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## Green Politics: Prospects in Rajasthan

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### Abstract

*Rajasthan, one of India's largest and most ecologically vulnerable states, faces several environmental challenges that threaten the well-being of its people and the natural resources upon which they depend. Issues like desertification, water scarcity, soil erosion, and unpredictable rainfall have long affected the region. Traditionally, people in Rajasthan have respected nature and practiced sustainable living, with communities like the Bishnois and Gonds protecting their environment through cultural and religious practices. These communities have maintained a deep connection with nature, using sustainable methods to live in harmony with their surroundings. However, with increasing population, industrialization, and urbanization, the state's natural resources are under pressure. Rapid development has started to strain the very resources that Rajasthan's people have relied on for generations.*

*In recent years, Local protests and movements, driven by concerns over water rights, land acquisitions for Special Economic Zones (SEZs), and other environmental issues, show that people are becoming more aware of these problems. What were once seen as localized issues are now sparking broader discussions about how natural resources should be used and preserved. This growing environmental consciousness could pave the way for the rise of Green Politics in Rajasthan—a political approach focused on ecological sustainability and responsible governance.*

*This paper aims to explore the potential for Green Politics in Rajasthan by examining recent eco-political movements, their impact on the state's development policies, and how they might shape the future of governance in a region facing environmental crises.*

**Key words:** *ecologically vulnerable states, Green Politics, Green Politic, Special Economic Zones (SEZs) etc.*

### Introduction

Rajasthan, one of India's largest and ecologically vulnerable states, faces pressing environmental challenges, including desertification, water scarcity, soil erosion and unpredictable rainfall. Historically, communities like the Bishnois and Gonds have practiced sustainable living, fostering a deep connection with nature. However, rapid industrialization, population growth, and urbanization have strained the state's natural resources, leading to widespread environmental degradation. In response, local protests and movements over water rights, land acquisition, and ecological preservation are gaining momentum, reflecting a broader awareness of these issues. This growing environmental consciousness may pave the way for the rise of Green Politics in Rajasthan—a political approach focused on ecological sustainability and responsible governance. This paper explores the potential of Green Politics in the

region, analyzing its impact on development policies and its potential to shape the future of governance in a state facing severe environmental challenges.

### Methodology

This study uses a **mixed-methods approach**, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the prospects of Green Politics in Rajasthan. By using both primary and secondary data, the study aims to provide a well-rounded understanding of public perception, political engagement, and policy-level efforts related to environmental issues in the state.

### Primary Data

Surveys were conducted with 50 respondents from both urban and rural areas of Jaipur to assess their awareness, attitudes, and expectations regarding environmental policies and green political movements.

**Secondary Data**

The study also involved the analysis of various secondary sources, including political party manifestos from the 2013 and 2018 Rajasthan Assembly Elections, official policy documents such as the *Rajasthan State Action Plan on Climate Change* and the *Rajasthan Solar Energy Policy 2019*, and relevant media reports published between 2018 and 2024. These were examined using **content analysis** to identify recurring themes, policy shifts, and political rhetoric around environmental sustainability.

Furthermore, **case studies** of two major environmental initiatives—*Jal Swavlamban Abhiyan* and the *Bhadla Solar Park*—were carried out to explore how environmental programs are implemented in practice, the challenges they face, and how they are perceived by the public.

By combining data from both grassroots experiences and institutional efforts, the study offers a comprehensive understanding of the current state and future potential of Green Politics in Rajasthan.

**Data Collection**

Using the survey method, primary data was collected to understand the awareness, attitudes, and expectations of people in both urban and rural areas of Jaipur about environmental policies and green political movements. A total of 50 respondents, representing different backgrounds, were surveyed to find out how familiar they are with environmental issues, how much they support green political movements, and what they think about the government's efforts to address environmental problems. The results show clear differences between how urban and rural residents view and engage with environmental topics, including their awareness, attitudes toward sustainability, and expectations from the government. This analysis provides useful insights into what shapes public opinion on environmental policies and how it might influence future green initiatives in Jaipur.

