

Environmental awareness and its impact on behavioural habits of rural and urban population- with special reference to Chidambaram Taluk, Cuddalore Dist. Tamilnadu.

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ABSTRACT

All living beings so made that we cannot live in isolation of our environment, our body are made up of all elements available in environment. And any disturbance in purity of environmental component can makes the hazard in our lives. It has posed a great problem to the existence of humans, plant, animal and other form of life on the earth although the prime support for the survival of human being is environment. The process of and side effect of environmental degradation may seems very slow which may not give effect in our life time but will make life of our own next generation miserable. Therefore now there is a need to increase awareness and understanding of the environmental along with responsible attitude toward the sustainable management of environment and natural resources of planet earth. The present study has delimited to study the level of environmental awareness regarding environmental components, services, pollution etc. among the rural and urban respondent of one of the district of Tamilnadu, India.

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Introduction

Man's unnatural interaction with nature results in the misbalance of nature leading to upset environment. It has posed a great problem to the existence of humans, plant, animal and all other forms of life as well. Therefore now there is a need to increase awareness and understanding of the environment along with responsible attitude toward the sustainable management of natural resources. The process of and side effect of environmental degradation may seems very slow which may not give direct effect in our lifetime but will make life of our next generation miserable. The understanding of environment and nature was prevailed in all the civilization from time immemorial. People of all civilization followed custom of worshiping environment in one or other form such as worship of sun, moon, river, trees(Banyan), mountains, animals (Elephants, Lion) etc. Modern civilization due to industrial revolution and scientific advancement and peoples adaptation to artificial way to life leading to serious threat to environment . Presently situation is people do speak about environment protection and understand the importance of preserving the natural resources but still depletion continues.

2. Objectives of the study

1. To analyse the extent of people's awareness about present environmental issues and related threats.
2. To find out environmental friendly & protecting behaviour of rural and urban respondents.

3. Review of Literature

UNESCO (1980) explains the environmental education as the general consensus on the goals of environmental education is to foster clear awareness of, and concern about social,

economic, political and ecological interdependence in urban anti rural areas: to provide every person with opportunities to acquire the knowledge (values, attitudes, commitments) and skills needed to protect and improved the environment: to create new patterns of behaviour of individuals, groups and society as a whole towards the environment.

Bandara (1989) studied an environmental awareness among the most vulnerable communities in developing awareness in these countries can be improved through both formal and non-formal education. Mass, media, art and traditional knowledge are elements that can greatly contribute to the engorgements of environmental awareness in developing countries.

Subudhi (1997) reports television,-broadcasting and newspaper have to play potent role in this context. Supreme Court of India has directed the Centre and all the state Government to cancel the licenses of all those Cinema Halls, video parlours and mobile cinema, if they fail to exhibit at least two slides daily on environment. The court directed the UGC to examine the feasibility of making environment compulsory in schools and colleges. Hence, on TV the UGC programmes in India include environmental issued for people of ages and students.

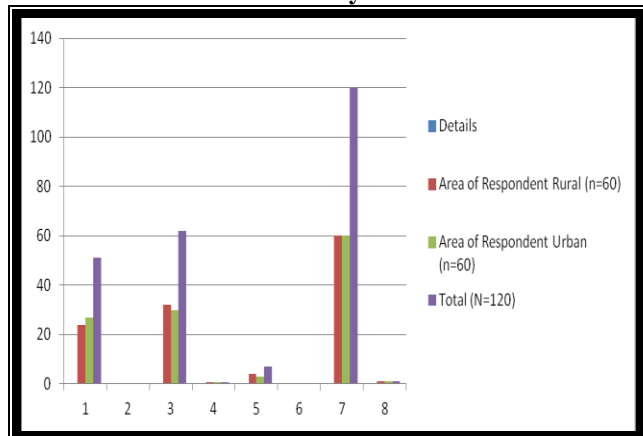
4. Methodology

The researcher has selected the Cuddalore district of the Tamilnadu, India. From this district two region (urban and rural) of Chidambaram taluk has been surveyed in order to study the environmental awareness of the people. The sampling of the study is said to be Multi-stage random sampling method. From each region, sixty respondents were

selected making total of one hundred twenty samples. All data were collected with the help of pre tested structured interview scheduled. The scheduled is administered through personal interview with most knowledgeable person from the surveyed area. For tabulation, processing and analysis of surveyed data Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) is used in addition to Ms Excel and simple statistical measures such as averages and percentage were used extensively for finding results and drawing conclusions.

5. Analysis and Discussion

Table.I Age wise classification of the sample respondents in the study area.

