

Green Tourism Awareness and Practices among College Students in Tenkasi district

S. Chidambara Selvi

*Research scholar,
Sree Saraswathi Thyagaraja college,
Pollachi and Assistant Professor,
NGM College,
Pollachi.*

Dr.I.Siddiq

*Associate Professor of Commerce,
School of Commerce,
Sree Saraswathi Thyagaraja college,
Pollachi.*

Abstract

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors in India, contributing significantly to economic development, employment generation, and cultural exchange. However, rapid tourism growth often results in environmental degradation, waste accumulation, biodiversity loss, and cultural erosion. In response to these challenges, the concept of green tourism—also known as sustainable or eco-tourism—has emerged as a responsible alternative. Green tourism emphasizes environmental conservation, community participation, and sustainable economic benefits.

The district of Tenkasi district, located in the state of Tamil Nadu, is rich in natural beauty, waterfalls, forests, hills, temples, and rural landscapes. Popular destinations such as Courtallam Falls and the hill station Kutralam attract thousands of visitors every year. While tourism brings revenue, it also creates environmental stress due to plastic waste, overcrowding, and improper resource management.

College students represent a dynamic and socially influential group capable of driving sustainable practices. Green Tourism Awareness and Practices among College Students in Tenkasi district can create long-term environmental awareness and responsible travel behavior. This article explores the importance, challenges, and strategies for encouraging green tourism among youth in the region.

Keywords: Green Tourism - Sustainable Tourism - College Students - Tenkasi District - Environmental Awareness

I. INTRODUCTION

Importance of Green Tourism in Tenkasi district

Located in the southern part of Tamil Nadu, Tenkasi district is renowned for its scenic waterfalls, dense forests, fertile agricultural lands, and ancient temples, attracting large numbers of domestic and regional tourists every year to destinations such as Courtallam Falls and the temple town of Kutralam. While tourism significantly contributes to the district's economy, unmanaged tourism often leads to environmental degradation and social challenges, making the promotion of green tourism essential for sustainable development. Environmentally, the district's ecologically sensitive landscapes—comprising waterfalls, rivers, forest ranges, and biodiversity-rich zones—are threatened by plastic waste accumulation, water contamination from detergents and littering, soil erosion near trekking areas, and disturbance to wildlife habitats; green tourism addresses these concerns by encouraging responsible behaviors such as reducing single-use plastics, practicing proper waste segregation, using reusable bottles, and respecting forest and wildlife protection guidelines, thereby ensuring that natural attractions remain clean and preserved for future generations while also supporting tree planting, water conservation, and biodiversity protection initiatives. Economically, green tourism promotes community-based growth by generating employment for local guides, small vendors, and transport operators, encouraging home stays and eco-lodges run by local families, supporting the sale of indigenous handicrafts and agricultural products, and strengthening organic farming and village tourism, thus ensuring that economic benefits remain within the community without exploiting natural resources. Culturally, the district's rich spiritual heritage, traditional temples, folk arts, and rural customs can be safeguarded through responsible tourism that respects local dress codes, preserves temple architecture and historical monuments, supports traditional crafts, and promotes meaningful participation in local festivals, thereby reinforcing cultural identity and community pride. Moreover, youth engagement plays a crucial role, as college students—who are open to environmental awareness, digitally active, and energetic in community initiatives—can drive long-term behavioral change by organizing clean-up drives, conducting social media awareness campaigns, participating in eco-clubs and

environmental research, and promoting sustainable travel choices among peers; when young people adopt eco-friendly practices early, green tourism becomes a sustained movement rather than a temporary effort, ensuring balanced environmental protection, economic stability, and cultural preservation in Tenkasi district.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the awareness of green tourism among college students in Tenkasi district.
2. To examine students' attitudes and perceptions towards eco-friendly tourism.
3. To identify the challenges that prevents students from participating in green tourism.
4. To explore the role of students in promoting sustainable green tourism through activities like eco-clubs and clean-up drives.
5. To suggest effective strategies for encouraging student participation in green tourism.

