

## Perception of Environmental Movement in Desert of Rajasthan: A Case Study of Churu District, Rajasthan

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### Abstract

All the natural functions of human being such as birth, growth, health and deaths are affected and determined by the natural environment in the same manner as the cases of other organisms but man being most developed and advanced animal, both physically and mentally and hence technologically, is capable of making substantial changes in natural environment so as to make it suitable for his own living. The role of most primitive biological or physical man in the functions of natural environmental system was fundamentally that at user of environmental resources and thus he played the role of a factor of the environment but as the skill and technology of man developed with cultural development his roles towards natural environment also changed progressively such as from user through modifier and changer to destroyer of the environment. Modern technological man has changed and is changing the environment for his vested interests to such an extent that even the very existence of human beings is threatened. There are a natural ecosystem and human ecological adaptation on the entire globe. But now a days mans is destroying this ecosystem for the name of modernization and development. To stop such type of manmade greed number of environmental movements took place to protect the environment and ecology. The paper describes the environmental movement perceptions among people. Because the environmental movement will began form the bottom to top. In other words, we can say any policy and rules cannot be effectively implements without public involvement.

**Keywords:** Perceptions; Ecosystem; Public Involvement; Environmental Movement

### Introduction

The Development of Science and Technology and ever-increasing Industries have brought tremendous change in the human environment shrinking the balance between human life and environment. Apart from this technological progress also create other innumerable problems, accompanied which affected the environment. During ancient times, there was emphasis on the care for the natural resources. Our ancient people learnt to live with five basic elements of nature i.e., water, air, tree, land, and the whole earth. They also worshipped them in reality and symbolically and also

called Mother Earth. These five elements are basic survival need of mankind. We are not supposed to ignore any one of them. The Global Environment Facility, established in 1990, attempts to bring about collaboration on financing global environmental problems between the World Bank, UNDP, and the UNEP. The UN, especially the UNEP has been one of the principal organizations stressing environment concerns within context of development.

The UN conference on Human Environment and Development held at Stockholm is considered as Magna Carta of environment

protection and sustainable development. It was for the first time that the world community got together to deliberate on an important issue of environmental protection and sustainable development. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), popularly known as Earth Summit was the most important and largest UN conference ever held and put the world on the path of sustainable development which aims at meeting the needs of the present, without limiting the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Earth Summit forced the people worldwide to rethink how their lives after natural environment and their resources. The Rio Declaration, in principle 13 calls upon the states to develop national laws regarding liability and compensation for victims of pollution and other environmental damages. This declaration is of utmost importance to India. National Environment Tribunal Act is the direct outcome of this Convention. Principle 16 of the Declaration reiterates the proposition that polluter must pay, known as 'Polluter Pays Principle'. It also envisaged the 'Environmental Impact Assessment' as a national instrument in matters which adversely affect the environment. It paves the way for legislation affecting mass disaster with emphasis on the right to know. These principles have found judicial recognition in landmark decisions of the Supreme Court of India. India is a party to most of the international conventions on environment, hence obliged to take appropriate steps for preservation of natural resources of the earth, as well as protection and improvement of environment. Indian Constitution makes specific reference to environmental protection. The statute book in India has several laws relating to pollution control and environment protection.

In India, the movement emerged as a response to a wide spectrum of struggles and conflicts over the use of natural resources, social justice issues and violation of human rights. A typology based on movement categories by issues and examples, provides a pointer to the diversity of organizations, issues and ideology that contribute to the environmental movement in the country. The environmental movement globally and in India comprises a diversity of organizations with common orientations but with varying emphases and strategies. The contributions of Gandhian thought, ecological Marxism, Green ideology, eco-feminism and eco-socialism are reviewed. The ideologies of the environmental movement are apparently distinct, but sometimes overlap. Prior to multinational technology and culture, there existed enormous cultural diversity, which, in fact, was a direct result of the world's biodiversity. The

modernization process has reduced diversity and is transforming nature into high-yielding monocultures [1]. This process is essentially a product of power relations between nations and economic interests. The polarization between the North and South on environmental issues, therefore, needs to be examined. It is now known that 25 per cent of the world's population consumes 85 per cent of its wealth and produces 90 per cent of its waste. If the rich reduce their wasteful consumption by 25 per cent, worldwide pollution will be reduced by 25 per cent, while if the poor 75 per cent reduced consumption totally and disappeared from the earth, the reduction in pollution would be only 10 per cent. Similarly, within the United States, 6 per cent of the world's population consumes over half of the world's non-renewable resources and over a third of all raw materials produced. Environmental problems affect a range of groups with different interests, all of whom argue for different policies. The groups could be differentiated by location (urban-rural or rich-poor), by income and class or consumption patterns within these locations and also by gender.