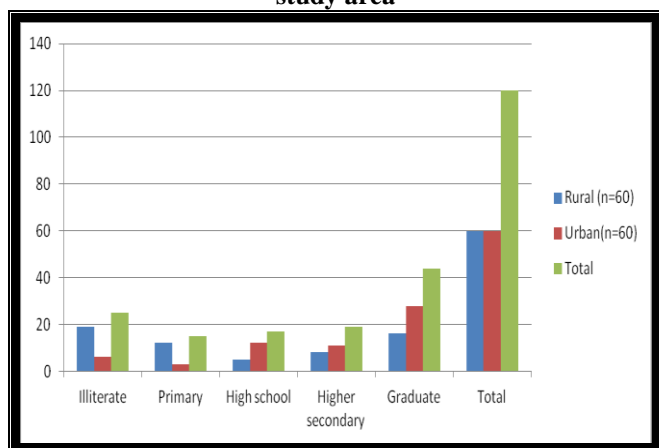


Source: from computed primary data.

Note- Figures in parentheses denotes percentage to the total sample.

Out of total surveyed respondents below 35 years of aged are youth in society who constitutes 40 % in (rural) and 45.0 % in (urban) area. The largest respondent are nearly 50 % from both rural and urban falls between the age group of 36-60, who can or may be a decision maker or influential people in society.

Table. II Education wise classification of respondents in study area



Source: from computed primary data.

Note- Figures in parentheses denotes percentage to the total sample.

Literacy rate of rural (31.7 %) population is higher than urban (10.0%) population but in other hand respondent from rural (20.0%) area those who have attained primary level of education is higher than the urban (5.0%) respondents. The availability of good facilities results in higher percentage of higher education level in urban area (46.7%) then rural area (26.7%) this may indicates the increase in case of school dropout or urban migration in rural areas.

Table.III Classification of respondents on awareness of Air pollution and its various cause & effects.

Details	Area of Respondent		Total
	Rural	Urban	
	(n=60)	(n=60)	(n=120)
Increase of Carbon Monoxide leads to Air Pollution	13 (21.7)	28 (46.7)	41 (34.2)
Respiratory Track is Affected and by Air Pollution	20 (33.3)	41 (68.3)	61 (50.8)
Ozone Layer is affected due to Air Pollution	20 (33.3)	42 (70.0)	62 (51.7)
Acid Rain is due to Air Pollution	12 (20.0)	32 (53.3)	44 (36.7)

Source: from computed primary data.

Note- Figures in parentheses denotes percentage to the total sample.

Due to various factors such as less industries and traffic the problems of air pollution is less in rural area and certainly rural population don't care about much awareness about air pollution. However about few common issues such as air pollution affects ozone layer and air pollution do cause respiratory problem rural (33.3) population have knowledge which is compare to urban population not much less then urban (53.3%) population.

Table .IV Classification of respondents on awareness of Water and Land pollution and its various cause & effects on Human and Environment.

Details	Ares of Respondent		Total
	Rural	Urban	
	(n=60)	(n=60)	(N=120)
Water Pollution affects Human, Animal and Plants	29 (48.3)	56 (93.3)	85 (70.8)
Emission of Factory causes Water Pollution	16 (26.7)	40 (6.7)	56 (46.7)
Fertilizer /Pesticide cause Water Pollution	26 (43.3)	43 (71.7)	69 (57.5)
Water Pollution causes Typhoid and Diarrhoea	29 (48.3)	50 (83.3)	79 (65.8)
Use of Insecticide / Fertilizers leads to land pollution	20 (33.3)	43 (71.7)	63 (52.5)
DDT causes Cancer among People	13 (21.7)	28 (46.7)	41 (34.2)
Land Pollution leads to skin Diseases	14 (23.3)	32 (53.3)	46 (38.3)
Dumping of Garbage leads to Land pollution	14 (23.3)	31 (51.7)	45 (37.5)

Source: from computed primary data.

Note- Figures in parentheses denotes percentage to the total sample.

Water pollution is a serious problem both in urban and rural India and the people face various problems due to the same. Majority of the respondents understands that domestic waster leads to water pollution (74.2%) and it affects the living organisms on the planet (70.8%). Among the regions, the urban respondents are well aware about the problems of water pollution whereas the understanding among the rural people is not up to the level.

Nearly, 33.3 % of rural population aware that use of pesticide and fertilizers cause land pollution leading to soil degradation, and this issue causing the increasing numbers of suicide in low and medium famers in India. Awareness about DDT as a poison is 21.7 % in rural area but its other effect such as it is one of the agents which may cause cancer. This awareness is high (46.7%) in urban area.

Table.V Classification of respondents on awareness of Noise pollution and its various cause & effects.

