

**A STUDY ON AWARENESS TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND BIO- DIVERSITY
CONSERVATION AMONG THE COLLEGE STUDENTS OF DHAKUAKHANA TOWN,
LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT OF ASSAM**

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Review: 22/06/2025**Acceptance:02/07/2025****Publication:01/08/2025****ABSTRACT:**

Environmental degradation and biodiversity loss are intrinsically linked and pose significant threats to the planet's health and human well-being. In this regard, it is very urgent to know the level of awareness towards environmental degradation and biodiversity among the students specially in higher education. Considering this, the investigator has conducted a micro level study entitled “A study on awareness towards environmental degradation and bio-diversity conservation among the college students of dhakuakhana town, lakhimpur district of Assam”. The study aimed at to explore the overall awareness among the students of Dhakuakhana town towards Environmental Degradation and Bio-Diversity Conservation. In this study ‘normative survey method’ is used. The study introduces purposive sampling with a sample size of 300 students. In order to collect data a self standardized scale namely “Awareness Scale towards Environmental Degradation and Bio-Diversity Conservation” is used as a tool of the study. The collected data’s are analyzed and interpreted quantitatively. The study reveals awareness level towards Environmental Degradation and Bio- Diversity Conservation among the college students of Dhakuakhana Town, Lakhimpur District of Assam.

Key words – Bio diversity, Degradation, Awareness

INTRODUCTION:

The term “environmental awareness” refers to understanding the impact of human actions on the natural world and recognizing the importance of its protection. It involves being conscious of environmental issues, their causes, and the consequences for both the environment and human well-being. It also means developing a sense of responsibility to make choices that promote sustainability and minimize negative impacts on the environment. Environmental awareness includes some aspects like - Awareness of Environmental Issues, Understanding the Environment, Promoting Sustainability, and Taking Responsibility. In essence, environmental awareness is a crucial step towards creating a more sustainable future for all.

The aims of environmental awareness are to educate the public about environmental issues, promote responsible behavior towards the environment, and foster a sense of stewardship for the planet. This includes increasing knowledge about environmental problems, developing positive attitudes towards conservation, and encouraging active participation in environmental protection. .

Biodiversity is being seriously affected by a range of environmental issues, such as the loss of natural habitats, changes in the climate, pollution, overuse of natural resources, and the spread of species that don't belong in certain ecosystems. These issues are interconnected and often exacerbate each other, leading to a decline in the variety of life on earth. **Biodiversity loss** means we're losing the rich variety of life on Earth — from the smallest genes to entire ecosystems. It affects not just the different species that live here, but also how they interact and the natural balance they maintain. In mid-2019, the United Nations, working with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), released a powerful report warning that around **one million** out of an estimated **eight million species** are at risk of extinction. Some scientists have even called this a possible **sixth mass extinction**, a crisis unlike anything the planet has seen since the age of the dinosaurs.

It is not possible to solve the problems of Environmental degradation and Biodiversity conservation until and unless awareness is developed among the people especially among the student society up to a desired level. There have only remedy lies on the extent of awareness on the part of the student fraternity. The Scholars also prove opinion that teaching of environmental education with adequate curriculum, organization of seminars, , workshops, debates, extempore speech, quiz, educational tours, N.S.S. camps etc. can help a lot in this direction. Hence, now a day’s environmental education (EE) has been one of the main interests of the stakeholders of education.

To survive and thrive on this planet, we all need to understand the importance of protecting and caring for our environment. Right now, the natural balance between living beings and their surroundings is deeply disrupted. Activities like deforestation, pollution, large-scale construction, and blasting mountains for roads and tunnels have thrown nature out of sync, leading to serious consequences. The

way forward starts with awareness—especially in schools, colleges, and among the general public. Teachers play a vital role. Beyond just teaching, they can inspire students and highlight how crucial it is to understand ecology and maintain ecological balance. It's only through this kind of education and awareness that we can hope to restore and protect our planet

A brief sketch of Dhakuakhana Town: Dhakuakhana is a growing town in the Lakhimpur district of Assam, located in the northeastern part of India. Until 2002, it was an area frequently affected by floods. Geographically, Dhakuakhana lies between 27.35° to 27.60° North latitude and 94.24° to 94.42° East longitude. It is bordered by the Brahmaputra River and Dhemaji to the east, and by North Lakhimpur and the Subansiri River to the west.

