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ATTITUDE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The concept of sustainable development has become one of the most concerning issues of the 21st century as the world is facing various environmental problems because of the lack of awareness of the concept among the masses. Various ecologist observed it as the protector of the disequilibrium in the ecological system that occurs due to the over utilization of the natural resources. This paper examines the needs and importance of conservation and preservation of natural resources. In today's world, computer and internet have become an integral part of our lives. Due to this we have detached ourselves from the natural world and got engaged in the digital world. And this leads to weakening of the connection of people with the natural world and among themselves. The main purpose of

conducting this study is to assess the attitude of undergraduate students towards sustainable development in relation to their gender and religion. The findings of the study revealed that there is insignificant difference in the attitude of undergraduate students towards sustainable development with respect to their gender and religion. The researcher try to focus on the attitude of the students because students are considered as the most powerful agent of positive change and this study will prove helpful in creating some solutions for the sustainable living.

Keywords: attitude, sustainable development, undergraduate students.

“Belief in the opportunity to consume without limits in an ecologically limited world is a powerful driving force increasing global risk.”

Samuel Taylor

Introduction:

Environmental degradation, extinction of flora and fauna, different types of pollutions, ozone layer depletion, ecological imbalance and excessive use of natural resources are increasing many global negative activities and environmental problems. From the last few decades, the environment protection becomes the imperative global objective rather than an individual activity. To overcome this serious problem, multiple measures were adopted internationally. The twentieth century revolves around the idea of economic and social development. The satisfaction of human needs and aspiration were the major objectives of the development and it leads to scarcity of the natural resources. At the same time, the concept of sustainable development was recognized and it was described as the positive movement towards the protection of the environment. It is considered as the catalyst for solving the problems of social and ecological imbalances. Various ecologists considered sustainable development as a long-term process for the maintenance and improvement of the ecological system. It is considered as the balanced and integrated approach for achieving the goals of sustainable development.

Mckeown (2002) emphasized on reorienting and identifying the need for education that could recognize the importance of sustainability. According to him, teachers should include the new courses and programmes for sustainable development in their respective school system. This will lead to the positive changes in student’s attitude towards the sustainable development. Fernandez, Rodriguez & Carrasquer (2007) investigated that “the environmental attitudes provide a good understanding of the set of beliefs, interests or rules that influence environmentalism or pro-environmental action”.

Students are considered as the future of the nation so it is essential to provide the sufficient knowledge and education about the environment so that they can identify the issues and challenges of today's world. It is important to educate the students of a present generation about the environmental issues and problems.

Concept of Sustainable Development:

In early 1980's the concept of sustainable development was introduced in order to balance our economic, ecological and social needs. The UN Commission on Economic Development "Brundtland" (1987) report defined it as "*the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*". It promotes the idea of conservation and helps in enhancing our natural resources. Munasinghe (1993) explained it as the process of increasing the spectrum of alternatives allowing individuals and communities to realize their aspirations and potential in the long perspective, at the same time maintaining the regeneration ability in economic, social, and ecological systems. The sustainable development develops the safe relationship between the human and nature. It helps in improving the quality of human life and glorifies the ecosystem. Dogaru (2013) analyzed the importance of environmental factors and sustainable development that help in overcoming the negative effects of environmental pollution for satisfying the needs of the present as well as of the future generation.

Rationale:

The present study aimed to assess the attitude of undergraduate students of Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh towards sustainable development. Although many research work has been done in this respect but very few have been done in Aligarh district. While taking this problem some research questions arose in the mind of the investigator:

- Q.1. What will be the attitude of undergraduate students towards sustainable development?
- Q.2. Is there any difference in the attitude of male and female undergraduate students towards sustainable development?
- Q.3. Is there any difference in the attitude of undergraduate students towards sustainable development in terms of their religion?

Objectives:

1. To study the attitude of undergraduate students towards sustainable development.
2. To see the effect of gender on the attitude of undergraduate students towards sustainable development.
3. To find out the difference between the mean scores of the attitude of Muslim and Hindu undergraduate students towards sustainable development.
4. To find out the difference between the mean scores of the attitude of Muslims male and female undergraduate students towards sustainable development.
5. To find out the difference between the mean scores of the attitude of Hindus male and female undergraduate students towards sustainable development.
6. To find out the difference between the mean scores of the attitude of Muslim and Hindu male undergraduate students towards sustainable development.
7. To find out the difference between the mean scores of the attitude of Muslim and Hindu female undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

Hypotheses:

1. There will be no significant difference between the attitude of male and female undergraduate students towards sustainable development.
2. There will be no significant difference between the attitude of Muslim and Hindu undergraduate students towards sustainable development.
3. There will be no significant difference between the attitude of Muslim male and Muslim female undergraduate students towards sustainable development.
4. There will be no significant difference between the attitude of Hindu male and Hindu female undergraduate students towards sustainable development.
5. There will be no significant difference between the attitude of Muslim male and Hindu male undergraduate students towards sustainable development.
6. There will be no significant difference between the attitude of Muslim female and Hindu female undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

Sample of the study:

The population for this study was comprised of undergraduate students of Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. The sample consists of 200 undergraduate students including 100 male and 100 female. This

sample is further divided into 50 Muslim males, 50 Muslim females, 50 Hindu males and 50 Hindu female students.