**Survey Results**

1. How familiar are you with environmental issues?

Response	Urban%	Rural%	Total
Very familiar	50%	30%	40%
Somewhat familiar	35%	45%	40%
Not familiar at all	15%	25%	

2. Do you think the local government has made sufficient efforts to address environmental challenges?

Response	Urban%	Rural%	Total
Yes	60%	45%	52%
No	40%	55%	48%

3. Are you aware of any local environmental policies or initiatives?

Response	Urban%	Rural%	Total
Yes	75%	50%	62%
No	25%	50%	38%

4. Do you support green political movements?

Response	Urban%	Rural%	Total
Yes	70%	50%	60%
No	30%	50%	40%

5. How important is environmental sustainability when deciding who to vote for?

Response	Urban%	Rural%	Total
Very important	65%	45%	55%
Somewhat important	30%	40%	35%
Not important	5%	15%	10%

6. Would you support the introduction of stricter laws to protect the environment?

Response	Urban%	Rural%	Total
Yes	80%	65%	72%
No	20%	35%	28%

7. How effective do you think current environmental policies are in addressing pollution?

Response	Urban%	Rural%	Total
Very effective	45%	30%	37.5%
Somewhat effective	40%	35%	37.5%
Not effective	15%	35%	25%

8. Would you support the development of more green spaces in your city or town?

Response	Urban%	Rural%	Total
Yes	70%	40%	55%
No	30%	60%	45%

9. Would you support the development of more green spaces in your city or town?

Response	Urban%	Rural%	Total
Yes	85%	55%	70%
No	15%	45%	30%

10. Do you think urban areas face more severe environmental problems than rural areas?

Response	Urban%	Rural%	Total
Yes	60%	35%	47.5%
No	40%	65%	52.5%

## Interpretation of Results

**1. Familiarity with Environmental Issues:** Urban respondents appear to have a higher level of awareness about environmental issues, which may be influenced by their access to media, events, and formal education.

**2. Local Government Efforts:** Urban respondents are more likely to feel that government efforts are sufficient, while rural respondents express more dissatisfaction. This may reflect a gap in the effectiveness or visibility of environmental policies in rural areas.

**3. Awareness of Local Environmental Policies:** Urban residents are more likely to be informed about local environmental policies, which may be due to better information dissemination channels (e.g., social media, news outlets).

**4. Support for Green Political Movements:** Support for green political movements is notably higher in urban areas, which might reflect the increased visibility and discussions around green politics in cities. Rural areas may have less exposure to these movements.

**5. Importance of Environmental Sustainability in Voting Decisions:** Environmental issues appear to be a higher priority for urban voters compared to rural voters. Urban voters may feel more directly impacted by issues like air pollution, waste management, and green policies.

**6. Support for Stricter Environmental Laws:** Both urban and rural areas show strong support for stricter environmental laws. However, urban areas seem more in favor, possibly because they may already experience the direct effects of environmental degradation like air pollution.

**7. Effectiveness of Environmental Policies:** Urban respondents tend to have a more positive view of the effectiveness of environmental policies, whereas rural respondents are less optimistic. This could be due to the implementation gap or less visible results in rural areas.

**8. Personal Environmental Practices:** Urban residents are more likely to engage in environmentally conscious behaviors, likely due to better access to facilities (e.g., recycling bins, composting programs) and greater environmental awareness.

**9. Support for Green Spaces Development:** There is overwhelming support for green spaces in urban areas, likely because of limited green spaces and growing concerns about urbanization. Rural respondents show mixed support, possibly because they already have ample open spaces.

**10. Urban vs Rural Environmental Problems:** Urban respondents are more likely to perceive severe environmental challenges (e.g., air pollution, waste management), while rural respondents may feel less pressure due to a lower population density and more space.

## Conclusions

- **Awareness** of environmental issues is significantly higher in urban areas, likely due to better access to resources and media.
- **Support for environmental policies and green political movements** is stronger in urban areas.

- **Rural areas** show more skepticism towards government efforts, indicating a potential communication or implementation gap in these regions.
- There is broad support for **stricter environmental laws** and **green spaces**, suggesting that people across both urban and rural areas recognize the importance of environmental preservation.

