

PA-ARSP-865

ISA 84416

NAREPP/IRG



A project of the United States Agency for
International Development and the Government
of Sri Lanka.

**ENVIRONMENTAL
AWARENESS SURVEY
SRI LANKA, 1992**

Conducted for

NAREPP/IRG

By

SURVEY RESEARCH LANKA, LTD.

June 1993

TABLE CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE DESIGN	2
KEY FINDINGS	4
LEVEL OF AWARENESS	5
GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS	14
HEALTH	17
WATER POLLUTION	18
SOLID WASTE	19
DEFORESTATION	20
POPULATION GROWTH	21
SOIL EROSION	22
AIR POLLUTION	23
THREAT TO WILDLIFE	24
SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS	25

INTRODUCTION

NAREPP/IRG contracted the Survey Research Lanka, Ltd., to carry out a country wide survey to measure the level of and changes in awareness of environmental issues among the public in Sri Lanka. The sample consisted of 2,000 urban and 2,000 rural persons. This survey is the first of a series of three surveys to be conducted over the life of the NAREP project. An integral part of NAREPP is technical assistance and training, that will help increase public awareness of environmental issues. The survey will develop key indicators that will help gauge NAREPP's performance during the period of the project.

The survey collected information on

- The public's perceptions of environmental problems relative to other economic and social problems.
- The public's perception and ranking environmental problems relating to air, water, soil, forest, wildlife, solid waste and health.
- The extent to which the public think these problems have improved/deteriorated.
- The level of knowledge among the public pertaining to environmental problems and how they gain it
- What people think they can do about environmental problems.

METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE DESIGN

The survey was carried out among 1990 urban and 1999 rural adults between the age of 18 - 55 years. A direct face to face interview was carried out for each sample member using a semi-structured questionnaire in whatever language spoken. The survey was conducted in 17 districts which were classified into the following zones.

Zone 1 : Colombo (except Colombo MC), Gampaha, Kalutara, Galle and Matara

Zone 2 : Hambantota, Moneragala, Polannaruwa, Anuradhapura and Puttalam

Zone 4.: Kandy, Matale, Nuwara Eliya, Badulla, Ratnapura, Kegalle and Kurunegala

Zone 5 : Colombo MC

Zone 3 consists of the districts in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Interviews were not conducted in the Northern and Eastern provinces due to the civil disturbances.

The technique used has been adopted by the Central Bank for its Socio Economic and Consumer Finance surveys. The sample population was selected using the three stage random sampling technique. The proportions of households to be interviewed in each zone were selected using the Department of Census and Statistics up-dated 1981 Census data base.

SAMPLE POPULATION CLASSIFIED BY ZONES

Location	Number in sample			
	Male	Urban Female	Male	Rural Female
Zone 1	532	605	364	336
Zone 2	63	66	204	196
Zone 4	164	165	448	451
Zone 5	199	196	-	-
Total	958	1032	1016	983

SAMPLE POPULATION CLASSIFIED BY AGE, GENDER & SECTOR

Age Group (Yrs)	Urban (%)		Rural (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
18 - 25	25.7	23.5	23.4	23.0
26 - 35	26.2	28.7	31.9	35.3
36 - 45	25.8	26.6	30.6	27.0
46 - 55	22.2	21.2	14.1	14.7
No. in Sample	958	1032	1016	983

SAMPLE CLASSIFIED BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Level of Education	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
Below O'L	42.6	62.3
Above O'L - A'L	49.4	35.1
Graduate & Over	8.0	2.6
No. in Sample	1990	1999

■ The survey results in this report were analyzed by NAREPP/IRG from the findings that Survey Research Lanka presented. Shenuka Chanmugam, Research Assistant for NAREPP/IRG was primarily responsible for the analysis and display of information presented in this report.

KEY FINDINGS

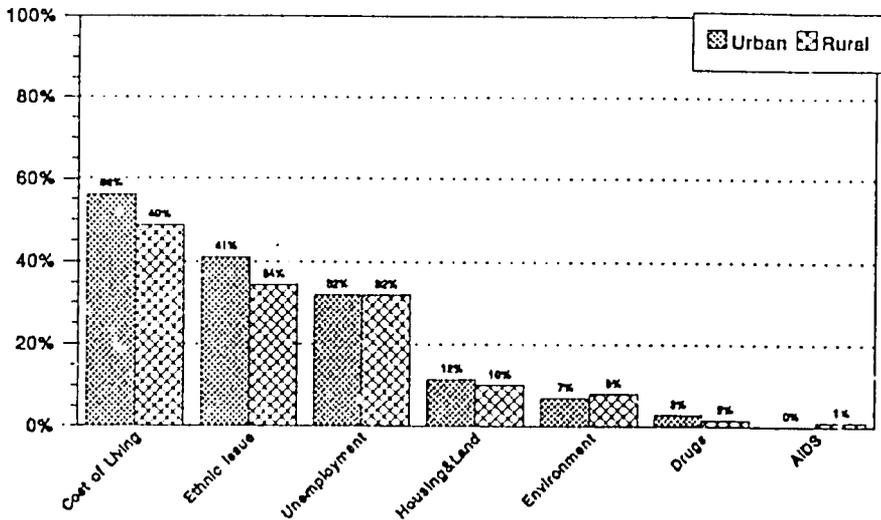
- Based on an open ended question, environmental problems relative to economic and social problems *nation wide* is rated fifth among the urban and rural population.
- Environmental problems ranked first among *local community* problems of urban and rural persons relative to economic and social problems.
- Yet about 75% of the population agree with the statement that "most people are not too concerned about environmental problems in Sri Lanka". Similarly 87% of the urban and 82% of the rural persons agree with the statement that "the average person has more important problems to cope with than those affecting his/her environment", and about 56% of the urban and rural population agree that "most people do not appreciate the benefits of a clean environment".
- Almost 60% of the sample population tend to see environmental problems as deteriorating over the last decade. A majority of the sample perceive environmental problems as fairly serious in Sri Lanka, and the perceived risk level of environmental problems is considered to be high as they affect the sample member and/or their families.
- More than 80% of the population say water pollution, solid waste/garbage, deforestation, and health related environmental problems are all environmental problems facing Sri Lanka today.
- Health related environmental problems are perceived as the most critical environmental problem; more than 90% of the population say the environment is affecting their health.
- Water pollution is rated as the second most frequently mentioned environmental problem among the sample population.
- Air pollution was rated low among the urban and rural population as an environmental problem.
- A significantly smaller proportion of the less educated population (below O'L) than more educated perceive air, soil, wildlife, deforestation and over population as environmental problems confronting the country.
- The young rural male population tends to be relatively concerned about the different types of environmental problems, especially the less educated, as compared to the other population groups.
- A majority of the population, urban and rural, disagree with the statement that "environmental problems can only be solved by those who are qualified; the average person cannot do much about it".
- A little more than 50% of the population who perceived environmental problems as a serious issue, feel that they can help improve the environment. The most frequently cited public roles in preventing environmental problems are disposing of household waste efficiently and maintaining clean surroundings, and tree planting.
- A little more than 60% of the population are aware of the Central Environmental Authority and about one-third of the population have heard of the National Environmental Act.
- The press, television, and radio were by far the major sources of environmental information for urban and rural populations; other sources were far behind in their direct educational importance.

