



**Original Article**

**ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AMONG RURAL–URBAN PEOPLE: A  
GEOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF ROHTAS DISTRICT**

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**Abstract:**

*Environmental awareness plays a significant role in promoting sustainable development, particularly in developing regions like Bihar. This study examines the level of environmental awareness among rural and urban populations in Rohtas district from a geographical perspective. The research highlights variations in awareness, attitudes, and environmental practices between these two groups. While urban populations demonstrate higher formal awareness due to education and media exposure, rural populations exhibit strong traditional ecological knowledge and sustainable practices. The study concludes that integrating modern environmental education with indigenous knowledge systems can significantly enhance environmental sustainability. Furthermore, the study emphasizes that geographical factors such as location, resource availability, and settlement patterns significantly influence the level of environmental awareness and practices among people. It also observes that socio-economic conditions, literacy levels, and access to information play a crucial role in shaping environmental attitudes. The findings suggest that a gap exists not only in awareness but also in the practical implementation of environmentally responsible behavior. Therefore, there is a need for a more inclusive and participatory approach that connects local communities with policy frameworks. Strengthening environmental education at the grassroots level and encouraging community-based initiatives can lead to long-term ecological balance and sustainable regional development.*

**Keywords:** *Environmental Awareness, Rural-Urban Differences, Sustainable Development, Rohtas District, Geographical Study*

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## Introduction:

Environmental degradation has emerged as one of the most pressing global challenges. Rapid urbanization, industrialization, and population growth have significantly affected natural ecosystems. Environmental awareness refers to the understanding of environmental issues and active participation in their solution.

In India, rural and urban populations differ greatly in their interaction with the environment. Rohtas district provides a unique case for examining these differences due to its mixed geographical and socio-economic structure.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the relationship between human society and the environment in such regions is dynamic and deeply interconnected. Rural communities are closely dependent on natural resources for their livelihood, which often shapes their ecological understanding and practices. In contrast, urban populations, though relatively less dependent on direct natural resources, are significantly responsible for increased environmental pressure through consumption patterns and waste generation. This contrast highlights the importance of examining not only the level of awareness but also the nature of environmental engagement in both settings.

In this context, a geographical approach becomes essential to understand how physical surroundings, resource distribution, and human activities interact to influence environmental awareness. The study of Rohtas district, therefore, provides valuable insights into the spatial variations of awareness and behavior, helping to identify gaps and opportunities for promoting sustainable development at the regional level.

## Objectives of the Study:

The study aims to examine and compare the level of environmental awareness among rural and urban populations in Rohtas district. It also seeks to analyze their environmental attitudes and practices, identify key factors influencing awareness, and suggest measures for promoting sustainable environmental behavior.

1. To evaluate environmental awareness among rural and urban populations
2. To analyze differences in environmental behavior
3. To identify influencing factors
4. To suggest policy measures

## Study Area:

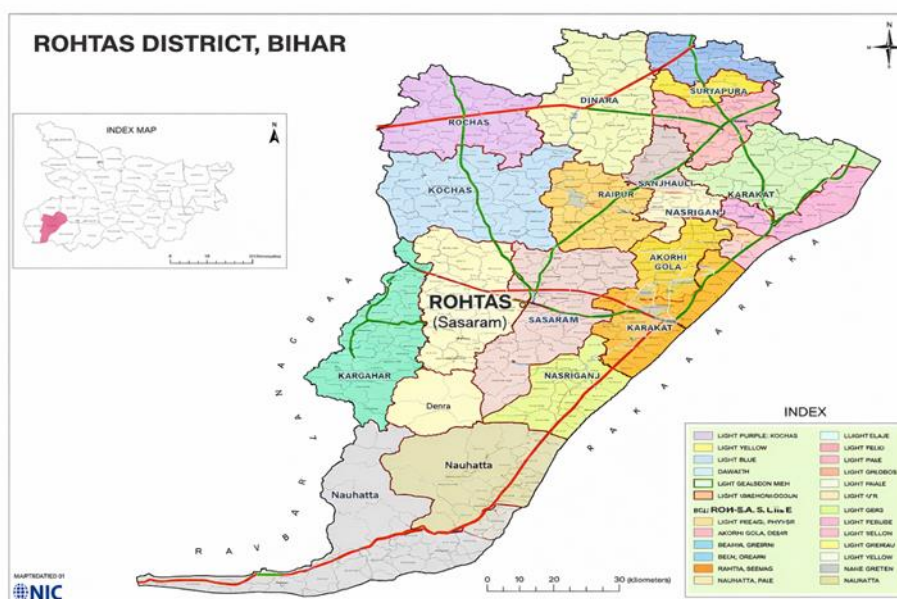
Rohtas district lies in southwestern Bihar and is characterized by plains, plateaus, and forested areas. The presence of the Sone River significantly influences the region's ecology and economy.<sup>2</sup>