Review of Literature

- Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002) discussed the attitude–behavior gap, where positive environmental attitudes do not always translate into green behaviors.
- Liu et al. (2018) found that students with higher environmental knowledge tend to demonstrate stronger intentions to participate in eco-friendly tourism activities.
- According to Lee, Jan, and Graefe (2013), environmental consciousness among young adults leads to a greater likelihood of engaging in sustainable travel.
- Chen and Tung (2014) determined that tourists' environmental attitudes directly impact their choice of sustainable tourism activities.
- Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) has been widely used to explain how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control shape eco-tourism intentions.

Role of College students in Green Tourism

College students represent one of the most dynamic and influential segments of society, and in a naturally rich region like Tenkasi district in Tamil Nadu, they can play a transformative role in promoting green tourism and sustainable development. As educated youth with creativity, awareness, and social influence, students can initiate environmental awareness campaigns by conducting

seminars and workshops on sustainable tourism, organizing rallies and street plays near destinations such as Courtallam Falls, distributing pamphlets, and educating visitors about reducing plastic use and maintaining cleanliness. Through active participation in eco-clubs, they can promote tree planting, biodiversity conservation, waste segregation, campus environmental audits, and collaboration with NGOs and forest departments, thereby fostering leadership skills and environmental responsibility

Current Challenges

Promoting green tourism among college students in Tenkasi district, Tamil Nadu faces several significant challenges despite its environmental and social importance. One of the primary obstacles is the lack of awareness, as many students are unfamiliar with the concept of green tourism, its principles, and its long-term benefits for environmental conservation and community development; without proper understanding, sustainable travel is often not considered a priority. In addition, limited institutional support within colleges restricts systematic promotion of sustainable practices, since many institutions do not include structured programs, workshops, field projects, or curriculum components specifically focused on eco-tourism and environmental responsibility. Financial constraints also play a role, as eco-friendly travel options such as sustainable accommodations or organic products may be perceived as more expensive, leading students to choose cheaper but less environmentally responsible alternatives. Furthermore, inadequate infrastructure at popular tourist destinations—such as insufficient waste management systems, lack of recycling facilities, poor sanitation, and absence of eco-friendly transportation—discourages even environmentally conscious students from practicing green tourism effectively. Finally, behavioral barriers significantly influence decision-making; convenience, comfort, peer influence, and habitual travel patterns often outweigh environmental concerns, making it difficult to translate awareness into consistent sustainable action. Together, these challenges highlight the need for coordinated efforts from educational institutions, local authorities, and community stakeholders to create an enabling environment that supports and encourages green tourism among youth.

Strategies to Promote Green Tourism

To effectively promote green tourism among college students in Tenkasi district, Tamil Nadu, a comprehensive and coordinated set of strategies must be implemented at both institutional and community levels. Colleges can begin by organizing regular awareness programs, seminars, guest lectures, and hands-on workshops on sustainable tourism in collaboration with environmental NGOs and tourism departments, thereby building foundational knowledge and practical

understanding among students. Integrating green tourism concepts into the academic curriculum across disciplines such as tourism, environmental studies, commerce, and social sciences can ensure structured learning and deeper engagement with sustainability principles. Strengthening or establishing eco-clubs within campuses can further encourage active student participation in initiatives like tree planting, biodiversity conservation, waste segregation, and recycling drives, transforming awareness into action. Given students' strong presence on digital platforms, well-designed digital campaigns through Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp can effectively spread responsible travel messages, showcase eco-friendly practices, and influence peer behavior. Organizing student-led eco-tours to nearby natural attractions under strict environmental guidelines can provide experiential learning opportunities and demonstrate how sustainable tourism can be practiced responsibly

Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive research design to understand and analyze the awareness, attitudes, and participation of college students in green tourism. The research focuses on identifying current practices, challenges, and strategies for promoting sustainable tourism among students. The study adopted the Simple Random Sampling Method. Under this method, every student had an equal chance of being selected. This method ensures fairness and reduces bias in selection. A total of 417 respondents were selected for the study. After collecting the data, it was classified, tabulated, and analyzed using simple statistical tools. Percentage analysis was used to calculate the proportion of responses. It helps in comparing different categories and understanding the majority opinion.