LEVEL OF AWARENESS

Q: When one speaks of major problems that the country in a national sense is faced with today, which problems come to your mind right now?

- Ethnic Issue
 - Unemployment
 - Drug Addiction
 - AIDS
 - Environmental Problem
 - Other
- Indicate problem mentioned first with a *

MOST FREQUENTLY CITED NATIONAL PROBLEM
*Note: Environment includes concerns about water, health, garbage, population, and forest
 Housing and land refers to concern about cost and availability*



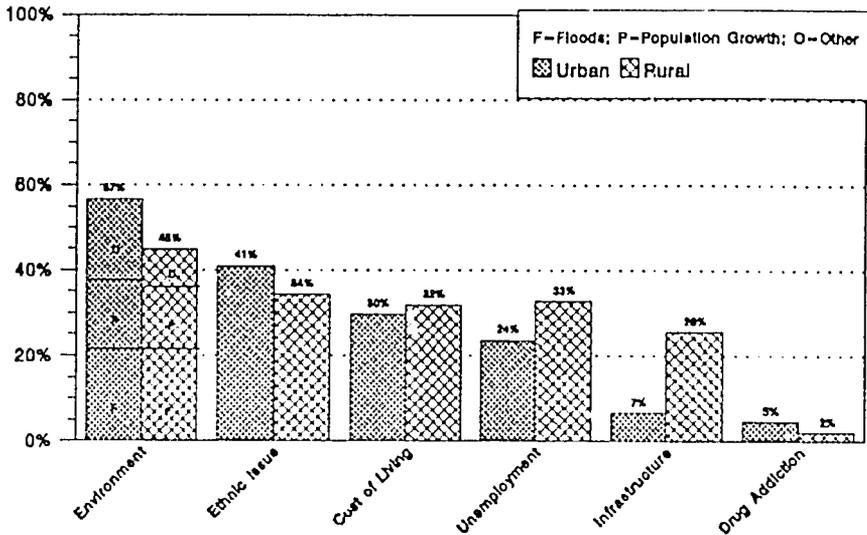
Sample Size: Urban = 1990; Rural = 1999

- This was an open ended question to determine the people’s perception of environmental problems relative to other pressing problems of the country. Environment is rated fifth, behind cost of living, ethnic issue, unemployment, and cost/availability of housing and land. (See graph). Responses from urban respondents were similar to rural respondents. Age, gender and education level did not have major impacts on the response. Less than 1% of the urban and rural sample population consider environment to be the principal major national concern that overshadows ethnic and economic problems.
- When the sample population who did not mention environment was asked if environment was a concern, a significant proportion of the urban (80%) and rural (71%) sample mentioned environment as a major national issue. This indicates that the level of awareness of environmental problems is relatively high amongst the public.
- Approximately 56% of the urban and rural population believe that most people do not appreciate the benefits of a clean environment.

Q: Are there any major problems of a similar nature that the people in your immediate area are collectively faced with today?

MOST FREQUENTLY CITED LOCAL COMMUNITY PROBLEM

Note: Environment includes concerns about population, garbage, drainage, air pollution & floods



Sample Size: Urban = 1318; Rural = 1413

- This again was an open ended question to determine how people ranked problems affecting them most directly. Out of the total sample 34% of the urban and 29% of the rural respondents indicated that no major problems troubled their communities.
- Of the remainder, a majority believe that environmental related issues are the primary problems which confront their communities, whether urban or rural. Environmental related issues include concerns about population growth, floods, air pollution, drainage system, garbage and deforestation. Floods and population growth are very significant environmental issues of concern to both the urban and rural population. Only 0.3% of the urban and rural sample groups identified air pollution from exhaust emissions as a local environmental problem. A somewhat larger proportion of the urban population (56.6%) is concerned about the environment than is the rural population (45%), whereas economic factors such as cost of living and unemployment is ranked higher by the rural population than the urban.

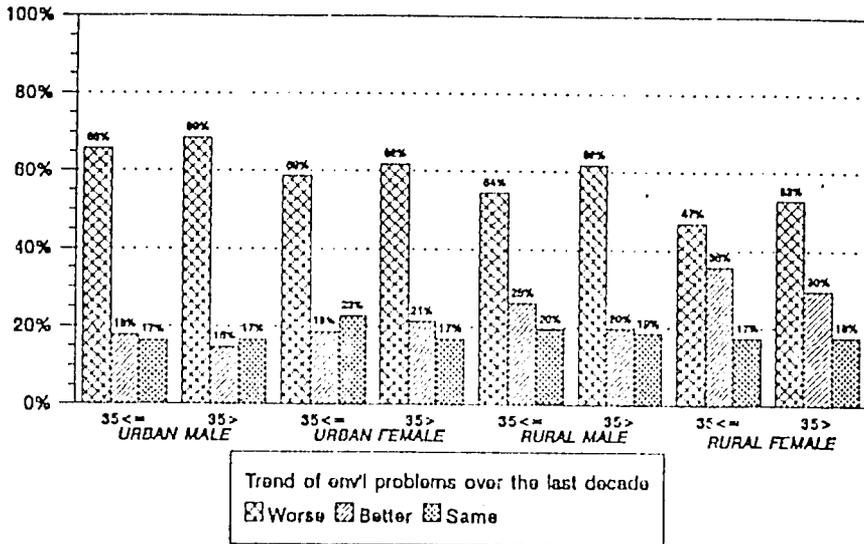
Q: In your opinion which of these phrases best describes the seriousness of each of the following problems in this country

	<u>Extremely</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Fairly</u>	<u>Not so</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Can't say</u>
Unemployment						
Drug Addiction						
AIDS						
Environment						

- The perceived seriousness of environmental problems relative to other problems, including the ethnic issue, unemployment, drugs, and AIDS was measured to determine the perceived intensity of the problem. Of those who identify environment as a major national or local issue, including aided re-calls, about half the urban population rate environmental problems as 'extremely' or 'very' serious, and about 40% do so in the rural areas. Reinforcing the previous findings that the urban population show more concern for the environment, slightly more urban than rural people perceive environmental problems as a serious issue; 12% of the urban and 15% of the rural sample members identified environmental problems as 'not so/not at all serious'. Nevertheless, a majority of the rural residents rate environmental problems as 'fairly serious'.
- Comparing the level of seriousness of environmental problems to the other 3 problems, economic problems receive the highest rating of seriousness, followed by drug addiction. Even so the level of seriousness was not significantly different between environment and unemployment or drug addiction.
- Results indicate that a majority of the public recognize environmental problems as among the most serious issues facing the country. Most importantly, perhaps, environment has evoked a personal concern regarding the local community among both the urban and rural sample population. This level of environmental concern is similar regardless of age, sex, education level or geographical regions.

Q: Can you please tell me as to which of these statements you agree with most?
 Environmental problems have been getting worse, better or same in Sri Lanka during the past 10 years

PERCENT WHO THINK THAT ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS ARE WORSE, BETTER OR SAME OVER THE LAST DECADE:
 Classified by Urban, Rural, Age and Gender.