## Methodology:

The study is based on both primary and secondary data:

- **Primary Data:** Field survey, structured questionnaire
- **Sample Size:** 200 respondents (100 rural, 100 urban)
- **Secondary Data:** Census reports, academic literature

Random sampling technique was used to ensure representation.<sup>3</sup>



### Environmental Awareness: Conceptual Framework:

Environmental awareness is a multidimensional concept that encompasses knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to environmental protection and sustainability. It involves not only understanding environmental issues such as pollution, climate change, and resource depletion, but also developing a sense of responsibility towards their prevention and management. The conceptual framework of environmental awareness is influenced by various factors including education, socio-economic status, cultural values, and access to information. It also reflects the interaction between human activities and the natural environment, highlighting the importance of adopting sustainable practices for long-term ecological balance.

Environmental awareness includes three key components:

- **Knowledge**
- **Attitude**
- **Practice**

It is influenced by education, occupation, and access to information.<sup>4</sup>

### Rural Environmental Awareness:

Rural populations show moderate awareness in formal terms but possess strong traditional ecological knowledge.

**Key Features:** The key features include a basic understanding of environmental issues, adoption of sustainable practices, and a sense of responsibility towards natural resource conservation. It also reflects the role of traditional knowledge, lifestyle patterns, and community participation in shaping environmentally responsible behavior.

- **Organic farming practices**
- **Low waste generation**
- **High dependence on natural resources**

However, lack of education and awareness programs limits their understanding of modern environmental issues.<sup>5</sup>

### Urban Environmental Awareness:

Urban areas have high population density and intensive use of natural resources, which leads to increased environmental stress. Environmental awareness among urban residents is essential for promoting sustainable development. A well-informed population can adopt eco-friendly



practices such as waste segregation, water conservation, and energy efficiency, which collectively contribute to environmental protection.

Urban populations demonstrate higher awareness levels due to:

- **Education**
- **Media exposure**
- **Government initiatives**

Despite this, unsustainable practices such as plastic use and waste generation remain prevalent.<sup>6</sup>

### **Comparative Analysis:**

Comparative analysis is a research method used to compare two or more subjects, ideas, groups, or phenomena in order to identify their similarities and differences. It is widely applied in academic research, especially in social sciences, geography, economics, and environmental studies. This method helps in gaining deeper insights and understanding patterns, relationships, and variations across different cases.

### **Meaning and Concept:**

Comparative analysis involves a systematic examination of variables across different units. These units can be regions (urban vs rural), time periods (past vs present), or groups (different social or economic classes). The goal is to draw meaningful conclusions based on comparison.

### **Rural and urban populations differ significantly:**

- **Rural areas: Sustainable practices but low awareness**
- **Urban areas: High awareness but poor implementation**

This paradox highlights the need for balanced development strategies.

### **Major Environmental Issues in Rohtas:**

Rohtas district is facing several environmental challenges, including deforestation,

water pollution, soil degradation, and increasing urban waste. Rapid population growth and unplanned urbanization have further intensified pressure on natural resources, leading to ecological imbalance and sustainability concerns.

- **Deforestation**
- **Water pollution**
- **Soil erosion**
- **Urban waste management**

### **Suggestions:**

Effective environmental awareness can be enhanced through integrated efforts in education, community participation, and the promotion of sustainable practices at both rural and urban levels.

- Strengthen environmental education
- Promote community participation
- Encourage sustainable practices
- Increase government intervention

### **Conclusion:**

The study reveals that environmental awareness is unevenly distributed between rural and urban populations. While urban residents have better knowledge, rural communities demonstrate more sustainable behavior.

A combined approach integrating modern awareness with traditional practices is essential for sustainable development. Furthermore, it is evident that awareness alone is not sufficient to ensure environmental protection; it must be accompanied by responsible behavior and active community participation. Rural communities, despite limited formal education, often follow environmentally sustainable lifestyles rooted in tradition and necessity. On the other hand, urban populations, although more informed, frequently engage in practices that contribute to environmental degradation due to consumerism and lifestyle patterns.



Therefore, there is an urgent need to bridge this gap by promoting practical environmental education, strengthening local participation, and encouraging behavioral change. Policy interventions should focus not only on increasing awareness but also on ensuring its effective implementation at the grassroots level. Integrating indigenous knowledge systems with modern environmental strategies can provide a balanced and sustainable path forward.

In conclusion, achieving environmental sustainability in regions like Rohtas district requires a holistic approach that combines knowledge, practice, and policy support, ensuring that both rural wisdom and urban awareness contribute equally to environmental conservation.

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