Scoring:

An attitude scale for sustainable development was developed by the investigators to collect the data. The attitude scale consists of 28 statements out of which 26 were positive and only 2 were negative. All these statements were rated on a five-point scale. The range of marks for positive statements was 5 to 0 and vice-versa for the negative statement.

Methodology:

The self-made attitude scale was administered to 50 students for pilot study and the reliability was found to be 0.82 using test-retest method. The content validity of the tool was also good in the opinion of the experts of this area. The data were analyzed by using Mean, Standard Deviation and t-Test.

Analysis and interpretation of data:

Objective-1. To assess the attitude of undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

Table-1. Shows the attitude level of the undergraduate students.

Attitude Level	No. of students (%)
Highly Favourable	127 (63.5%)
Moderately Favourable	70 (35%)
Unfavourable	03 (1.5%)

As shown in Table.1, out of 200 students 127 undergraduate students (63.5%) have high favourable attitude, 70 undergraduate students (35%) have moderate or average attitude and only 3 undergraduate students (1.5%) have an unfavourable attitude towards sustainable development. Hence, it can be said that in general undergraduate students have a favourable attitude towards sustainable development.

Objective 2: To see the effect of gender on the attitude of undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

Hypothesis-1: There will be no significant difference between the attitude of male and female undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

Table-2. Showing the difference between the mean scores of attitude of male and female undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	d.f.	t-value	Level of Significance
Male	100	109.59	13.64	198	1.69	Not Significant at 0.05 level
Female	100	112.3	8.5			

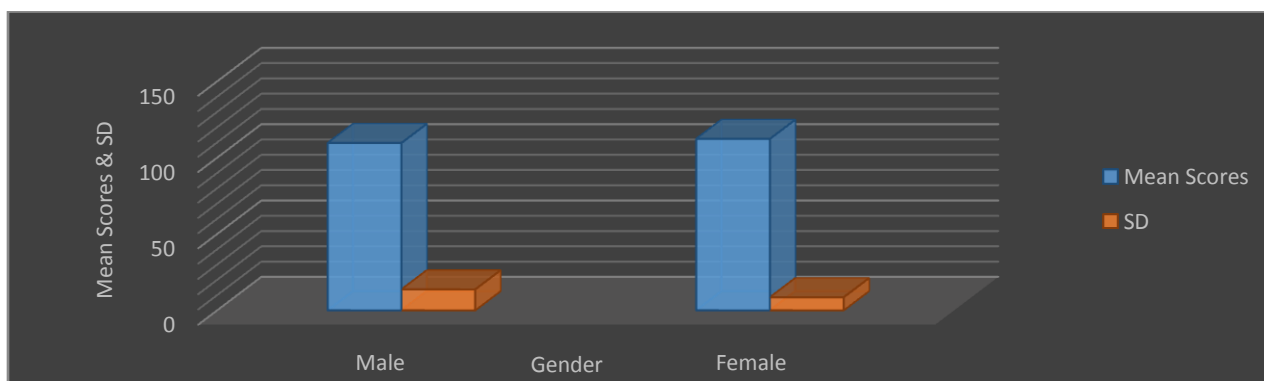


Figure-1. Showing the difference between the mean scores and SD of attitude of male and female undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

As shown in Table-2, the mean scores for both male and female undergraduate students were 109.59 and 112.3 respectively but t-value was calculated as 1.69 at 198 degree of freedom, which is found not significant at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it can be said that male and female undergraduate students did not differ in their attitude toward sustainable development and thus null hypothesis-1 is accepted. The data is also supplemented in Figure-1.

