life due emphasis has to be given to environmental education in both formal and non formal system of education Sundaravalli (2012). It is in this backdrop the present study- “A study of environmental awareness of college students in relation to sex, rural-urban background and academic streams” was undertaken.

**Study Area:**

The present study was carried out during academic year 2005-06 with students of different sex, area and academic streams of Govt. Degree College Dharamshala, district Kangra, Himachal Pradesh (India) (Fig.1).

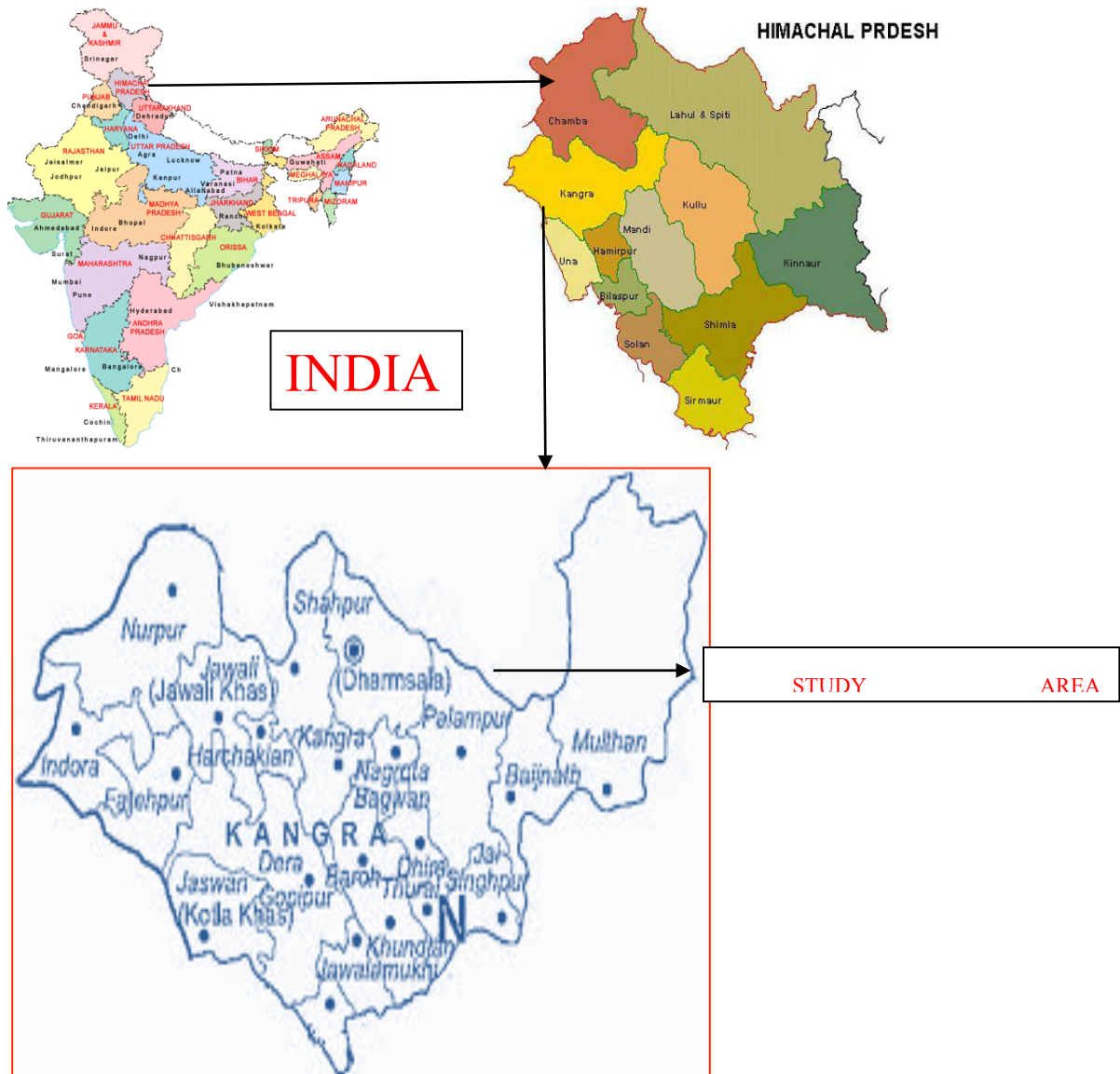


Fig 1 Map of District Kangra of Himachal Pradesh showing the Study Area

**Methodology:**

In the present investigation convenient random sampling technique was used and 180 students studying in science, commerce and art streams of undergraduate classes of Govt. Degree College Dharamshala of district Kangra of Himachal were surveyed. In the present investigation Environmental Ability Measure developed by Dr. Parveen Kumar Jha was used to collect requisite data from students. The tool comprised of 51 items and with regards to norms the score 37-51 was considered in high, 16-36 in average and 0-15 in low category. Also, reliability of test tool was determined by Split-half reliability which was found to be 0.61, R-K method which was found to be 0.84 and test-retest was 0.74. Thus EAAS bears an adequate degree of reliability. To determine validity of the environmental awareness ability measure coefficient of correlation between the scores of the present scale and Environmental Awareness Scale of Tarniji was computed which was found to be 0.83. To analyze the obtained data on environmental awareness ability scale statistically technique of analysis of variance was applied. The tool was individually administered to the selected sample by the investigator himself.

**Results and Discussions:**

It is evident from the result that no student was in low category of environmental awareness level (Table 1).

**Table No.1 Sex, area and stream wise percentages of environmental awareness ability of sampled students**

Area	Sex Streams	Male			Female		
		High	Average	Low	High	Average	Low
Rural	Science	100.00%	-----	-----	100.00%	-----	-----
	Commerce	93.33%	6.67%	-----	93.33%	6.67%	-----
	Arts	80.00%	20.00%	-----	60.00%	40.00%	-----
Urban	Science	93.33%	6.67%	-----	100.00%	-----	-----
	Commerce	100.00%	-----	-----	100.00%	-----	-----
	Arts	100.00%	-----	-----	86.66%	13.34%	-----