Sample Size: Urban = 1456 (Male=687, Female=769); Rural = 1184 (Male=628, Female=556)

- This question was addressed only to persons who rated environment as 'extremely, very or fairly serious'.
- More than 50% of the sample population (urban = 63.4%, rural = 54.6%) rate environmental problems in Sri Lanka as getting worse in the last decade. A little over a quarter of the rural population (27.1%) tend to see environmental problems getting better in the last decade, compared to 18.2% in the urban sample. Among rural residents, a third of the rural female population, especially the younger women, tend to see environmental problems as improving.

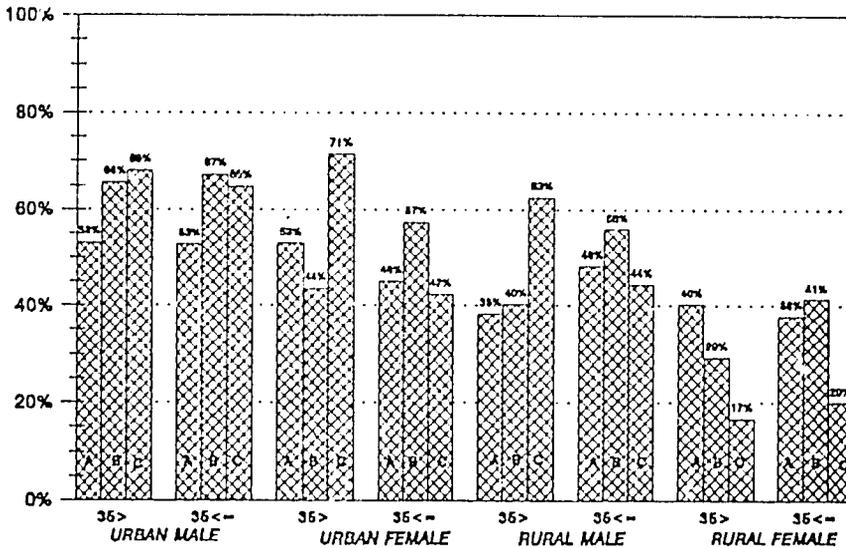
Q: Which of these phrases best describes the risk that you and your family members face of being affected by the impact of each of the following problems.

Extremely Very Fairly Not so Not at all Can't say

Unemployment
 Drug Addiction
 AIDS
 Environment

PERCEIVED RISK LEVEL OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

Classified by Urban, Rural, Age, Sex and Education. (Note: A=Below O'L; B=Above O'L; C=Grad & Over)



Sample Size: Urban = 1707 (M=823, F=884); Rural = 1480 (M=778, F=702)

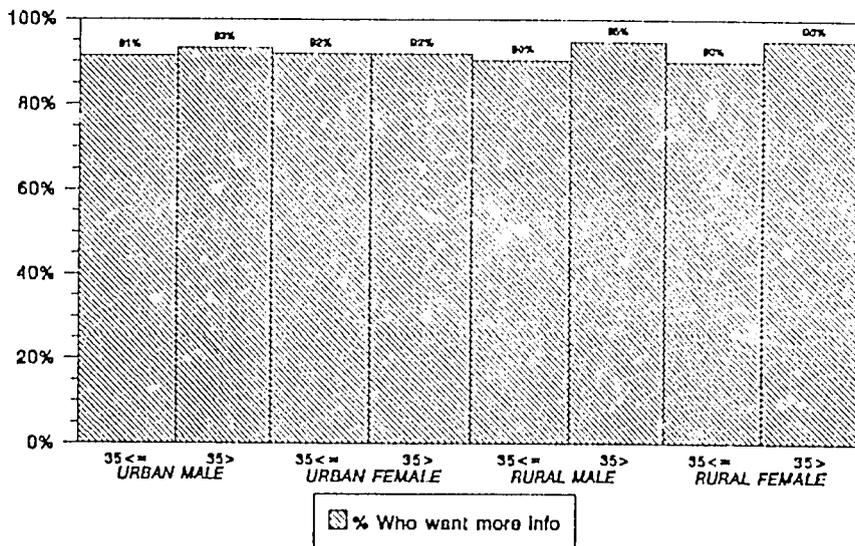
- The perceived risk faced by the sample member or his/her family relative to the above four issues was sampled among all persons who thought these problems were a major national and local issue, including aided re-call.
- About a quarter of the urban population tend to see environment as 'extremely' or 'very' high risk problems, whereas only 11% do so in the rural population. Almost two-thirds of the rural population, and a little less than 50% of the urban population, perceive environment as affecting themselves or their families as low risk problems. However when comparing the risk factor with the other issues, the perceived risk level of environment came just after unemployment as high risk problems. Drugs and AIDS tend to be very low risk problems affecting the sample members or their families in both urban and rural areas.

Q: In your opinion, how useful would more information on the following problems be to you personally?

Extremely Very Fairly Not so Not at all Can't say

Unemployment
 Drugs
 AIDS
 Environment

PERCENT WHO PERCEIVE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS AS BEING SERIOUS AND AMONGST THEM, THOSE WHO WANT MORE INFORMATION
 Classified by Urban, Rural, Age and Sex.

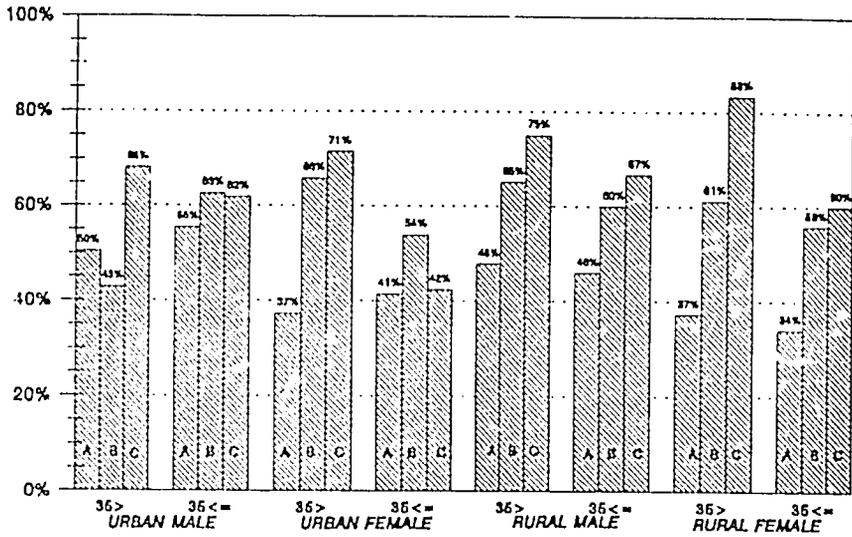


Sample Size: Urban = 1707 (M = 823, F=884); Rural = 1480 (M=779, F=681)

- More than 90% of the urban and rural population indicated that more information related to the environment would be useful. Similar responses were given regardless of age or gender by the sample population. 71.5% of the urban and 69% of the rural population responded that more information on environment would be 'extremely/very useful'. This result may reflect the low volume of information currently reaching them.

Q: In the case of each of the following problems, is there anything that people like you could do to solve problems, at least partly?

