



JETNR

Journal of Emerging Trends and Novel Research

JETNR.ORG | ISSN : 2984-9276

*An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal*

# A Comparative Study on Cleanliness Awareness Among Higher Secondary Students with Reference to Swachhata Practices in Government and Private Schools

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## Abstract

This study investigates the understanding of cleanliness practices among higher secondary students enrolled in government and private schools. The research aims to identify students' awareness regarding national cleanliness initiatives and daily hygienic behaviors. A sample of 100 students was selected from two types of schools. A structured self-made awareness inventory was used for data collection. Statistical tools such as Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-test were applied. The findings indicate measurable variation in awareness levels between the two school categories, highlighting the influence of institutional environment and cleanliness-related activities.

**Keywords:** Cleanliness Awareness, Higher Secondary Students and Swachhata Practices.

## Introduction

Clean and hygienic surroundings play a crucial role in human well-being and social discipline. Schools serve as fundamental spaces where students learn not only academic knowledge but also essential life habits, including sanitation. National campaigns promoting cleanliness aim to build a healthier country, and students represent a vital section of this movement.

Assessing awareness levels among higher secondary learners from different institutional settings provides insights into how effectively schools inculcate cleanliness-related values. This comparative research evaluates how far students understand hygienic behavior, waste disposal, sanitation rules, and cleanliness campaigns introduced by the government.

Cleanliness has long been recognized as a foundational value that shapes the health, productivity, and social behavior of individuals and communities. Across the world, educational institutions play an essential role in nurturing these values, as students develop most of their personal, social, and civic habits during schooling. Clean surroundings in schools not only prevent illnesses but also cultivate discipline, responsibility, and an understanding of public health. In the Indian context, the importance of hygiene and sanitation received a renewed national emphasis with the launch of various cleanliness initiatives, especially government-led cleanliness campaigns. These movements underscore the idea that cleanliness is not merely a personal habit but a collective responsibility that contributes toward nation-building.

Higher secondary students represent a critical demographic in this effort because they stand at the transitional stage between adolescence and adulthood. Their understanding of cleanliness practices—such as appropriate waste disposal methods, sanitation maintenance, personal hygiene, and participation in community welfare—reflects the broader societal outlook toward public cleanliness. Additionally, their habits often influence younger children at home, peers, and even family members, making their awareness highly impactful. Therefore, examining how well these students understand and practice cleanliness-related behaviors is significant for both educational development and national progress.

Schools are vital spaces for promoting sanitation awareness, but they differ widely in terms of resources, infrastructure, cleanliness initiatives, and educational strategies. Government and private schools often operate in different structural and cultural environments. Government schools, in many regions, actively participate in sanitation drives initiated by local authorities, offering students frequent exposure to cleanliness programs. On the other hand, private schools may possess more financial resources and better facilities, yet the extent of structured cleanliness education varies widely. These differences raise relevant questions about how institutional characteristics influence students' awareness of cleanliness practices.

Since higher secondary students are expected to take mature and informed decisions about hygiene, it becomes necessary to evaluate their level of understanding across various school types. A comparative study helps in identifying which group of students—government or private—exhibits stronger awareness, and what factors might contribute to these differences. Such an examination enables policymakers, school administrators, teachers, and curriculum planners to identify gaps in sanitation education and develop strategies that can strengthen cleanliness awareness.

This research also gains importance because cleanliness extends beyond maintaining school premises. It includes the development of lifelong habits such as proper handwashing, use of toilets, environmental hygiene, waste segregation, participation in community cleaning, and sensitivity toward public spaces. Students who grow up with strong awareness in these areas tend to become responsible citizens who contribute positively to society. Therefore, understanding students' awareness levels offers insight not only into the school system but also into the direction of future civic behavior.

Furthermore, comparative investigation provides a deeper understanding of whether institutional differences affect awareness. For instance, government schools often conduct community-based cleanliness activities, while private schools may emphasize indoor hygiene, structured maintenance, and modern sanitation facilities. These differing exposures might

influence students' perspectives and practices. Thus, comparing the two categories allows researchers to draw meaningful conclusions regarding the role of educational environments in shaping cleanliness awareness.

In addition, while sanitation campaigns have gained significant national attention, their success relies heavily on the youth's participation. Students serve as ambassadors of cleanliness within their communities, spreading awareness through their actions and encouraging environmentally responsible behavior. Understanding their knowledge level therefore becomes an essential element of evaluating the overall impact of cleanliness initiatives implemented at the school or district level.

Given this context, the present study aims to explore and compare the cleanliness awareness of higher secondary students studying in government and private institutions. By examining their understanding, attitudes, and behavior toward cleanliness, the research seeks to highlight differences, identify strengths and weaknesses, and propose actionable suggestions. The study focuses on awareness patterns across two different types of schools, thereby providing a comprehensive view of the influence of school environment on students' hygienic awareness. The findings of this comparative analysis can eventually guide educational planners and school managements in designing targeted cleanliness education programs that effectively strengthen hygienic practices among adolescents.