## Content Analysis Method Applied to Secondary Data

### 1. Political Party Manifestos (2013 & 2018 Rajasthan Assembly Elections)

The objective of the content analysis was to identify recurring themes, policy shifts, and political rhetoric regarding environmental sustainability in Rajasthan's political discourse. The analysis involved coding manifestos from the 2013 and 2018 Rajasthan Assembly Elections for environmental themes such as renewable energy, water conservation, land acquisition, and sustainability. Key categories like "Commitments to Renewable Energy," "Water Conservation Policies," and "Public Participation in Environmental Issues" were created, and the frequency of these themes was counted to observe any shifts between the two elections. The findings revealed that the 2013 manifestos focused primarily on economic growth through industrialization, with vague promises about water supply and deforestation. In contrast, the 2018 manifestos displayed a clear shift toward specific policies on solar energy and water conservation, with a growing emphasis on climate change and sustainability as essential for economic growth and job creation.

### 2. Official Policy Documents (Rajasthan State Action Plan on Climate Change and Rajasthan Solar Energy Policy 2019)

The content analysis of official policy documents, including the Rajasthan State Action Plan on Climate Change and the Rajasthan Solar Energy Policy 2019, aimed to evaluate the government's stance on environmental issues and track policy evolution. Keywords such as "climate change," "solar energy," "sustainable agriculture," "water conservation," and "carbon emissions" were coded, and the documents were categorized into themes like "Climate Adaptation and Mitigation," "Renewable Energy Development," and "Water and Resource Management." The analysis revealed that while the Rajasthan State Action Plan outlines strategies for mitigating climate change, including promoting renewable energy and improving water efficiency, its implementation has been slow due to insufficient funding and lack of local involvement. The Rajasthan Solar Energy Policy 2019, though detailed and focused on expanding solar energy capacity, faces challenges such as land acquisition and difficulties in integrating solar energy into the state grid.

### 3. Media Reports (2018-2024)

The content analysis of media reports from 2018 to 2024 aimed to track the coverage of environmental issues and assess the evolution of public awareness and activism. Articles were coded for recurring themes such as "climate change," "water scarcity," "pollution," "green energy," and "public protests," and categorized into themes like "Public Awareness and Protests," "Government Policies," and "Local Environmental Movements." The findings showed a significant increase

in media coverage of issues like water scarcity, air pollution, and renewable energy, with a notable rise in reports on protests related to SEZ land acquisitions and water rights, reflecting growing public engagement. Additionally, many reports expressed skepticism about the government's commitment to environmental promises, pointing out the gap between political rhetoric and actual policy implementation. Media coverage has also broadened the discourse, elevating local environmental concerns to a larger political conversation about sustainability.

#### 4. Case Studies (Jal Swavlamban Abhiyan & Bhadla Solar Park)

The content analysis of case studies on the Jal Swavlamban Abhiyan and Bhadla Solar Park aimed to explore the practical implementation and public perception of these environmental programs. Themes like "community participation," "water conservation," "renewable energy," and "socio-economic impacts" were coded and categorized into areas such as "Impact on Local Communities," "Policy Implementation Challenges," and "Public Perception of Environmental Initiatives." The findings revealed that while the Jal Swavlamban Abhiyan made progress in improving water management, its impact was hindered by inconsistent implementation, lack of local resources, and resistance in rural areas, with urban areas showing less engagement. The Bhadla Solar Park received positive feedback for its role in renewable energy and job creation, but it also faced challenges like land acquisition, displacement, and integration with the energy grid. Local views were mixed, with some appreciating the economic benefits while others expressed concerns about land loss and environmental degradation.

#### Conclusion

This research study concludes that while Rajasthan faces pressing environmental challenges such as water scarcity, desertification, and pollution, there is growing public awareness and support—especially in urban areas—for sustainable development and Green Politics. The increasing emphasis on environmental issues in political manifestos, policy documents, and media coverage indicates a shift in political discourse towards ecological sustainability. However, significant challenges remain, particularly in policy implementation, rural engagement, and infrastructure development. Despite these obstacles, the combination of grassroots activism, heightened public consciousness, and evolving political commitments suggests a promising foundation for the growth of Green Politics in Rajasthan, with the potential to reshape governance and drive more sustainable and inclusive development across the state.

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