PERCENT WHO PERCEIVE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS AS A SERIOUS ISSUE AND FEEL THEY CAN DO SOMETHING
 Classified by Urban, Rural, Age, Sex and Education. (Note: A=Below O'L; B=Above O'L; C=Grad & Over)

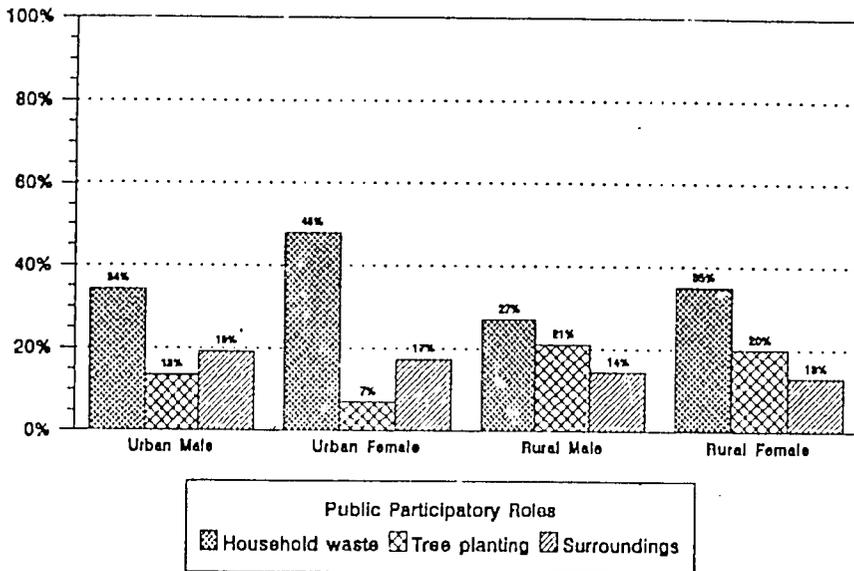


Sample Size: Urban = 1707 (M=823, F=884); Rural = 1400 (M=779, F=681)

- To the question "Environmental problems can only be solved by those who are qualified; the average person cannot do much about it", almost two-thirds of the urban and rural population disagreed with this statement.
- About 50% of the sample population who considered environment as a major problem think that they can in some way help solve or reduce the problems related to environment -- 52.6% of the urban and 51.4% of the rural population. From this sample group who mentioned that they can in some way help solve/prevent environmental problems, a little more than one-third of the urban and the rural sample population have participated in some activity aimed at solving/preventing environmental problems.
- The least educated (except for the urban male over 35 years sample) clearly believe they are least able to respond to environmental problems.
- A significantly smaller proportion of the young urban and rural females feel they can do something to prevent environmental problems compared to the other sub populations.

Q: Can you please tell me as to what the role the public should play in solving/preventing environmental problems?

**MOST FREQUENTLY CITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSES AVAILABLE TO PUBLIC
(I) DISPOSING OF HOUSEHOLD WASTE & MAINTAINING CLEAN SURROUNDINGS, (II) PLANTING TREES AND
(III) KEEPING THE SURROUNDINGS CLEAN THROUGH VOLUNTARY WORK**



Sample Size: Urban = 898 (M=437, F=465); Rural = 750 (M=419, F=331)

- This question was addressed to the sample population who indicated that they can in some way help reduce the problems related to environment.
- The three most frequently mentioned community activities that the public should play to solve/prevent environmental problems by the urban and rural sample members are (i) disposing of household waste efficiently and maintaining clean surroundings, (ii) planting trees and (iii) keeping the surroundings clean through voluntary work (Shramadana campaign).
- The majority of the urban and rural population indicated that disposing of household waste efficiently and maintaining clean surroundings is a way to solve/prevent environmental problems. This activity was stated most frequently by urban females.
- One fifth of both rural males and females mentioned tree planting as a way to solve/prevent environmental problems whereas among the urban dwellers, 13% of urban males and 7% of urban females mentioned tree planting.
- A larger proportion of the urban population tend to see disposing of household waste efficiently as a means of reducing environmental problems than rural and vice-versa for tree planting. This reinforces findings of concern about solid waste/garbage problems among the urban population.

Likewise, a larger proportion of the rural population are more concerned about deforestation than the urban population.

- Only 6% of the urban and 3% of the rural sample members thought reporting environmental problems to the relevant authorities will help solve environmental problems.
- A very small proportion of the sample population described other steps that should be taken to prevent environmental problems, including shifting of factories from urban areas, educating the public through the print medium, and establishing an institution for the conservation of environment.

Q: Have you participated in any such action aimed at solving/preventing an environmental problem?

- Nearly 40% of the urban and 35% of the rural population have participated in an activity to protect the environment. Of this group, around 57% of the urban and 53% of the rural respondents participated in clean-up campaigns in their neighborhood and 16% of urban and 20% of rural have participated in planting trees.
- The survey indicated that 44% of the urban and 54% of the rural sample population who have participated in any activities to protect the environment have found their efforts to be 'extremely' or 'very' effective. Most of the sample population also believe that clean-up campaigns and planting trees are the most effective activities that they have participated in to help protect the environment.
- The survey revealed that the participation level of rural females in community activities was lower than the urban female and the urban and rural male population. However, a large proportion of the rural females have indicated that they can do something to help reduce environmental problems.
- Rural persons from the districts of Matale, Kandy and N'Eliya had the highest percentage of participation in activities to protect the environment.

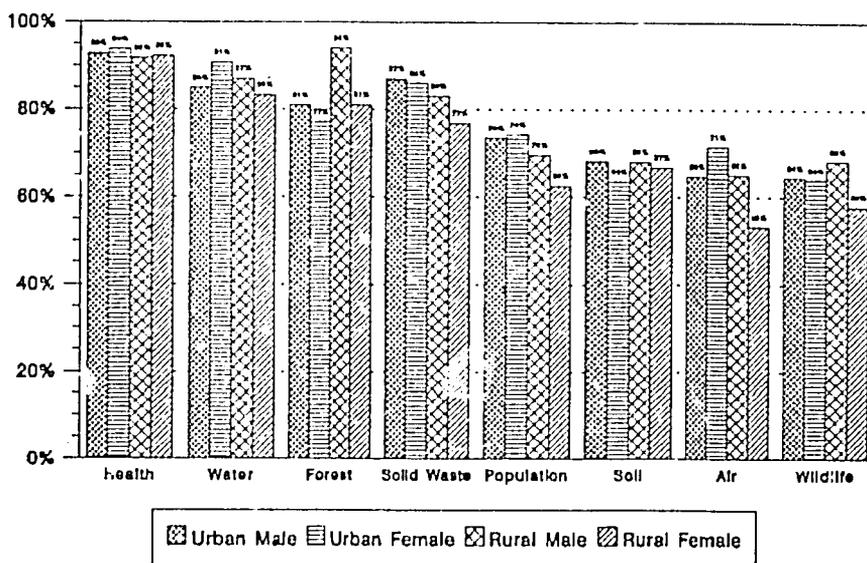
GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

Q: When one speaks of 'Environmental Problems' which types come to your mind right now? (Please write description of problem in detail)

- ___ Air
- ___ Soil
- ___ Water
- ___ Wildlife
- ___ Forest
- ___ Population
- ___ Solid Waste/Garbage
- ___ Health
- ___ Other (Please state)
- ___ None of the above

MOST FREQUENTLY CITED ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

Classified by Urban, Rural and Gender



Sample Size: Urban Male = 958; Urban Female = 1032;
Rural Male = 1016; Rural Female = 983.