Among male 100% rural male science students were in high level of environmental awareness ability scale in comparison to 93.33% commerce and 80.00% arts students. In urban male category in both commerce and arts stream 100% students were in high level of environmental awareness ability scale in comparison to only 93.33% science students. Whereas in case of rural female category 100% science students were in high level of environmental awareness ability scale in comparison to 93.33% commerce and 60.00% arts students. In urban female category both in science and commerce 100% students are in high level of environmental awareness ability scale in comparison to 86.66% arts students.

With regards to effect of sex on environmental awareness the calculated value of 'F' for the main effects of sex on environmental awareness ability for df 1 was 1.710 which is much lower than table value 3.90 at 0.05 level of significance hence there is no significance difference in environmental awareness ability of male and female students and it is interpreted that male and female students possess equal level of environmental awareness ability. However Sharma (1999) found that girls students attitude towards environment was more favorable than their counterpart boy students. Also, with regard to area the calculated value of 'F' for df 1 came out to be 9.876 which is much higher than the table value 3.90 at 0.05 level of significance, hence it is also interpreted that there is significant difference in environmental awareness ability of rural and urban students similar results were also reported by Vashist (2001). Bhardwaj (2004) has found no significant interactional effect of area of residence and sex towards environment education. Likewise, stream wise the calculated value of 'F' for df '2' came out to be 6.918 which is higher than table value 3.05 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence it is interpreted that there is significant difference between environmental awareness ability of students belonging to science, commerce and art streams. However, Khalid (2001) found no statistical difference in environmental awareness level of science and non science students.

With regard to interactional effect of type of sex and area the computed value of 'F' for df 1 came out to be 3.438 which is lower than the table value 3.90 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence it is interpreted that type of sex and area of students do not influence each other significantly in their combined influence on environmental awareness ability. Similarly, the computed value of 'F' for interactional effects of type of sex and stream wise on the environmental awareness of secondary school students for df 2 came out to be 2.700 which is also much lower than the table value 3.05 at 0.05 level of significance, hence it is interpreted that type of sex and academic streams of students do not influence each other significantly. Likewise, computed value for the interactional effect of type of area and academic streams on environmental awareness of secondary school students for df 2 came out to be 2.899, which