### The environmental movement

Social movements have complex roots and it is difficult to dissociate one from the other. Bowman [2] rightly argues that it was not a single issue or sudden crisis that led to the formation and growth of the environment movement. The evolution of the environment movement indicates that it is life-centered, and distinguished by a sense of moral imperative regarding human behavior in relation to other life-forms within the biosphere. The movement identifies a complex effort of international characters over a range of issues, and its participants cut across social and economic classes. It is not an elitist movement in an excluding sense, nor is it a mass movement comparable to those seeking economic or political reforms [3]. It comprises a diversity of organizations with common orientations but with varying emphases and strategies. The varied nature of these movements, their diverse methodologies and different ideological orientations render the task of constructing an adequate taxonomy of these movements difficult. To understand the nature of the environmental movement in India, one attempt has been to analyse them in terms of their material, political and ideological contexts [4].

In another attempt, the nature and type of the environmental movement in India have been analyzed on the basis of the classification of the struggles over the use and control of natural re-

sources. In this schema, the environmental movement in India is contextualized by three types of struggles over natural resources. The first type of struggle is related to the entitlement of different social groups to environmental resources. Second, environmental action is directed towards seeking a change in the official policy related to the pattern of environmental resource use and, the third type of struggle raises ecological issues of development, particularly the dimension of human-nature relationship and presents a critique of the dominant development paradigm. All these struggles are clustered around various natural resources that include land, water, forest and air [5]. Ideologies of Indian environmentalism are essentially characterized by free-floating eclectic brands of multifarious, often conflicting groups. The crusading Gandhians, the Marxists, the proponents of appropriate technology (Guha, 1988), the ideology of conservation and the perspective of indigenous ecological management [6] and, eco-feminism (Mies and Shiva, 1993), are the known ideologies of the environmental movement in India.

The issue of preservation aimed at protection of biodiversity has been the ideological force behind the movement towards the preservation of Silent Valley and other conservation efforts that have led to the creation of wildlife sanctuaries and national parks in the country. The ideology of indigenous communities is derived from the view that the culture and the belief systems of these communities (the advices or the original dwellers) provides an alternative ecological wisdom [6].

The research on public environmental perception has examined the value bases for environmental concern [7], as well as identifying important socio-demographic correlates. Some studies related to particular cultural settings have also emerged recently, including work in South Africa [8], China [9], and Costa Rica (Schelhas and Pfeffer, 2005). Overall, the results often point to the importance of local environmental conditions in shaping concerns. In South Africa, for instance, “those most likely to be directly affected by water pollution are also most likely to see it as a problem” [8]. In Costa Rica, global discourse on eco-tourism and conservation has influenced local perceptions of environmental issues in forests [10]. And widespread poverty and deprivation in China is argued by Harris [9] to have shaped the instrumental view of the natural world held by many Chinese, including less emphasis on environmental preservation.

**The study area**

Churu district lies in the North-East of the Rajasthan state at an altitude of 286.20 meters above the mean sea level. It is the part of Thar Desert located in the Western part of Rajasthan extending between 73°40' to 75°41' East longitudes and 27°24' to 29°00' North latitudes. The study area covers an area of 13858.38 sq. kms. with population of 20.40 lack persons according to census 2011. Churu district ranks 13th in terms of population, 6th in terms of area and 30th in terms of population density. The district exhibits an undulating terrain mostly covered by blown sand farming part of the desert of Rajasthan. It is sandy, dry and ill watered, unkind to all farms of life, animals and plant. The district has a desert climate characterized by extremes temperature and erratic rainfall. The literacy rate in Churu district is 66.8 percent which is higher than the State Average (66.1 percent) and it ranks 12<sup>th</sup> among the other districts of the state. Gender Gap of the literacy rate is 24.8 percent in the district.

