

**HOW FAR SCIENCE TEACHERS USE
THE ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES IN SCIENCE TEACHING
IN THE JUNIOR SECONDARY GRADES IN SRI LANKA**

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Sri Lanka is one of the countries that is rich in natural resources, and the environment is rich in biodiversity. Although the country is small, different climates prevail within very short distances. As a result, Sri Lankan environments are laboratories themselves and this research was conducted on the premise that environment can be used as a meaningful teaching tool, especially at the Junior Secondary level. The study was focused on the use of the environmental features in Science teaching in the Junior Secondary grades in Sri Lanka. Specific objectives of the research were, to find out the field areas available in the surrounding environment to teach Science, to find out the existing teaching methods used by teachers to teach environment topics, and to prepare an environmental guidebook for science teachers and students. The survey research method was used. Data collection methods were questionnaires for teachers and students, observation of classrooms, interviews with teachers and students and field visits. The quantitative data were analyzed with percentages and presented as tables and figures. The qualitative data were used to fill gaps in quantitative analysis and to prepare an environmental guide book.

Findings revealed that the science teachers in the sample did not visit the natural environment to teach the selected topics. 95% of students did not visit the natural environments to learn selected topics. Awareness among teachers and students about the surrounding natural environment was very low. Both teachers and students, however, were interested in studying environmental topics in the relevant fields if they are guided to do so.

Results of the research suggest that the science teachers should have a fair knowledge of their surrounding environments. Supporting materials like environmental guidebooks have to be introduced to promote Science Education. As a result of the research, an environmental guidebook was prepared for the Trincomalee district. Science Education can be uplifted, specially in the rural areas by using environmental features in science teaching. The conclusion of the study was that the teachers should concentrate more on informal environments if they want their students to be innovative and creative.