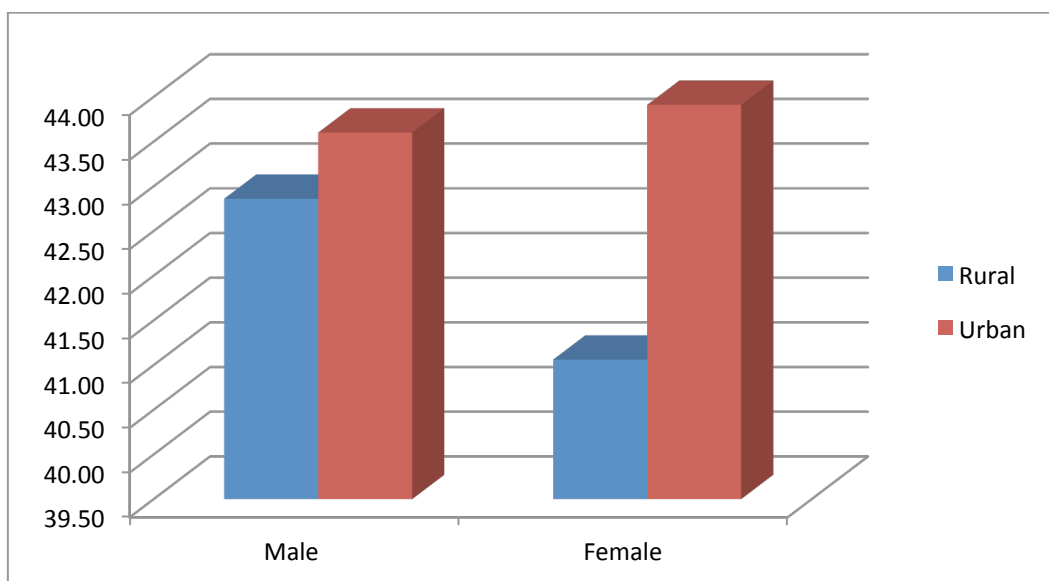
is also much lower than the table value 3.05 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, it is interpreted that area and academic streams do not influence each other significantly in their combined influence on environmental awareness ability of students. Similar results were reported by Bhardwaj (2004) on attitude of senior school students towards environmental education. When combined interactional effect of sex, area and academic streams was calculated the computed value of 'F' for df 2 came out to be 1.534 which is much lower than table value 4.73 at 0.01 level of significance (Table 2).

**Table No.2 Summary table of analysis of variance of environmental awareness ability scale score of type of sex, area and stream of students**

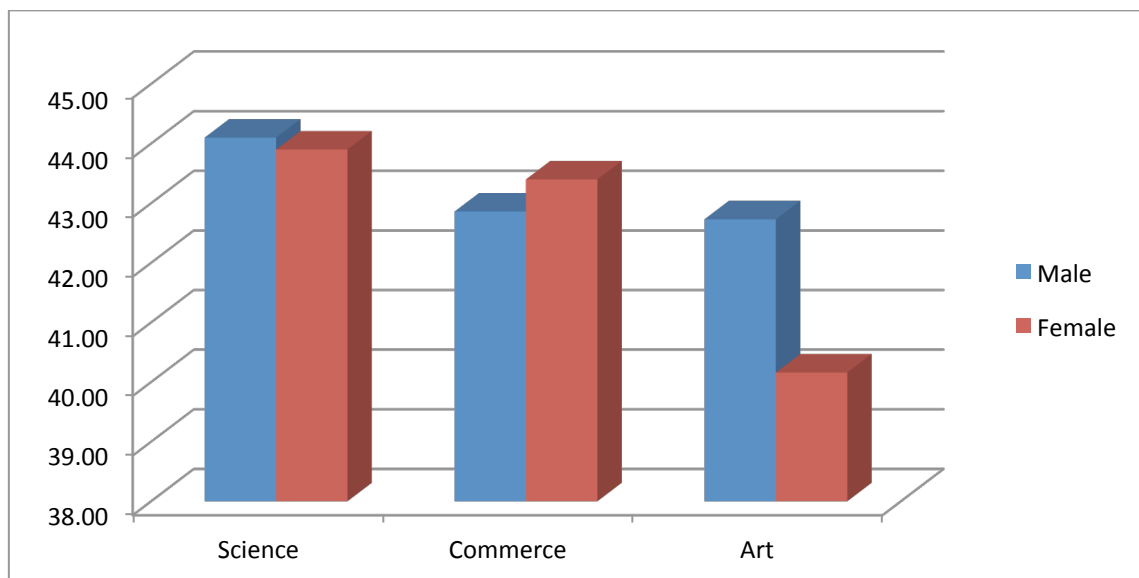
Source of Variance	Sum of Square	'df'	Mean Square	'F' Ratio
Sex (A)	24.94	1	24.94	1.710
Area (B)	144	1	144	9.876*
Stream (C)	201.74	2	100.87	6.918*
AxB	50.14	1	50.14	3.438
AxC	78.74	2	39.37	2.700
BxC	84.54	2	42.27	2.899
AxBxC	44.76	2	22.38	1.534
Error of Variance	2450.67	168	14.58	-----
Total	3079.53	179	-----	-----