- This question was addressed to the entire urban and rural sample. Participants could cite more than one problem and without ranking. For those who mentioned any environmental problem, on an average cited 2 different types of problems.
- Nearly 26% of the urban and 35% of the rural respondents indicated that they are unable to recall any specific type of environmentally related problem. Among the respondents who mentioned an environmental problem, water pollution is cited most frequently in both the urban and rural areas (spontaneous responses).

- The sample population who did not mention a specific issue was further asked by the surveyor as to whether they perceived it (eg: air pollution or health) as an environmental problem. A significantly larger proportion of the sample population responded to the various issues (See Graph). For example, in the spontaneous responses only 40 percent of the population mentioned water pollution whereas among the spontaneous and aided responses 87% mentioned water pollution.
- In the sample population of total spontaneous and aided recalls, health emerged at the forefront of all environmental concerns with more than 90% of urban and rural population stating this as a problem. (Health was the third most frequently mentioned problem in the spontaneous responses).
- Water pollution is ranked second among the total sample population (ranked first in the spontaneous responses). Almost 87% of the population perceive water pollution as an environmental problem. However, solid waste is the second most frequently mentioned problem in the urban sector (also in the spontaneous responses) and deforestation in the rural sector (air pollution was second in the spontaneous responses).
- Soil, wildlife and air pollution are among the least cited environmental problems. Air pollution is however rated second among the rural and fourth among the urban population in the spontaneous responses.

Q: What have you heard about environmental problems relating to air/water/health/solid waste/population/soil/wildlife/forest.

Q: How is the problem caused

Q: What in your opinion, would be the adverse impact of this problem if it is permitted to continue unchecked

Q: How serious is the problem in Sri Lanka

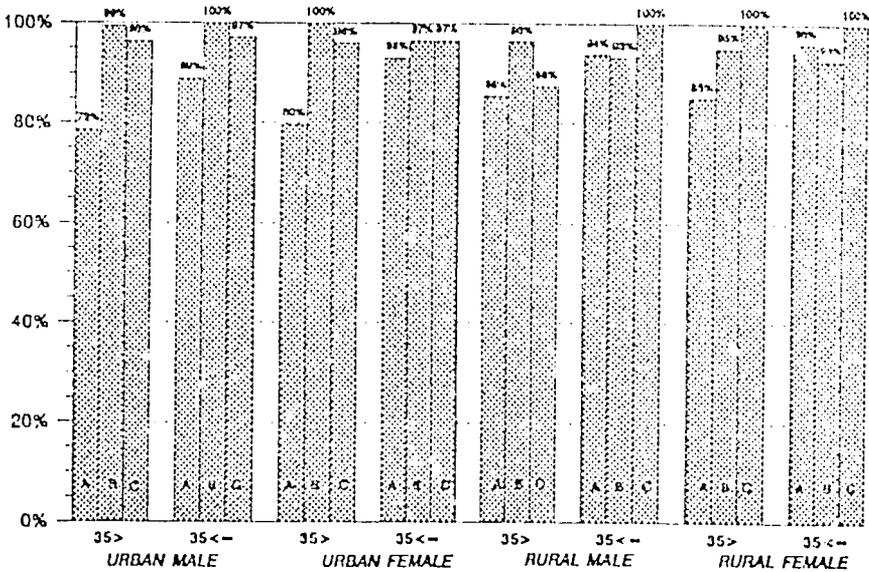
Q: How would you describe the status of the problem in Sri Lanka over the past 10 years - worse, better or same.

- The above questions were asked for each type of environmental problems (air, water, solid waste, etc) from the persons who identified that particular environmental problem. The responses given for the first two questions varied considerably - from responses that were relevant to environmental degradation to something that was wholly irrelevant. The report done by SRL has analyzed the data from these questions and if further information is required it can be obtained from NAREPP/IRG.
- The following section gives an overview of each environmental problem. The graphs are a further break down of the data given on page 14 -- i.e. the urban and rural population are further classified by age and educational levels.

HEALTH

PERCENT WHO HAVE CITED HEALTH HAZARDS AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM

Classified by Urban, Rural, Age, Sex and Education. (Nc - A-Below O'L; B-Above O'L; C-Grid & Over)



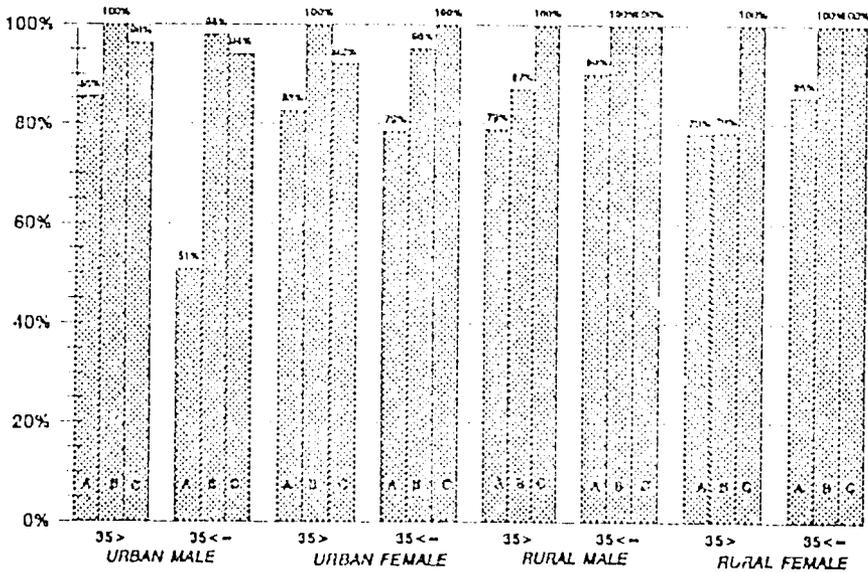
Sample Size: Urban = 1854 (M=888, F=966); Rural = 1837 (M=931, F=906)

- Health issues relative to environmental degradation heads the list of environmental problems in Sri Lanka among both the urban and rural population. Almost all are aware of the health problem regardless of age and gender -- 93% of the urban and 91% of the rural population. The difference between responses of more educated persons is small. However among the older urban females and males who have an education below O'L, the level of concern is lower than the rest of the population.
- Almost two-thirds of the urban and rural population stated unclean surroundings as the cause of health related environmental problems. Population growth and environmental pollution are other frequently mentioned causes of health problems. In prior findings, the majority of the population mentioned health problems as the main impact of environmental problems such as solid waste, air and water pollution.
- Approximately 57% of the urban and rural population perceive health related environmental problems as an 'extremely' or 'very' serious issue.

