



The relationship between viewing natural objects as sacred and perceptions of environmental risk linked to them

Sachdeva (2016) examined the relationship between viewing natural objects as sacred and perception of environmental risk linked to them. The study found that higher perception of an object as sacred corresponds to lower perception of environmental risk. This was demonstrated using different research methodologies. First, in a survey part of the study, Sachdeva showed that people in northern India who had stronger sacred beliefs for the Ganges River perceived the river as less polluted than those who held less sacred beliefs. A similar result was obtained in an experimental part of the study. Participants presented with sacred information about the Ganges River expressed a lower level of perceived risk of water pollution compared to the participants who received secular information about the river. Importantly, sacred information about the river led to a lower perception of risk regardless of prior belief about the river (strong versus weak sacred beliefs). The main finding was replicated in a field setting as well. For this part of the study, Sachdeva (2016) recruited her participants while engaging in either spiritual or secular activities on the banks of the Ganges River. Again, participants in the secular context perceived the water pollution as higher in comparison to the participants engaged in spiritual activities.

Note: See source document for full reference.

Applicable to:

Stakeholders: [Attitudes toward environmental issues](#), [Worldviews](#)

Disaster Phases: [Prevention](#)

Types of Actors Concerned: [Non-active citizens](#)

Hazards: [Natural hazards](#)

Source

[Deliverable D4.2 "Report on 'risk cultures' in the context of disasters" \(page 37\)](#)

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