(\*Significance at 0.05 level of significance for degree of freedom 1/168 and 2/168)

Hence, it is interpreted that type of sex, area and social category of students also do not influence each other significantly in their combined influence on environmental awareness ability of students. Means of environmental awareness ability scale scores of male and female students of rural and urban areas and stream wise has also been shown in Fig 2 and 3.



**Fig No.2 Means of environmental awareness ability scale scores of male and female students of rural and urban areas.**



**Fig No.3 Means of environmental awareness ability scale scores of male and female students of science, commerce and art streams**

Thus, it is very much evident from the present study that college students have fairly good environmental awareness level. Students are a great force and can play a big role in protection of environment if they are timely guided and helped regarding the understanding of environmental issues. The present study thus provided us an insight to the level of environmental awareness among college students. To further increase environmental awareness ability of students integration of environmental education into curriculum, teachers training and training of trainers, campaigns with religious leaders and forums, working through community leaders, development and distribution of resource material, conducting of extra-curricular activities and last but not the least the campaign through mass media has to be started keeping in mind the holistic approach. Mann (1983) also found that these activities bear positive fruits. Let us conserve, recycle, renew, reforest, replenish, litigate, legislate, mitigate, minimize, penalize, pressurize, and prosecute all what is needed to revive and rejuvenate our environment for better future of our coming generations.

**Acknowledment:** The author is highly thankful to Dr. Kartar Singh Thakur (Professor) in Education Department of Education at International Centre for Distance Education and Open Learning (ICDEOL) Himachal Pradesh University Summer Hill Shimla-5 for his eminence help and guidance in the present research work.

#### References:

Arunkumar, J. (2012). A study on assessment of environmental awareness among teacher trainees in teacher training institutes. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences* 2(3): 312-321.

Bhardwaj, O. P. (2004). A study on attitude of senior secondary school students towards environmental education. M.Phil. dissertation submitted to Himachal Pradesh University Summer Hill Shimla.

Kant, S. and Sharma, Y. (2013). The environmental awareness of secondary school students with reference to their intelligence. *BPR Technologia: A Journal of Science, Technology & Management* Vol 2 (1): 33-39.

Khalid, T. (2001). Pre service elementary teacher misconceptions in respect to three environmental issues, Dissertation Abstract International, Vol. (61) 8.

Khan, S. H. (2013). A study of attitude towards environmental awareness in relation to certain variables among senior secondary school students. *International Global Research Analysis* Vol. 2(4): 42-44.V

Mann, A. (1983). A study entitled creating awareness among high school students about environmental pollution through education an experimental study. M.Ed. dissertation submitted to Punjab University Chandigarh.

Sharma, R. C. (1999). Attitude of high school students towards environmental education. M.Ed. dissertation submitted to Himachal Pradesh University Summer Hill Shimla-5.

Sundaravalli, T. (2012). Student teacher's awareness on environmental pollution. *International Journal of Teacher Educational Research (IJTER)* Vol.1 (4): 52-58.

Vashist, K. N. (2001). A study on awareness attitude and behavior related to environment with reference to education and other correlates in selected industrial areas of Himachal Pradesh. Ph.D. thesis submitted to Himachal Pradesh University Summer Hill Shimla-5.