**Environmental protection movement perceptions**

**Role of public**

The role of local People is maximum in environment conservation and solving environmental problems, because the local environmental problem directly influences them. In the beginning people are less aware towards the environmental problems but due to the continuous negative effects of the environmental problem, they raise their voice against the same. The educated and the aware People are able to analyze the legal aspect of the problem and plan strategy to remove the problem. Under this, they try to solve the problem by taking legal action against the persons involved, also with the means of dharnas, rally etc. the problem is placed before the administration.

Category	Respondents			Percent
	Male	Female	Total	
Yes	300	280	580	58
No	160	140	300	30
Don't know	40	80	120	12
Total	500	500	1000	100

**Table 1:** Public participation in environmental protection.

Source: On line Survey (2020).

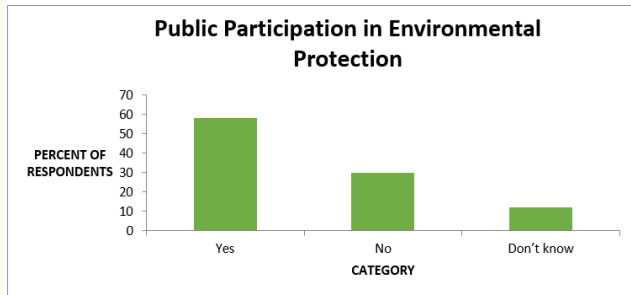


Figure 1

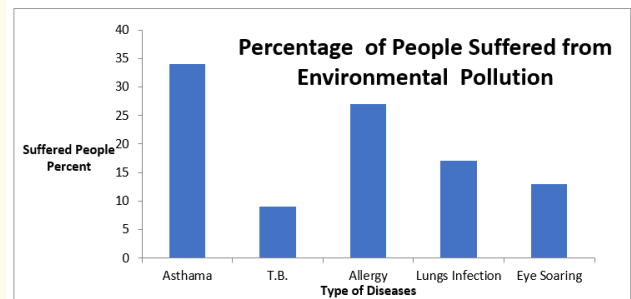


Figure 2

This is clearly indicated by the survey that public participation was considered sufficient for environmental protection by about 58 percent of both male and female People. 30 percent People were reported that the public participation was not sufficient for environmental protection. The environmental laws should such be made, that they can be effective on local level.

#	Type of Diseases	Suffered People	
		Number	Percent
1.	Asthma	34	34
2.	T.B.	9	9
3.	Allergy	27	27
4.	Lungs Infection	17	17
5.	Eye Soaring	13	13
Total		100	100

Table 2: Number of people suffered from environmental pollution.

Source: Online Survey (2020).

The above table shows that 34 percent people suffered from Asthma, 9 percent people suffered from T.B., 27 percent people suffered from Allergy, 17 percent people suffered from Lungs Infection, 13 percent people suffered from Eye Soaring etc.

There are number of environmental issues spreading local level pollution. This led to the spread of various diseases. Due to this, the local residents collected and informed the matter to the administration. In the beginning, the administration did not take the matter seriously but later when the people started agitation by means

of rally, contacting concern authorities and media, administration took action. The people were aware of the Water Preservation and Control of Pollution Act, 1974. This act establishes an institutional structure for preventing and abating water pollution. It establishes standards for water quality and effluent. Pollution industry must seek permission to discharge waste into influent bodies. The pollution control board was constituted under this act. Local people also filed a writ in court, due to which the administration planned out a strategy and sorted out the problem. In Churu, drainage problem is very big problem. The general topography of the city is undulating and contains low laying areas at several places causing problems in managing the discharges caused by the storms. The city does not have a well-planned drainage network and the existing drains are of insufficient capacity. The solution of this problem is only possible by the cooperation of local residents. They can make a well in home so that water is allowed to pour in it. This will not only solve the drainage problem but also increase the water table of the city.

**Role of media**

The media plays important role in the overall development of the society. The best way to reach out to them and make them aware of the environmental problems is through media, particularly the electronic media. Therefore "Mass Awareness" has been identified as one of the thrust areas by the Ministry, not only to intensify the efforts already being made in this direction but also to launch new initiatives. The Bhoomi Door Darshan Programme and National Geography Doordarshan Programme and few other television channels are proposed to be extensively used for telecasting environment-based programmes and information. Professional

Media agencies which are hired to assist the Ministry in carrying out the campaign also play a major role. To encourage individual efforts in producing films/documentaries on environment/wildlife related themes in the country, the Ministry has sponsored organization of a film festival "Vatavaran 2001" by Centre for Media Studies, Delhi in April 2002.

