International Journal of Linguistics Applied Psychology and Technology
https://ijlapt.strjournals.com/index.php/ijlapt
Vol. 3 No. 1(Jan) (2025)
ISSN(O): 3048-4529

Government Policies and Environmental Education Programs in Rajasthan: An Evaluation

Balu Ram Gawdiya[1], Dr. Renu Poonia[2], Dr. Sunil Sharma[3]

[1] Research Scholar, Department of Geography, SPC Govt college Ajmer MDS University Rajasthan Email baluram94@gmail.com
[2]Research Supervisor (Associate Professor Geography, SPC Govt college Ajmer)
[3]Co Supervisor (Professor Geography SPC Govt college Ajmer)

Abstract

Environmental education (EE) is gaining recognition as an essential instrument for promoting sustainable development, especially in ecologically sensitive areas. Rajasthan, the largest state in India by land area, confronts significant environmental issues such as desertification, water shortage, loss of biodiversity, and vulnerability to climate change. This research examines the government policies and environmental education initiatives implemented in Rajasthan, with an emphasis on school-based programs like the National Green Corps (Eco-Clubs), state biodiversity outreach efforts, and recent large-scale tree-planting campaigns. Utilizing policy documents, program reports, and existing literature, the research evaluates institutional structures, execution strategies, and the degree of conformity with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The results indicate that Rajasthan has developed a robust programmatic foundation through eco-clubs, biodiversity initiatives, and green school projects, which have played a role in enhancing awareness and fostering student involvement in environmental conservation. Nonetheless, significant shortcomings are apparent, such as inconsistent program execution, insufficient teacher training, weak monitoring frameworks, and a lack of comprehensive long-term impact evaluations. This paper contends that although Rajasthan has made notable strides in establishing platforms for environmental education, the success of these initiatives relies on better integration into the curriculum, enhanced teacher training, effective monitoring and evaluation, and environmentally responsible practices in initiatives like plantation drives. The research concludes by suggesting policy actions to formalize environmental education, capitalize on NEP 2020 reforms, and promote partnerships among various stakeholders, aiming to transform environmental education in Rajasthan from disconnected efforts to a fundamental component of sustainable development.

Keywords: *Environmental Education, Government Policies Rajasthan Environment Policy*

1. Introduction

Environmental Education (EE) is widely acknowledged as an essential instrument in achieving sustainable development and community resilience to environmental change. In a state like Rajasthan - geographically diverse (Thar Desert, semi-arid plains, wetlands, and ecologically sensitive zones) and culturally varied - EE plays a crucial role in enabling citizens, especially youth, to understand local environmental challenges (water scarcity, desertification, biodiversity loss, and climate impacts) and to participate meaningfully in mitigation and adaptation actions. In India, EE is delivered through a mix of national schemes, state policies, educational boards, and civil-society programmes; Rajasthan's approach includes state-level

policy instruments and school- and community-level programmes supported by government departments and NGOs. This paper evaluates how government policy and programme architecture in Rajasthan translate into on-the-ground EE outcomes.

(Background sources used for policy and programme description include Rajasthan government environment portals and State Action Plans, as well as national EE programme descriptions.)

2. Objectives

The study is guided by the following objectives:

• To map the principal government policies and institutional structures supporting environmental education in Rajasthan (state departments, boards, and action plans).

• To evaluate major EE programmes implemented in the state (particularly school-based programmes such as Eco-clubs/National Green Corps and curriculum initiatives).

• To assess implementation strengths and gaps with respect to reach, teacher capacity, monitoring, and community engagement.

• To recommend practical measures for strengthening EE delivery and policy integration in Rajasthan.

3 Study Area: Rajasthan - a short introduction

Rajasthan, India's largest state by area, spans varied ecosystems: the hyper-arid Thar Desert in the west, semi-arid plains and agricultural zones in central areas, and the more humid, forested, and wetland pockets in the east and southeast (including wetland sites like Keoladeo and recently designated Ramsar locations). The state faces acute water scarcity, temperature extremes, unique biodiversity pockets, and climate vulnerabilities that make local environmental knowledge and behaviour change especially important. These geographic and socio-ecological conditions shape the priorities for environmental education interventions - from water-conservation practices in arid blocks to wetland protection and biodiversity awareness in conservation hotspots. (State-level environmental institutions and recent policy work demonstrate an explicit focus on climate resilience and local ecosystem protection.)