WATER POLLUTION

PERCENT WHO HAVE CITED WATER POLLUTION AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM

Classified by Urban, Rural, Age, Sex and Education. (Note: A=Below O'L; B=Above O'L; C=Grad & Over)

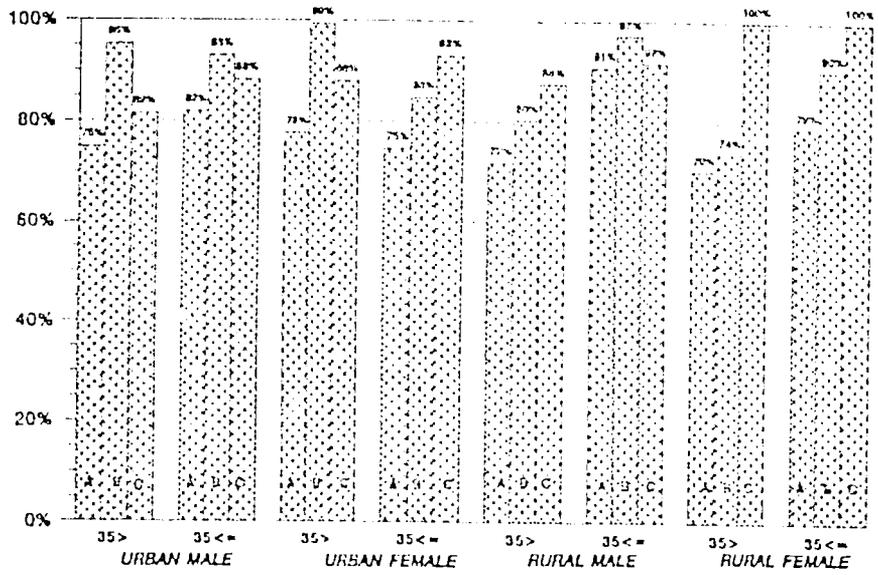


Sample Size: Urban = 1747 (M=812, F=935); Rural = 1703 (M=884, F=819)

- The second most frequently mentioned environmental problem is water pollution. A large proportion of both urban (83%) and rural (85%) persons perceive water pollution as a problem in the country. 64% of the urban and 57% of the rural population view water pollution as 'extremely' or 'very' serious problem.
- The less educated (below GCE O'L) young urban males are considerably less concerned about water pollution than their rural counterparts or other urban and rural persons. In fact, the young rural male regardless of education level tend to be more concerned about water pollution than the rest of the population. Among the young rural male and female population, all who had an education above the O'Level or higher cited water pollution as a problem in Sri Lanka.
- The level of knowledge on water related environmental problems was high among the urban and rural persons, regardless of education level.
- Slightly less than half the urban and rural population referred to improper disposal of solid waste/garbage in the water streams as the main cause of water pollution.
- Approximately 63% of the urban and 56% of the rural population refer to water pollution as becoming worse over the last decade. Almost a quarter of the rural population believe the level of water pollution has improved over the last decade compared to 17% of the urban population.

SOLID WASTE

PERCENT WHO HAVE CITED SOLID WASTE AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM
 Classified by Urban, Rural, Age, Sex and Education. (Note: A-Below O'L; B-Above O'L; C-Grad & Ovm)



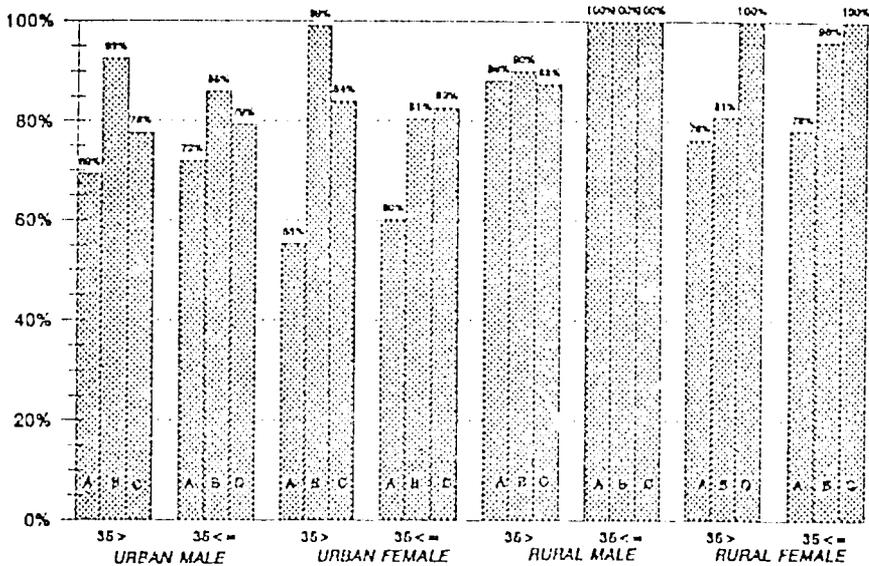
Sample Size: Urban = 1720 (M=833, F=887); Rural = 1749 (M=843, F=906)

- A larger proportion of the urban population rate solid waste/garbage as an environmental problem in the country than the rural population. 87% of the urban versus 79% of the rural public. Solid waste is one of the two most frequently mentioned problems by the urban population and the first four in the rural sector. However, more than 90% of the younger rural male regardless of education level is concerned about solid waste -- a slightly larger proportion than the urban males and females.

DEFORESTATION

PERCENT WHO HAVE CITED DEFORESTATION AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM

Classified by Urban, Rural, Age, Sex and Education. (Note: A-Below OL; B-Above OL; C-Grad & Over)



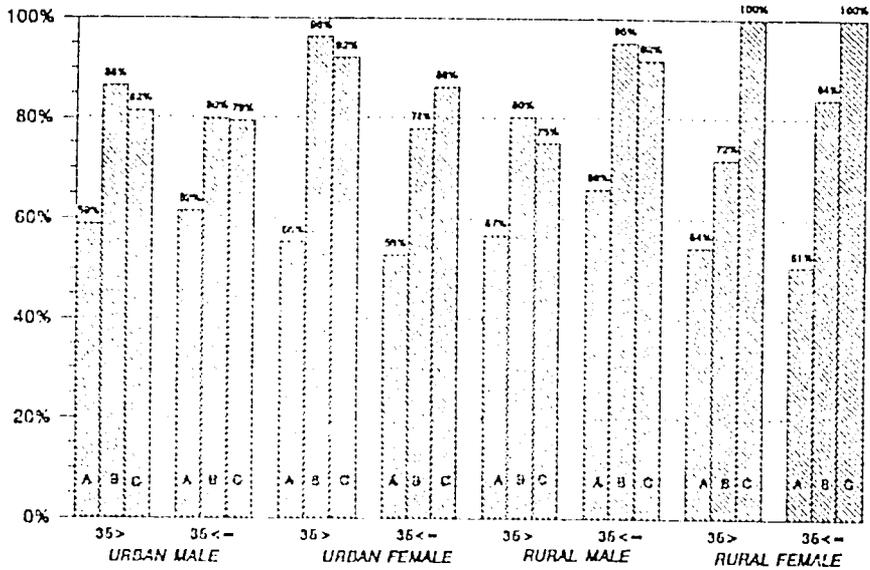
Sample Size: Urban = 1568 (M=774, F=794); Rural = 1750 (M=954, F=796)

- More than two-thirds of the urban and rural populations think that cutting trees for timber is the prime cause for forest related environmental problems.
- A significant majority of the urban and rural population perceive deforestation as an environmental problem in Sri Lanka - almost 80% of the urban and 92% of the rural population. The urban population are more concerned about solid waste than deforestation whereas the rural population feels otherwise. Every rural male below the age of 35 years perceive deforestation to be an issue. Also a slightly larger proportion of the younger rural females tend to see deforestation as a problem than the older rural females and the urban population.
- Although a larger proportion of the rural than urban population are concerned about the consequences of deforestation, a smaller percentage of the rural population believe that the problem of deforestation has become worse than the urban population -- 72% of the urban and 65% of the rural population. A significant proportion of the urban (76%) and the rural (71%) population believe that deforestation is an 'extremely' or 'very' serious problem. Less than 3% of the population in both urban and rural sectors consider it to be 'not so' or 'not at all' serious.