The media played a vital role in solving the environmental problems and in increasing awareness in the study area. A movement named "Amritam Jalam Abhiyaan" was started in June 2005 by Rajasthan Patrika. The movement started from Kalra Johda after which in June 2006 this was done in Pithana Johda. In 2008 the

movement took place in Depalsar Johda. The programmer was started to collect the preserved water of pre monsoon season. The process includes the cleaning and deepening of the Johda with the help of public. Rajasthan Patrika has always played a responsible role by promoting the public interest works. In this reference, Rajasthan Patrika made efforts in conserving the traditional methods of water preservation through Amratam Jalam Abhiyaan. It has also motivated people for tree plantation through its Hariyalo Rajasthan Programme. As regards to the role of media regarding environmental awareness is concerned, most of the People in rural as well as are depended on News Paper, T.V., Radio.

#	Category	Respondents					
		Rural		Urban		Total	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1	News paper	250	50	270	54	520	52
2	T.V.	175	35	200	40	375	37.5
3	Radio	75	15	30	06	105	10.5
Total		500	100	500	100	1000	100

Table 3: Role of media in environmental awareness.

Source: Online Survey 2020.

The above table shows that in rural areas 54 percent people aware from T.V. while in urban the percent was 54, but in rural areas 35 percent people aware from newspaper while in urban the percent was 40 and in rural areas 15 percent people aware from Radio while in urban the percent was 06. In both areas radio (10.5 percent) and T.V. (37.5 percent) have been least source of information regarding environmental awareness and protection. Radio has not been effective because it only provides general information and not specific information on environmental awareness and protection.

**Role of NGOs**

The number of voluntary agencies, community groups, academic societies, nongovernmental organizations working for environment in Churu district has increased significantly in the last few years. At present, there are about 50 NGOs working in different parts of the district to build awareness of the environment. The National Environmental Awareness Campaigns, promoted by the Ministry of Environment and forests have successfully encouraged

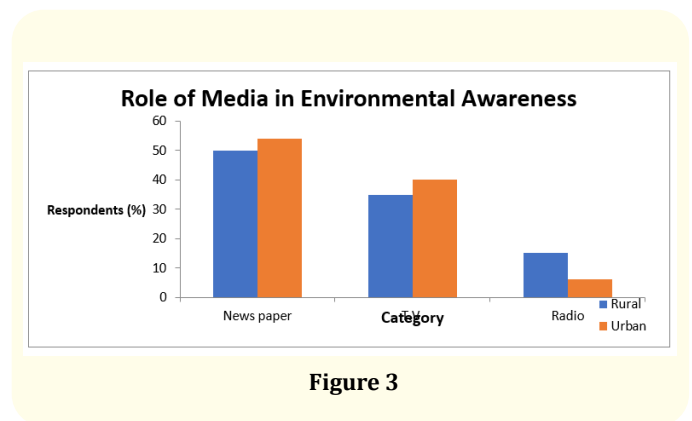


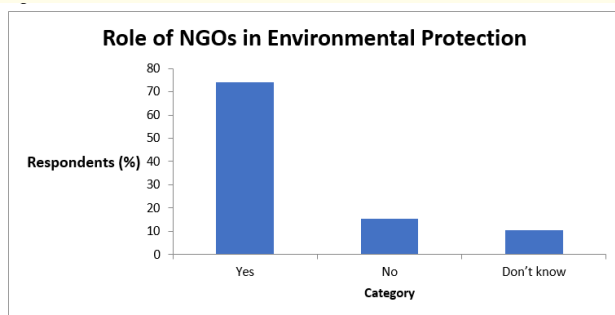
Figure 3

many NGOs development, appropriate technology etc. as there is a development, between environmental protection and human welfare.