4. Secondary Data Use and Methodology

This evaluation is based on a qualitative desk-review of secondary sources, selected to capture both official policy documents and programme implementation reports:

Official state documents and portals: Directorate of Environment & Climate Change (DECC) materials and the Rajasthan environment portal.

State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) documents (2014; revised/draft versions and 2022 updates) and related policy notes (including the 2023 Climate Change Policy).

Central government environmental education scheme information (Environment Education Programme under MoEFCC / EEARSD).

Programmatic reports and NGO/centre reports (Centre for Environment Education - CEE, and programme pages on National Green Corps /Eco-club implementation in Rajasthan).

Recent published materials (research repositories, PDF action plans, and news reports for contextual developments).

Method: The review synthesizes policy aims, documented programme reach (e.g., Eco-club numbers), and stated implementation mechanisms. Key themes (institutional architecture, curriculum integration, teacher training, programme reach, monitoring, and community engagement) guided analysis. Limitations: reliance on published secondary materials (which may under-report local innovations and grey literature), variability in reporting years, and limited access to detailed M&E datasets. Where possible, the most recent official documents were prioritized.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Institutional and policy framework

Rajasthan has an established institutional base for environment governance: the Department/Directorate of Environment and Climate Change (established in earlier decades and reorganized into a Directorate in 2019) and specialized bodies such as the Rajasthan State Biodiversity Board and State Pollution Control Board. The state has developed State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCC) and, more recently, a Climate Change Policy (2023), which explicitly recognize the role of awareness, capacity building and education in building resilience. These policy instruments provide an enabling environment for EE programming - aligning local climate priorities (water, desertification control, biodiversity protection) with outreach and education.

5.2 Major EE programmes and partnerships

At the school level, the National Green Corps (Eco-club) programme - a flagship Ministry of Environment initiative - has a strong presence in Rajasthan through state implementation partnerships and civil-society facilitation (with entities like CEE supporting teacher training and resource development). Reports indicate that tens of thousands of schools across the state participate in Eco-club activities; CEE has historically supported curriculum-linked teacher manuals and capacity building with SCERT and school boards. The central Environment Education Programme (under the MoEFCC's EEARSD umbrella) also channels resources and guidelines that feed into state-level programming. These combined institutional and programmatic linkages are the backbone of EE in Rajasthan.

5.3 Curriculum integration and teacher capacity

Projects documented by CEE and state partners (for instance, curriculum localization efforts for classes 6–8) show efforts to "environmentalize" existing textbooks and provide teacher manuals and activity ideas tied to NCERT/state syllabi. Such integration is a critical strength because it embeds EE within mainstream schooling rather than isolating it as an extracurricular activity. However, the effectiveness of such curricular integration depends heavily on teacher capacity building. Reviews and programme notes indicate variable teacher training coverage

and an ongoing need for systematic in-service training, resource availability, and follow-up support.

5.4 Reach, equity and geographic variation

Program documentation suggests that Eco-club and CEE-supported interventions cover a large number of schools across Rajasthan's districts, but coverage and intensity vary. Desert and remote rural areas present particular delivery challenges (distance, limited resources, and staff turnover), while urban schools often enjoy deeper NGO collaborations and resource access. This unevenness risks leaving the most climate-vulnerable and resource-poor communities with the least access to structured EE - a key equity concern.

5.5 Monitoring, evaluation and sustainability

A recurring programmatic gap is systematic monitoring and demonstrable evaluation of learning outcomes and behaviour change. While government plans highlight capacity and awareness-raising, published programme materials rarely present longitudinal data on impact (for example, measurable changes in water-use practices or biodiversity stewardship attributable to EE interventions). The SAPCC and related policy documents do include advocacy and awareness actions as priorities, but the operational M&E frameworks tied to EE outcomes need strengthening.