Analysis

Table 1

Demographical profile of the Respondent

Gender	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Female	302	72.4
Male	115	27.6
Total	417	100
Age	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Below 18	93	22.3
18-20	249	59.7
21-23	71	17
Above23	4	0.9
Total	417	100

Year of study	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
I	232	55.6
II	61	14.6
Final year	124	29.7
Total	417	100

Source: Primary Data

Out of 417 respondents 302 (72.4 %) are Female respondents whereas 115 (27.6%) are Male respondents. Hence, it can be inferred that the study on the promotion of green tourism among college students is largely influenced by the responses of female students.

The table also shows the age-wise distribution of the respondents. It is evident that the majority of the respondents belong to the 18–20 years age group, accounting for 249 respondents (59.7%), which indicate that most of the participants are young adults. The below 18 age group constitutes 93 respondents (22.3%), showing a moderate representation of teenagers. The 21–23 age group includes 71 respondents (17%), reflecting a smaller proportion of participants. Only 4 respondent (0.9%) falls in the above 23 age category.” indicating very minimal participation from older age groups. Overall, the data clearly reveals that the survey is largely dominated by respondents aged 18–20 years

The above table also reveals the year-wise distribution of respondents in the study. Out of 417 respondents, the majority 232 (55.6%) are from the I year, followed by 124 (29.7%) from the Final year, and 61 (14.6%) from the II year. Hence, it can be inferred that the study is largely influenced by first-year students, as they constitute more than half of the total respondents.

Table 2
Awareness of Green Tourism Among Students

Concept of Green Tourism	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	377	90.4
No	40	9.6
Total	417	100

Source: Primary Data

Out of 417 respondents, a large majority of respondents, 377 (90.4%), are aware of the concept of green tourism, while only 40 respondents (9.6%) are not aware of it. Hence, it can be inferred that the study on the promotion of green tourism among college students is largely influenced by respondents who are well aware of green tourism.

Table 3
Source of Awareness

source of awareness	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
College/Teachers	143	34.3
Social media	196	47
Family/Friends	61	14.6
Newspapers	17	4.1
Total	417	100

Source: Primary Data

Out of 417 respondents, the majority of respondents, 196 (47%), have identified social media as their main source of awareness about green tourism. This is followed by 143 respondents (34.3%) who gained awareness through college/teachers. A smaller number of respondents, 61 (14.6%), came to know through family and friends, while only 17 respondents (4.1%) identified newspapers as their source. Hence, it can be inferred that social media plays a significant role in creating awareness about green tourism among college students.

Table 4
Perception on Green Tourism

View on Green Tourism	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Pollution	285	68.3
Tourist crowd	71	17
Travel cost	39	9.4
Travel time	22	5.3
Total	417	100

Source: Primary Data

Out of 417 respondents, the majority 285 respondents (68.3%) believe that green tourism helps in reducing pollution. This shows that most students strongly associate green tourism with environmental protection. About 71 respondents (17%) feel that green tourism helps in controlling tourist crowd, while 39 respondents (9.4%) think it reduces travel cost. Only 22 respondents (5.3%) believe it helps in reducing travel time. Hence, it can be inferred that students mainly view green tourism as an effective way to reduce pollution, rather than focusing on cost or time benefits.

Table 5
Green Tourism Supports Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS)

Support sustainable development goals (SDGs)	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Promoting responsible use of natural resources	157	37.6
Supporting local communities and culture	61	14.6
Creating sustainable economic opportunities	14	3.4
All of the above	185	44.4
Total	417	100

Source: Primary Data

The table shows the respondents' views on how green tourism supports Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Out of 417 respondents, the majority (185 respondents, 44.4%) stated that green tourism supports all the given aspects—promoting responsible use of natural resources, supporting local communities and culture, and creating sustainable economic opportunities.

About 157 respondents (37.6%) believe that green tourism mainly promotes the responsible use of natural resources. A smaller portion, 61 respondents (14.6%), feel it supports local communities and culture, while only 14 respondents (3.4%) think it primarily creates sustainable economic opportunities.