The town is known for its rich cultural heritage. One of its major traditional festivals, *Faat Bihu*, is celebrated at Mohghuli Chapori. Dhakuakhana is home to a diverse population, including several ethnic communities such as the Mishing, Kaibarta, Ahom, Chutia, Sut, Deori, and Koch. While Hinduism is the dominant religion, communities practicing Christianity and Islam also live here peacefully. Among these communities, the Mishing people are an indigenous tribe who continue to practice their traditional beliefs, worshipping natural deities like the sun and moon, referred to as *Doni-Polo*. The Deori community, on the other hand, follows *Kundisim* and worships their ancestral deity, *Kundimama*. A significant number of the Kaibarta community today follow the *Mayamara Vaishnavism* sect.

In terms of education, Dhakuakhana has two prominent general degree colleges: Dhakuakhana College and Harhi College, both of which contribute to the town's academic development.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The loss of biodiversity and degradation of environment is a serious concern of the world. It brings threatening to the health of our planet as well as well being of human society. It is important to conserve environment and bio-diversity being a part of the ecosystem which provides our basic needs. Specially conservation of the five important elements - land, water, air, fire and space has the intrinsic value in order of existence of human being. Each of these elements evident themselves in the diverse flora and fauna around the world. Therefore, to conserve the biodiversity and protect environment awareness is very essential to secure our future. The only remedy towards the end is awareness towards environmental degradation and bio-diversity conservation. To address this issue, it's crucial to create strong awareness about environmental degradation and the importance of conserving biodiversity—especially among students and the general public. As the future of our society, the younger generation is expected to take responsible actions toward protecting the environment.

Dhakuakhana is very rich in biodiversity in Assam. It has rich biodiversity, including diverse faiths with diverse ethnic communities, the people thriving muga silk culture in Dhakuakhana. The region features evergreen vegetation and a mix of transient as well as grasslands. Besides it, some areas like Mahdhowa Beel, Roha Beel, and Harhijan are the important wetlands which support a variety of fish and other aquatic life, including vulnerable indigenous species. Including the Open-billed stork and Lesser Adjutant stork the area has a variety of bird species. The area of Dhakuakhana is also known for its beetle diversity, with 25 species identified in different habitats. Hence, assessment of the extent of awareness towards environmental degradation and bio-diversity conservation among the college students of Dhakuakhana is very essential. Considering the importance of the issue the investigator has conducted the study namely "A study on awareness towards Environmental Degradation and Bio-Diversity Conservation: among the College Students of Dhakuakhana Town, Lakhimpur District of Assam".

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the present study are---

1. To study the overall awareness of the college students of Dhakuakhana Town towards Environmental Degradation and Bio-Diversity Conservation.
2. To compare the degree of awareness towards Environmental Degradation and Bio-Diversity Conservation between the boys and girls college students of Dhakuakhana Town.
3. To compare the degree of awareness towards Environmental Degradation and Bio-Diversity Conservation between the Arts and Science stream college students of Dhakuakhana Town.

Formulating Hypotheses for the Study: For this study, the researcher has proposed the following hypotheses:

1. There is likely no meaningful difference in the level of awareness about environmental degradation and biodiversity conservation between male and female college students in Dhakuakhana Town.
2. There is likely no meaningful difference in the level of awareness about environmental degradation and biodiversity conservation between students from the Arts and Science streams in colleges of Dhakuakhana Town.

DELIMITATIONS:

1. The present study has covered the degree level students studying at Dhakuakhana College and Harhi college of Dhakuakhana Town only.

2. The study focuses only on students who are pursuing their education in the Science and Arts streams..

However, despite of these delimitations it is expected that the results could be viewed in a more general manner.

MEHODOLOGY

Method: This study was carried out using the 'normative survey method'. "Normative survey method is that method of investigation which attempts to describe and interpret what exist at present in the form of conditions, practices, trends, effects, attitude, beliefs, etc,"(Siddhu, K.S., 1990, P-107). The investigators used it because the study is concerned with the existing awareness and beliefs towards Environmental Degradation and Bio-Diversity Conservation.