5.6 Community linkage and local knowledge

Successful EE models emphasize community engagement (parent–school interaction, village-level resource persons, local conservation actions) and the inclusion of indigenous/local ecological knowledge. Some Rajasthan case-studies (e.g., community-led wetland protection and traditional water-harvesting revivals) point to strong local potential. However, mainstream EE programmes could do more to systematically document and scale such community-anchored approaches, ensuring cultural relevance and long-term sustainability.

5.7 Recent policy developments and implications for EE (2022–2025)

The updated SAPCC documents and the 2023 Rajasthan Climate Change Policy reinforce climate awareness, capacity building and resilience-building measures - creating a policy window to mainstream EE further into school curricula, teacher training, and community resilience programs. Recent initiatives and state campaigns (reported in news and government releases) that foreground water-conservation and wetland protection create opportunities to tie EE to visible, locally relevant projects that can serve as learning laboratories for schools and communities.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Rajasthan has a solid policy and institutional foundation for environmental education - including a Directorate for Environment & Climate Change, SAPCCs, and active school-level programmes (Eco-clubs/National Green Corps) supported by both government and NGOs like CEE. These initiatives provide important entry points for environmental literacy and local action. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of EE in generating measurable outcomes is constrained

by uneven geographic coverage, limited systematic teacher training, weak monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and insufficient integration of community and local knowledge systems into mainstream programmes.

Recommendations

To strengthen EE outcomes in Rajasthan the following priorities are recommended:

1. Scale systematic teacher training and continuous professional development: Institutionalize regular in-service EE training for teachers (DIETs, SCERT collaboration) with a follow-up mentorship system. Align teacher training modules with local ecological contexts (Thar, wetlands, forests).

2. Integrate EE across curricula with localized learning materials: Expand the curriculum-localization work -producing context-specific teacher manuals, activity kits, and assessment rubrics for learning outcomes (not just activity counts).

3. Strengthen M&E and evidence generation: Develop an EE monitoring framework with measurable indicators (knowledge, attitudes, practices) and periodic evaluations to inform policy. Link programme funding to M&E outputs.

4. Enhance community-school partnerships: Use conservation projects (wetland restoration, rainwater harvesting, community forestry) as school learning labs. Document best practices and scale community-driven models (e.g. Ramsar site stewardship, traditional water-harvesting revivals).

5. Ensure equitable coverage: Prioritize resource-poor and ecologically vulnerable blocks for EE programming, deploy mobile/cluster resource centres, and incentivize local NGOs to build sustained presence in remote areas.

6. Leverage state policy momentum: Use the newly articulated Climate Change Policy (2023) and SAPCC updates to secure earmarked budgets for EE, and to mainstream climate literacy across educational and health outreach programmes.

8. Limitations of this study

This evaluation is based on secondary published sources (government websites, NGO reports, official PDFs, and news items). It does not include primary data collection (school visits, interviews, or surveys) that would be required to assess learning outcomes empirically and to measure behaviour change attributable to EE programmes. Future researchers can combine the policy review presented here with field evaluations (mixed-methods) to measure programme impact at school and community levels.

References

1. Directorate of Environment and Climate Change, Government of Rajasthan. Environment portal. “Directorate of Environment and Climate Change.” Accessed 2024–2025.
2. Rajasthan State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC), Government of Rajasthan (2014; updated/draft documents 2022).

3. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC). Environment Education Programme (EEP) / Environment Education, Awareness, Research & Skill Development (EEARSD) scheme. Retrieved from official scheme pages (MoEFCC EEP portal).
4. Centre for Environment Education (CEE). "Environment Education programmes in Rajasthan," programme information and teacher manual materials. (CEE Rajasthan programme documents).
5. National Green Corps / Eco-club programme information and implementation notes (MoEFCC / CEE state collaboration).
6. Rajasthan Climate Change Policy, 2023 - policy briefings and summaries.
7. Rajasthan State Environment Health Cell / State-level health & climate adaptation planning (NCDC repository - state briefings).
8. Recent news reporting on state environmental campaigns and Ramsar site designations, e.g., Times of India coverage (World Environment Day-related state campaigns and Ramsar site declarations).