POPULATION GROWTH

PERCENT WHO HAVE CITED POPULATION GROWTH AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM

Classified by Urban, Rural, Age, Sex and Education. (Note: A-Below O'L; B-Above O'L; C-Grad & Over)

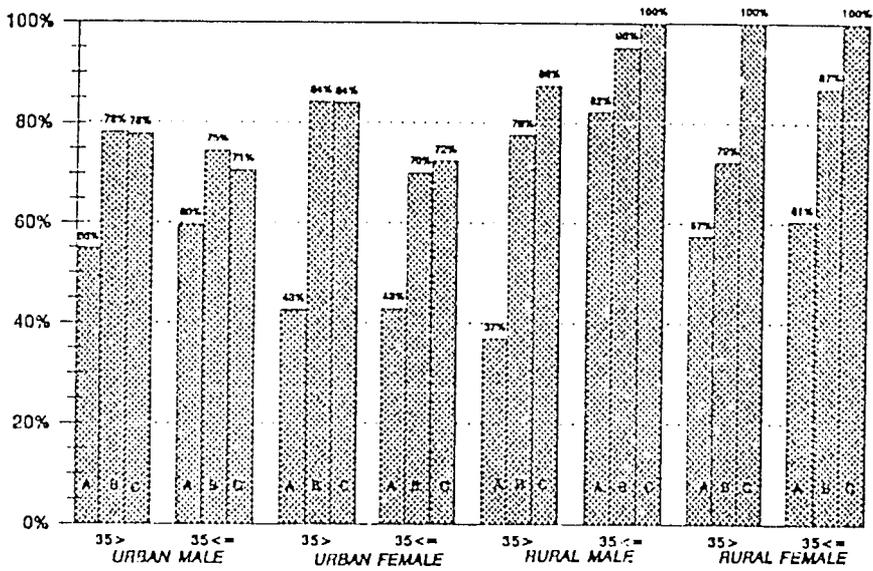


Sample Size: Urban = 1467 (M=702, F=765); Rural = 1320 (M=706, F=614)

- 74% of the urban and 63% of the rural population perceive population growth as contributing towards environmental degradation in the country. A little more than half the population of less educated (below O'L) persons, regardless of age, gender and residential area, tend to view population growth as an environmental problem. The less educated are the least concerned, especially the least educated females. Nevertheless, 100% of the highly educated (grad & over) rural females are aware of the environmental problems related to population growth; 89% are in the urban sector. Interestingly, around 94% of the younger rural males who have an education level above O'L and higher are concerned about the consequences of population growth compared to a smaller proportion of rural females and younger urban females of the same education level.
- A significant proportion of the rural population, almost 30% perceive population related environmental problems to have improved over the last decade. 63% of the urban and 50% of the rural population rate environmental problems related to population growth as becoming worse in the last 10 years. Nearly 60% of the urban and about 55% of the rural public consider the impact of population growth on environment to be 'extremely' or 'very' serious.

SOIL EROSION

PERCENT WHO HAVE CITED SOIL EROSION AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM
 Classified by Urban, Rural, Age, Sex and Education. (Note: A=Below OL; B=Above OL; C=Grad & Over)



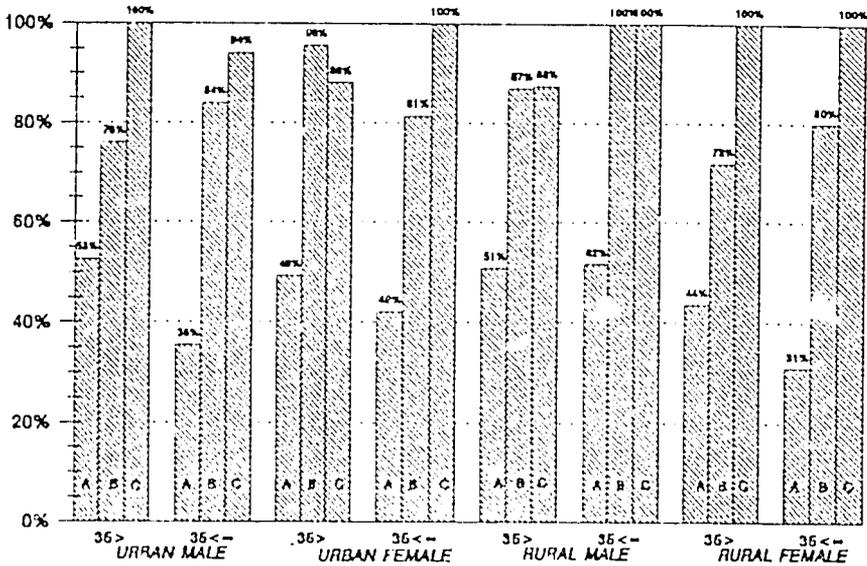
Sample Size: Urban = 1307 (M=652, F=655); Rural = 1347 (M=691, F=656)

- Two-thirds of the population, 66% of the urban and 67% of the rural population perceive soil erosion as an environmental problem in Sri Lanka. A little more than 80% of the urban and the rural population perceive soil related problems as a serious issue, and about 50% of the population from both sample groups tend to see it as an 'extremely' or 'very' serious problem. Nearly 60% of the urban and 54% of the rural population believe soil erosion has become worse over the last decade.
- Concern for soil erosion is low among the public compared to the other environmental problems. The less educated population is not as concerned about soil erosion as the educated public. Among the less educated persons, the older rural males are least concerned about soil erosion. However, a much larger proportion (above 80%) of the younger rural males believe soil erosion is a problem. 100% of the highly educated rural females and younger males believe that soil erosion is an environmental problem in the country compared to about 75% in the urban sector.

AIR POLLUTION

PERCENT WHO HAVE CITED AIR POLLUTION AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM

Classified by Urban, Rural, Age, Sex and Education. (Note: A=Below O'L; B=Above O'L; C=Grad & Over)



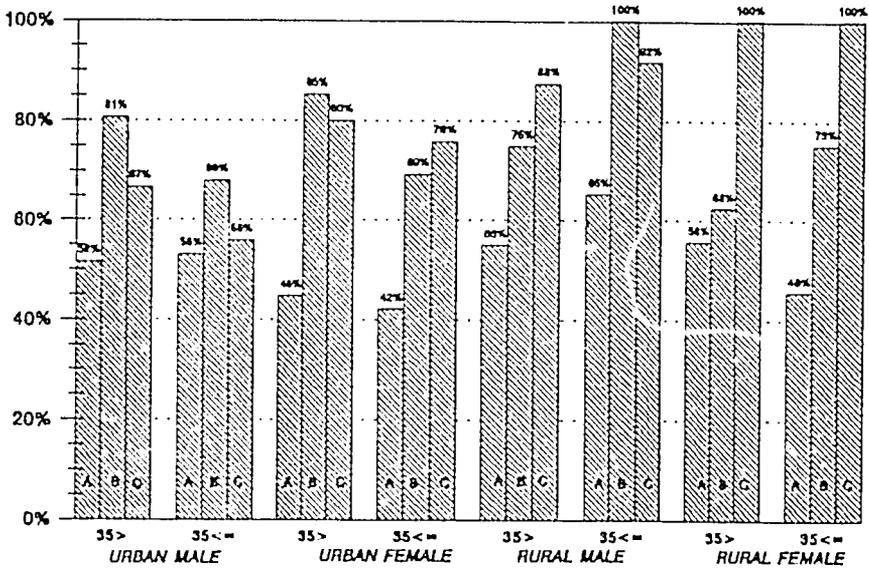
Sample Size: Urban = 1358 (M=820, F=738); Rural = 1182 (660, F=522)