Population: All Degree level students currently enrolled at Dhakuakhana College and Harhi College in Dhakuakhana Town. Only these two college have under graduate course in Dhakuakhana .

Sample: sample Description of the study –

Total sample size- 300 students

Sampling Technique- Purposive

Gender Distribution:

Boys: 150

Girls: 150

Stream wise Distribution:

Boys- i. Arts Stream: 100.

ii. Science stream: 50

Girls -Arts Stream: 100

Science stream: 50

Overall stream Distribution: Total Arts Students: 100 (Boys) + 100(Girls) =200

Total Arts Students: 50 (Boys) + 50(Girls)=100

SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION

GENDER	STREAM	COUNT
BOYS	ARTS	100
BOYS	SCIENCE	50
GIRLS	ARTS	100
GIRLS	SCIENCE	50
TOTAL		300

Tool: The Investigator has used "Awareness Scale towards Environmental Degradation and Bio-Diversity Conservation" for the present study in order to measure awareness of the College students towards Environmental Degradation and Bio- Diversity Conservation. This five point Scale consists of 20 items.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The investigator gathered the necessary data using an "Awareness Scale on Environmental Degradation and Biodiversity Conservation." This tool includes 20 statements, each rated on a five-point scale to assess the level of awareness. The collected data has analysed and interpreted to fulfill the objectives of the present study. The "Awareness Scale towards Environmental Degradation and Bio-Diversity Conservation" consists of five point scale with 20 items. In this regard as per the number of items the maximum score of a respondent can be 100 and minimum score can be 20 respectively.

TABLE NO: 1

Always	Often	Occasionally	Seldom	Never
24%	43%	20%	11%	2%

The table above indicates that most of the students show a positive and encouraging level of awareness about environmental degradation and the importance of conserving biodiversity.

On the other hand, a smaller group of students demonstrated a relatively lower level of awareness when it comes to environmental degradation and the conservation of biodiversity.. Therefore, the conclusion is that College students of Dhakuakhana Town have a desirable degree of awareness on these issues.