## Review of Literature

A review of related literature provides an intellectual foundation for a research study by surveying previous academic work, analysing theoretical contributions, identifying gaps, and situating the current investigation within the broader scholarly discourse. This chapter includes conceptual literature, theoretical background, national studies, international studies, and a summary of key findings from earlier work relevant to awareness of cleanliness, hygiene practices, sanitation programmes, and the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. It also highlights comparative studies involving school students and institutional differences between government and private educational settings.

Hassan (2023, Saudi Arabia)

The work explored digital campaigns for hygiene awareness. Digital material significantly enhanced understanding. Students showed strong response to visual awareness tools.

Jain & Sharma (2024)

The study explored the impact of school cleanliness ranking systems. Schools participating in ranking competitions improved student awareness. Competition encouraged regular cleanliness monitoring.

Banerjee (2025)

Research conducted in West Bengal showed strong student awareness but weak parental involvement. Students acted as cleanliness promoters in their communities. The study recommended integrating SBA into curriculum.

Steiner (2025, Germany)

The study assessed environmental cleanliness awareness among secondary students. Awareness was high due to curriculum focus on sustainability. Practical activities deepened understanding.

## Objectives

1. To examine the general awareness of cleanliness practices among higher secondary students.

## Hypothesis

H<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in the cleanliness awareness scores of government and private higher secondary students.

## Methodology :

### *Population*

Higher secondary students studying in government and private schools of Ajmer district.

### *Sample*

100 students

- 50 Government school students
- 50 Private school students

### *Tool Used*

A researcher-constructed *Cleanliness Awareness Scale* consisting of items related to sanitation habits, waste segregation, school hygiene, and community cleanliness.

### *Statistical Techniques*

- Mean
- Standard Deviation
- t-test

## Data Analysis

**Table 1:**

***Mean, SD & t-test of Cleanliness Awareness Scores***

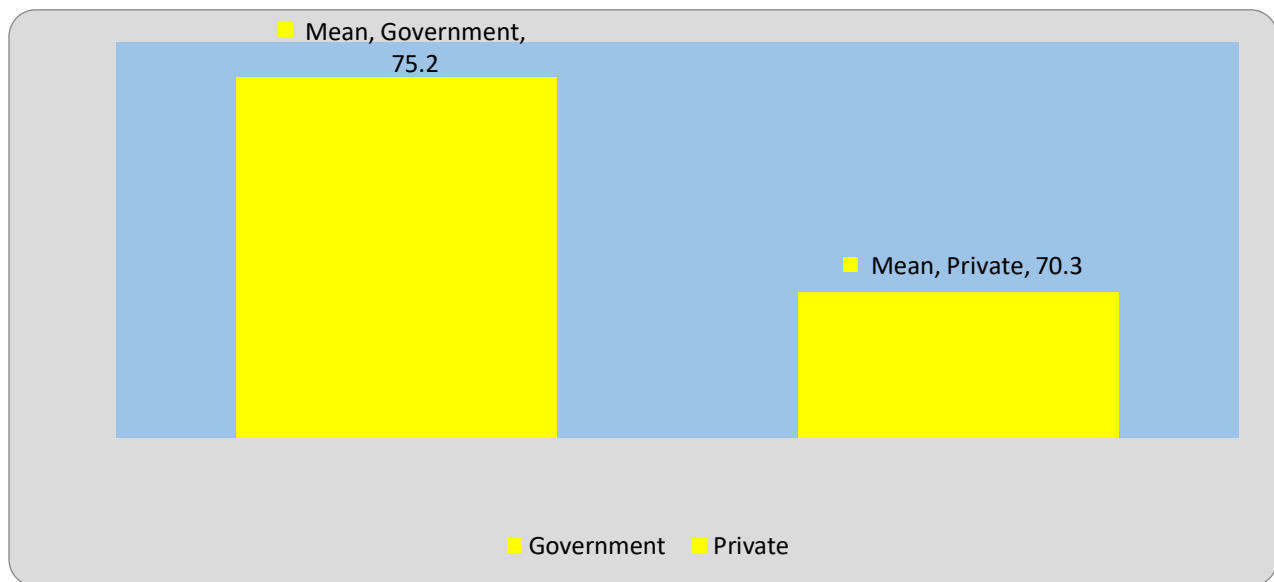
School Type	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Significance (p)
Government	50	75.2	7.9	2.46	0.015*
Private	50	70.3	8.5		

## Interpretation

- Government school students scored higher on cleanliness awareness compared to private school students.
- The t-value (2.46) is significant at the 0.05 level.
- The null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a notable difference between the two school categories.

**Graph:1**

### Awareness Comparison of Government & Private Schools



## Findings

1. Government school students showed a stronger level of cleanliness awareness.
2. Statistical analysis identified a meaningful difference in awareness between the two groups.
3. Structured cleanliness programs and school-based activities may contribute to higher scores.

## Conclusion

The study concludes that students enrolled in government schools display comparatively better awareness of cleanliness-related practices than their counterparts in private schools. Institutional emphasis on hygiene, daily sanitation routines, and participation in community cleanliness events appear to contribute to this difference. Strengthening cleanliness education in private schools could enhance students' hygiene awareness.

## Suggestions

- Schools should conduct regular cleanliness workshops for students.
- Waste segregation bins should be installed in all school areas.
- Cleanliness awareness should be integrated into school assemblies and classroom discussions.

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