This is clearly indicated by the survey that role of NGOs was considered sufficient for environmental protection by about 74

Category	Respondents			Percent
	Male	Female	Total	
Yes	400	340	740	74
No	80	75	155	15.5
Don't know	20	85	105	10.5
Total	500	500	1000	100

**Table 4:** Role of NGOs in environmental protection.  
Source: Online survey 2020.



**Figure 4**

percent of both male and female People. 15.5 percent People were reported that the role of NGOs was not sufficient for environmental protection and 10.5 percent People were reported that they don't no role of NGOs was sufficient or not for environmental protection. The environmental laws should such be made that they can be effective on local level. The main objectives and activities related to environment of all the NGOs are to promote the environmental education and awareness through organization of film shows, workshops, seminars, training programmes especially for students, to collect, compile and disseminate data related to environment and preparation of documentary films for public awareness to promote environmental friendly technology and sanitary practices in daily life through awareness programmes to make aware the public and authorities about the problem areas and extent of environmental degradation including harm to the public health and other resources, affection of wildlife, and conducting research related to protection of environment. Thus, importance of NGOs and their role has been well recognized for implementation of environmental laws

but for this purpose there is need of well-informed public and proper legal framework to enable the NGOs and the public to play their appropriate role. The roles of NGOs for protection of environment in the study area are on the following aspects:

**Tree plantation**

In the Study Area, various NGOs try to make people aware of planting trees. They are told about the benefits of trees and plants and are provided the plants from nursery. Plantation is made on social land like schools, road side and pasture areas. NGOs try to promote social forestry scheme of government among the People of rural area.

**Campaigning of environment awareness**

NGOs try to campaign the environment awareness by slogans, banners, pamphlets and other such materials. They visit schools and other such institutions and try to popularize the environment awareness.

**Role of government**

The role of government has been active in some cases of study area while in others it has not been satisfactory. The government made a planning in which the water from Johri Sagar to outside of city. A sector plan has been made by the government for permanent solution of sewage and drainage problem. The project sectors undertaken in this programme are water supply, sewerage, transportation and drainage for which the allocation of total fund for Churu is 69.50 crores. In which the drainage has been allocated 4.5 crores. The plan is named as Urban Informal structure Development Programme. Under the Urban Solid Waste Disposal Act 2000, the government has launched in Churu city "Door to Door Garbage Collection". The government also promotes special campaign like "Swachchhata Mitra Aapke Dwaar" for cleaning the city.

Category	Respondents			Percent
	Rural	Urban	Total	
Yes	380	315	695	69.5
No	83	80	163	16.3
Don't no	37	105	142	14.2
Total	500	500	1000	100

**Table 5:** Role of government in environmental protection.  
Source: Online survey 2020.



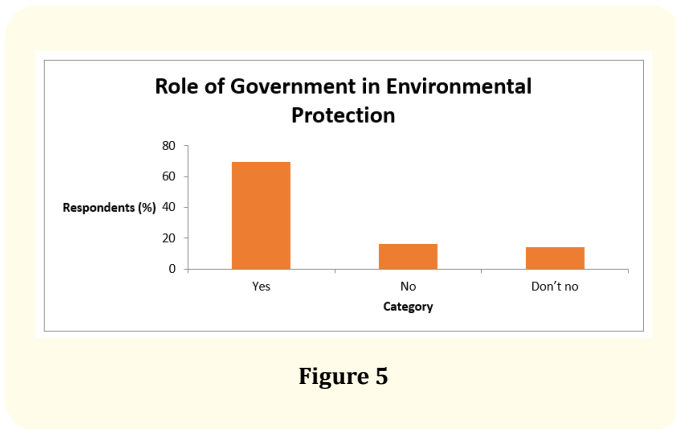


Figure 5

The above table shows that in Churu district role of government were considered sufficient for environmental protection by about 69.5 percent of both rural and urban People. 16.3 percent People were reported that the role of government was not sufficient for environmental protection and 14.2 percent People were reported that they don't know whether the role of government for environmental protection was sufficient or not [11-24].

### Conclusion

The environmental movement has visibly enlarged, refined and extended our understanding of environment issues and their significance. Robert Nisbet (1982), says that when the history of the twentieth century is finally written, the single most important social movement of the period will be judged to be environmentalism. The environmental movements are very effective method to aware the people those who are living in the small city. The approach must be thinking locally and act globally. Every movement related to protection of environment gives us a new thought and new perception towards to save the environment and humanity. All movements and public involvement also affected by political will and strongness. Because no nay policy or program will be effectively implemented without political will and involvement. If you talk about Asian countries the political system is more powerful than others in terms of public involvement in the politics. They can divert people mind as they desired. So, they must divert public mind to protect our earth and environment. Because every mankind is based only healthy and pure environment and ecosystem.

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