Details	Area of Respondent		Total
	Rural	Urban	
	(n=60)	(n=60)	
Machines in the Factory cause Great Noise	18 (30.0)	46 (76.7)	64 (53.3)
Loud Speakers create Pollution	24 (40.0)	53 (88.3)	77 (64.2)
Transport creates Noise Pollution	22 (36.7)	48 (80.0)	70 (58.3)
Noise affects our Hearing Capacity	30 (50.0)	57 (95.0)	87 (72.5)
Noise Pollution increases Blood pressure and Heart Beat Rate	15 (25.0)	34 (56.7)	49 (40.8)
Noise affect Human Beings and Animals	21 (35.0)	44 (73.3)	65 (54.2)

Source: from computed primary data.

Note- Figures in parentheses denotes percentage to the total sample.

Urban respondents due to increase in numbers of traffic, industries and other elements and its immediate effect on human health is well aware. Whereas 50.0% of rural population aware about of noise pollution and its effect in hearing capacity.

Table. VI Classification of respondents on various environment friendly behaviour.

Details	Area of Respondent		Total
	Rural	Urban	
	(n=60)	(n=60)	
Preserving Water as the source of drinking water is degrading	30 (50.0)	52 (86.7)	82 (68.3)
Habit of planting Saplings to have more trees	16 (26.7)	34 (56.7)	50 (41.7)
Consuming Organic Foods which may ensure good health and also support environment	9 (15.0)	21 (35.0)	30 (25.0)
Use of Organic Pesticides is the Best Method	15 (25.0)	36 (60.0)	51 (25.5)
Avoiding GM Foods which is a major source of disease.	11 (18.3)	30 (50.0)	41 (34.2)
Using Low Decibel Sound Speaker it helps reducing noise pollution	20 (33.3)	42 (70.0)	62 (51.7)
Celebration Functions without Crackers to reduce air and sound pollution	14 (23.3)	35 (58.3)	49 (40.8)
Avoiding Plastic Material and use of Environment friendly bags (Jut/Cotton etc)	11 (18.3)	28 (46.7)	39 (32.5)
Protecting Birds and Animals and they are part of Bio-diversity	21 (35.0)	38 (63.3)	59 (49.2)
Using Public Transports to reduce traffic and air pollution	25 (41.7)	45 (75.0)	70 (58.3)
Adaptations of Rain Water Harvesting	12 (20.0)	33 (55.0)	45 (37.5)
Creating Environment Awareness among the people	14 (23.3)	34 (56.7)	48 (40.0)
Participating in Environmental Protection Activity	18 (30.0)	36 (60.0)	54 (45.0)

Source: from computed primary data.

Note- Figures in parentheses denotes percentage to the total sample.

Majority of the respondents adopt to safeguard the environment while there is wide variation among the urban and rural regions. Environmental protection activities followed by the urban people ranges from 35 % to 91.7 % while the

same is 13.3 % to 58.3 % for the rural population. Here the main reason of fluctuation of data is due to socio-economic condition of both the population. Urban people may know about GM foods or Inorganic food but due to lack of availability they are forced to consume and those few are available are beyond the budget of urban middle class population.

Here the respondent avoid plastic materials (32.5%) and use wire/cloth bags (65%), use electricity (66.7%) and age (56.7%) economically, protect birds and animals (49.2%). Adopt rain water harvesting (37.5%) and celebrate functions without crackers (40.8%) and create awareness among the people (40%). It is to appreciate the people that they are environmental friendly and particularly adoption is high the urban as compared to rural people.

6. Conclusion

After analysis it's been found that there is a wide range of variation about the understanding of environments and its important components among the rural and urban population. This may be due to lack of exposure to media and low level of educational attainment in rural area. The surveyed respondents both from rural and urban population are aware about the environmental components, services and pollution. But there is variation among the rural and urban people in understanding the environmental issues. Education and Awareness programmes play a major role in understanding the environmental issues and adopting environmental friendly behaviour.

The variation of understanding of environmental awareness rural and urban is always present during this study. It's been found that the village life few decades ago was environmental friendly, as it was in to their life style as almost all the households use banana leaves, use mud pots for food items, carry items for transport use bullock carts, use all green ingredients etc. Advancement in technology and introduction of plastic replaced the all biodegradable handmade materials resulting in serious environmental threat, as plastic getting thrown everywhere. Similar in the case of cities where mostly are unplanned and lack basic facilities of proper drainage and sewage systems cities. Although urban population do have knowledge about environment but either due to long habit or lack of responsible behaviour towards environment, and even due to absence of proper facilities to dispose garbage's, results in scattered and indispose garbage's results in creating environmental threat and unhealthy situations even.

7. Policy suggestions

Based on the conclusion few policy suggestions are drawn and given below:

- 1.Environmental education must be given at all level and government should create more program on environmental awareness in public private partnership manner where local groups and NGOs can be involve, beside this local municipal authorities should have to work very enthusiastically and actively along with strict policies for managing waste material.
- 2.Environmental friendly approach has to be still widened among the people so that the environmental resources can be preserved for the generations to come.

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