- About 68% of the urban and 59% of the rural population tend to see air pollution as an environmental problem in Sri Lanka. Of the sample population, the rural females are least concerned about air pollution whereas the urban females are more aware than the urban or rural males. Although there is almost a 10 percentage point difference in the response between the urban and the rural population, above 95% of the urban and rural population who have a high level of education (above A'L or higher) are of the view that air pollution is a problem.
- There is a great difference between the perceptions of the educated and less educated with respect to air pollution; people with an education below GCE O'Levels are considerably less interested regardless of gender or age.
- The survey also indicated that the public's general knowledge on the subject of air pollution was low.
- In reply to the question of the causes of air pollution, about a third of the urban and 25% of the rural population mentioned motor vehicle emission as the main contributor to air pollution. A little less than 15% of the urban and rural population referred to fumes from industries as a cause of air pollution.
- A majority of the population, 74% of the urban and 63% of the rural population who perceive air pollution as a major problem are of the view that the level of air pollution has deteriorated over the last ten years. A larger proportion of the urban than the rural population view air pollution as a 'very' serious problem (59% of the urban versus 49% of the rural) whereas most of the rural population perceive it as a 'fairly' serious problem (36% of the urban versus 31% of the rural population).

THREAT TO WILDLIFE

PERCENT WHO HAVE CITED THREAT TO WILDLIFE AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM

Classified by Urban, Rural, Age, Sex and Education. (Note: A=Below O.L.; B=Above O.L.; C=Grad & Over)



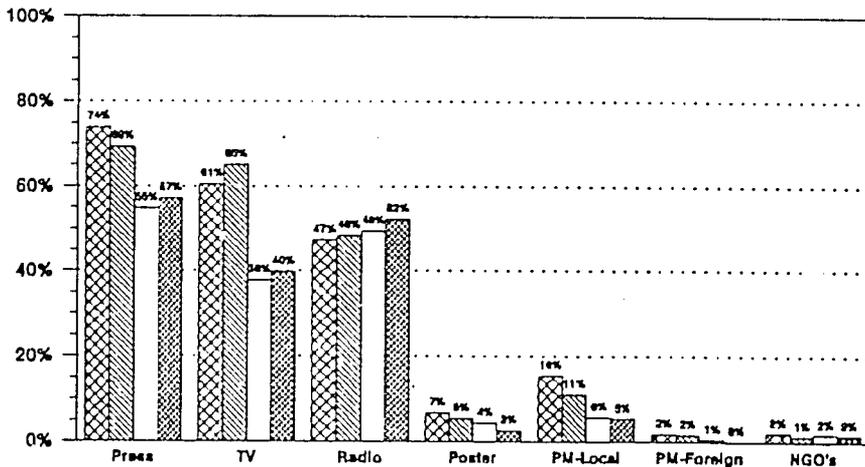
Sample Size: Urban = 1275 (M=617, F=658); Rural = 1260 (M=692, F=568)

- Nearly two-thirds of the population, 64% of the urban and 66% of the rural population believe that the country's wildlife is being threatened. The rural males, especially the younger ones, are more concerned about wildlife than the urban males. The highly educated rural females (Grad & above) are much more aware of the threats to wildlife than their counterparts in the urban sector, including males. In the urban sector, a larger proportion of the older population believes the threat to wildlife is an environmental problem than does the younger population, whereas in the rural sector a higher percentage of the younger population do so.
- Approximately 64% of the urban and 56% of the rural population believe that the threat to wildlife has become worse in the last 10 years. Approximately 55% of the urban and rural populations feel that the threat to wildlife is an 'extremely' or 'very' serious issue.

Q: Can you please identify the different sources from which you have learnt about problems regarding the environment.

- Press
- TV
- Radio
- Posters
- Printed Matter - Local
- Foreign
- NGO Activities
- Other

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS
Classified by Urban, Rural and Gender



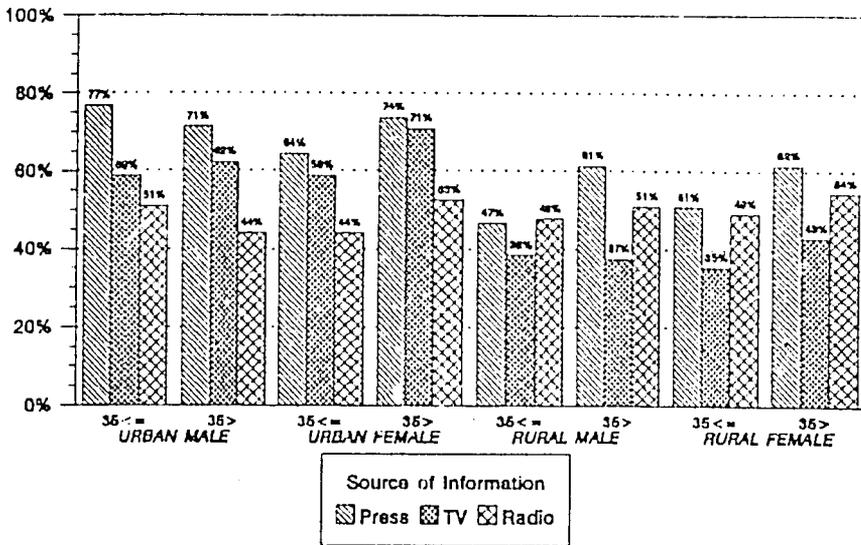
(Note: PM = Printed Matter)
 ☒ Urban Male ☒ Urban Female □ Rural Male ☒ Rural Female

Sample Size: Urban = 1090; Rural = 1099

A majority of the sample population in both urban and rural areas cited press as the primary source of information on the environment. However a larger proportion of the urban population (72%) mentioned the press than the rural population (56%). TV was the next source of information for the urban population while the radio was for the rural population. Less than 2% of the urban and rural population identified NGOs as their source of information.

PERCENT WHOSE SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS IS THE PRESS, TV OR RADIO

Classified by Urban, Rural, Age and Sex.



Sample Size: Urban = 1990; Rural = 1999

Q: Have you heard of:

- (a) an Act of Parliament known as the National Environmental Act
- (b) a state institution known as the Central Environmental Authority

The survey revealed that a fair proportion of the public are aware of the National Environmental Act, and/or the Central Environmental Authority. A little more than one-third of the urban and rural sample population claimed that they have heard of the National Environmental Act, and 63% of the urban and 58% of the rural population are aware of the Central Environmental Authority.