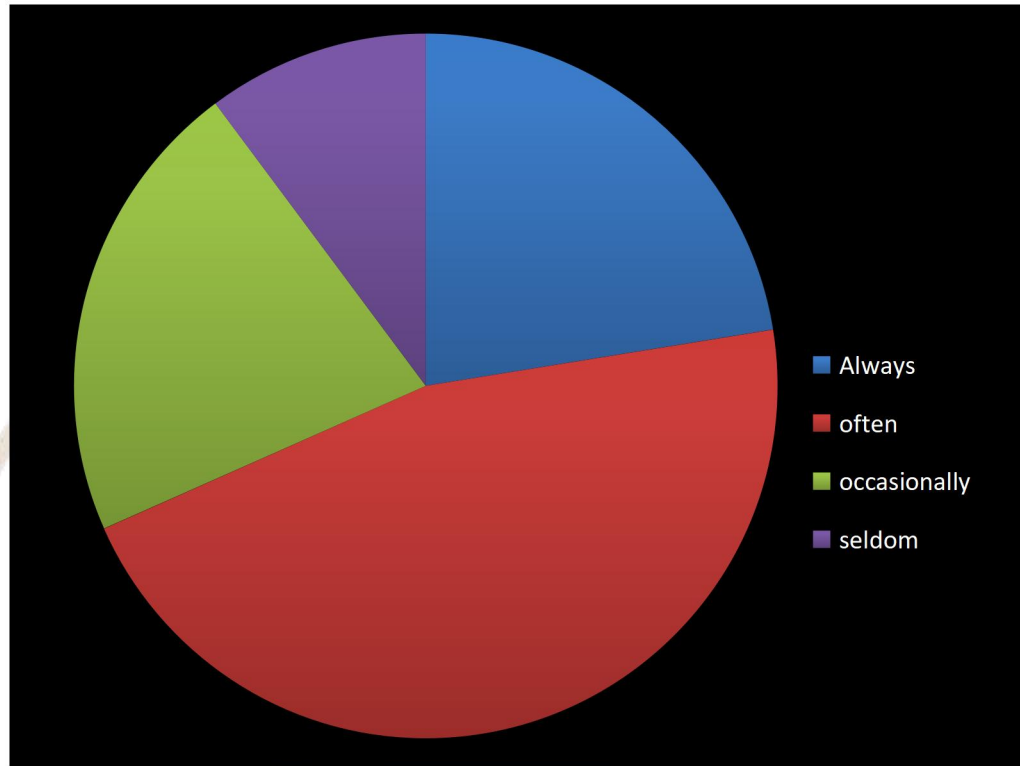


Fig: 1-Pie diagram showing degree of Awareness (in percentage) towards Environmental Degradation and Bio-Diversity Conservation.

TABLE NO: 2

Groups	N	Mean	SD	CR 3.38	Rejection of the null hypothesis.
Boys	150	65.15	7.09		
Girls	150	70	10.26		

For the testing of hypothesis no.1 i.e. “There is no significant difference between the boys and girls college students of Dhakuakhana Town with regard to their degree of awareness towards Environmental Degradation and Bio-Diversity Conservation” the Standard Deviation and Mean for Girls and Boys were calculated separately. Based on the calculation, the Critical Ratio (CR) was found to be 3.38, which is higher than the standard value of 1.96 at the 0.05 level of significance. This means the null hypothesis is rejected. So, we can carefully conclude that there is a meaningful difference between boys and girls college students in Dhakuakhana Town in terms of their awareness about Environmental Degradation and Biodiversity Conservation.

TABLE NO: 3

Groups	N	Mean	SD	CR 0.51	Acceptance of the null hypothesis
Science	100	68.25	10.46		
Arts	200	67	6.96		

To test the null hypothesis no.3 stating as there is no significant difference between the Arts and Science stream college students of Dhakuakhana Town with regard to their degree of awareness towards Environmental Degradation and Bio-Diversity Conservation” a Critical Ratio (CR) is calculated using the Mean and Standard Deviation Scores. The obtained CR value of 0.51 did not exceed the critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 significant levels. Consequently, the null hypothesis is retained, suggesting no significant difference exists between the two student groups (Science and Arts stream) in Dhakuakhana Town regarding awareness of Environmental Degradation and Bio-Diversity Conservation

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY :

After carefully reviewing the collected data, the researchers came to the following conclusions. —

1. **Awareness level:** The study found that college students of Dhakuakhana Town possess a satisfactory level of awareness regarding Environmental Degradation and Bio-Diversity Conservation
2. **Gender Difference :** The research revealed a statistically significant difference in the level of awareness in Environmental Degradation and Bio-Diversity Conservation between boys and girls college students of Dhakuakhana Town
3. **Stream Difference:** The study found that there is no meaningful difference in the level of awareness about Environmental Degradation and Bio-Diversity Conservation between college students from the Arts and Science streams in Dhakuakhana Town. Both groups showed a similar understanding and concern towards these environmental issues.

CONCLUSION:

The study on awareness towards Environmental Degradation and Bio-Diversity Conservation among the College students of Dhakuakhana Town, Lakhimpur District, Assam is conducted at a micro-level aspect and it was designed to investigate public awareness regarding two critical environmental issues: Environmental Degradation and Biodiversity conservation. The primary objective of the researchers was to gain in-depth insight in to the extent and nature of the awareness among the target population within the specific regional context of Assam.

This study aimed to explore the level of awareness among college students, focusing on differences based on gender and academic stream. As a small-scale investigation, it brought to light several important findings. The researchers believe that the insights gained here could be valuable for educational administrators, policymakers, and other authorities when making decisions at the college level, particularly on matters related to environmental degradation and biodiversity conservation. Throughout the research process, it became clear to the investigator that this is a deeply important and underexplored area. There is ample scope for more detailed and extensive studies in the future to better understand and address these pressing environmental issues among the College students of Dhakuakhana Town, Lakhimpur District, Assam at macro level taking some other considerations like locality (Rural-Urban), Levels of education (Elementary, Secondary, University), awareness of teachers etc.

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