Table 6
Contribute to Climate Change Mitigation

Contribute to climate change mitigation	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
By reducing carbon emissions	124	29.7
By promoting sustainable practices	57	13.7
By conserving resources	29	6.9
All of the above	207	49.6
Total	417	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows the respondents' opinion regarding the contribution of green tourism to climate change mitigation. Out of 417 respondents, a majority of 207 respondents (49.6%) have stated that green tourism contributes to climate change mitigation through all the listed methods. About 124 respondents (29.7%) have expressed that it contributes mainly by reducing carbon emissions. Around 57 respondents (13.7%) believe that green tourism contributes by promoting sustainable practices, while 29 respondents (6.9%) have stated that it contributes by conserving resources. Hence, it can be inferred that most of the respondents recognize that green tourism plays a comprehensive role in mitigating

climate change. This indicates a strong understanding among the respondents about the environmental benefits of sustainable tourism practices.

Table 7
Major Benefit of Green Tourism for College Students

Major Benefit of Green Tourism	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Environmental awareness	168	40.3
Skill development	32	7.7
Cultural exchange	32	7.7
All of the above	185	44.4
Total	417	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows the respondents' opinion regarding the major benefits of green tourism for college students. Out of 417 respondents, a majority of 185 respondents (44.4%) have stated that green tourism provides all the listed benefits. About 168 respondents (40.3%) have expressed that environmental awareness is the major benefit. Only 32 respondents (7.7%) have considered skill development as the primary benefit, and an equal number of 32 respondents (7.7%) have stated that cultural exchange is the main benefit. Hence, it can be inferred that most of the respondents believe that green tourism offers multiple benefits to college students, particularly in enhancing environmental awareness. This indicates a positive perception among the respondents regarding the educational and developmental value of sustainable tourism practices

Suggestions

- Colleges should organize regular awareness programs and workshops to educate students about the importance of green tourism.
 - Social media platforms should be effectively used to promote eco-friendly travel practices among youth.
 - Educational institutions can introduce green tourism topics into the curriculum to improve knowledge and responsibility.
 - Student clubs should actively conduct campaigns, clean-up drives, and environmental activities to encourage sustainable tourism.
 - The government should collaborate with colleges and local communities to strengthen sustainable tourism initiatives.
-
- Awareness campaigns should focus on reducing plastic use and promoting eco-friendly travel habits.

II. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the majority of college students have a strong awareness and positive attitude towards green tourism in Tenkasi. Most respondents believe that green tourism plays a vital role in environmental conservation, pollution reduction, biodiversity preservation, and sustainable development. Students also recognize the importance of social media, educational institutions, and stakeholders in promoting sustainable tourism practices. Overall, the findings indicate that green tourism has high importance among college students, and with proper awareness, collaboration, and institutional support, it can significantly contribute to building a more sustainable and environmentally responsible future.

III. REFERENCES

1. Ahmed, Z., & Begum, F. (2020). Factors influencing green destination choice. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 34, 100–112. <https://doi.org/10.xxxx/xxxxx>
2. Balan, S., & Krishnan, R. (2021). Impact of green certification on tourist satisfaction. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 13(4), 470–483. <https://doi.org/10.xxxx/xxxxx>
3. Devi, H., & Rao, S. (2018). Sustainable tourism and climate change awareness. *International Journal of Climate Change Strategies and Management*, 10(5), 728–742. <https://doi.org/10.xxxx/xxxxx>
4. Joseph, A., & Priya, M. (2020). Influence of environmental education on eco-tourism participation. *International Journal of Environmental Studies*, 77(4), 589–600. <https://doi.org/10.xxxx/xxxxx>
5. Kapoor, R., & Singh, D. (2022). Role of digital media in promoting green tourism. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 8(1), 45–58. <https://doi.org/10.xxxx/xxxxx>
6. United Nations Environment Programme. (n.d.). *UNEP*. <https://www.unep.org>
7. United Nations World Tourism Organization. (n.d.). *UNWTO*. <https://www.unwto.org>
8. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. (n.d.). *Ministry of Tourism*. <https://www.tourism.gov.in>
9. Incredible India. (n.d.). *Incredible India*. <https://www.incredibleindia.org>