Objective 3: To find out the difference between mean scores of the attitude of Muslim and Hindu undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

Hypothesis-2: There will be no significant difference between the attitude of Muslim and Hindu undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

Table-3: Showing the difference between the attitude of Muslim and Hindu undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	d.f	t-value	Level of Significance
Muslim	100	111.32	9.06	198	0.24	Not Significant at 0.05 level
Hindu	100	111.62	8.31			

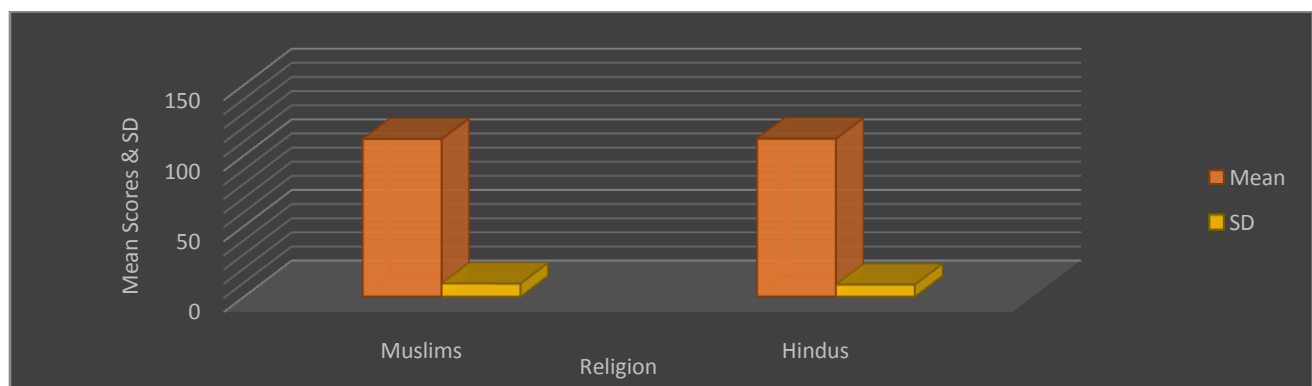


Figure-2. Showing the difference between the attitude of Muslim and Hindu undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

As shown in Table-3, the mean scores for both Muslim and Hindu undergraduate students were 111.32 and 111.62 respectively but t-value was calculated as 0.24 at 198 degree of freedom, which is found not significant at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it can be concluded that Muslim and Hindu undergraduate students did not differ in their attitude toward sustainable development and hence null hypothesis-2 is accepted. The data is also substantiated in Figure-2.

Objectives-4: To find out the difference between the mean scores of the attitude of Muslim male and Muslim female undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

Hypothesis-3: There will be no significant difference between the attitude of Muslim male and Muslim female undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

Table-4: Showing the attitude of Muslim male and Muslim female undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	d.f	t-value	Level of Significance
Muslim Males	50	109.84	9.63	98	0.52	Not Significant at 0.05 level
Muslim Females	50	110.78	8.57			

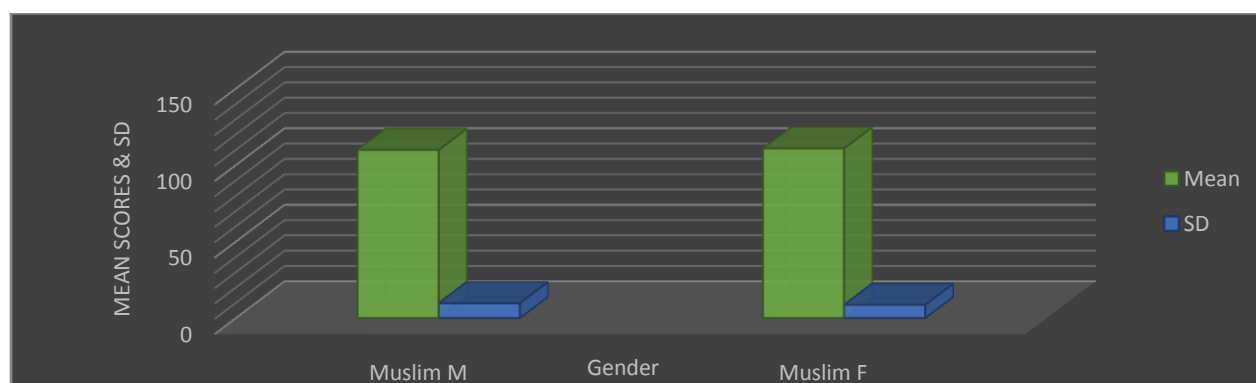


Figure-3. Showing the attitude of Muslim male and Muslim female undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

As shown in Table-4, the mean scores for undergraduate Muslim male is 109.84 and Muslim female is 110.78, but t-value was calculated as 0.52 at 98 degree of freedom. The obtained t-value is not found to be significant at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it is inferred that Muslim male and Muslim female undergraduate students did not differ in their attitude toward sustainable development and hence null hypothesis-3 is accepted. The data is also presented in Figure-3.

Objective-5: To find out the difference between the mean scores of attitude of Hindu male and Hindu female undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

Hypothesis-4: There will be no significant difference between the attitude of Hindu male and Hindu female undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

Table-5: Showing the attitude of Hindu male and Hindu female undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	d.f	t-value	Level of Significance
Hindu Male	50	109.46	7.93	98	1.18	Not Significant at 0.05 level
Hindu Female	50	111.42	8.41			

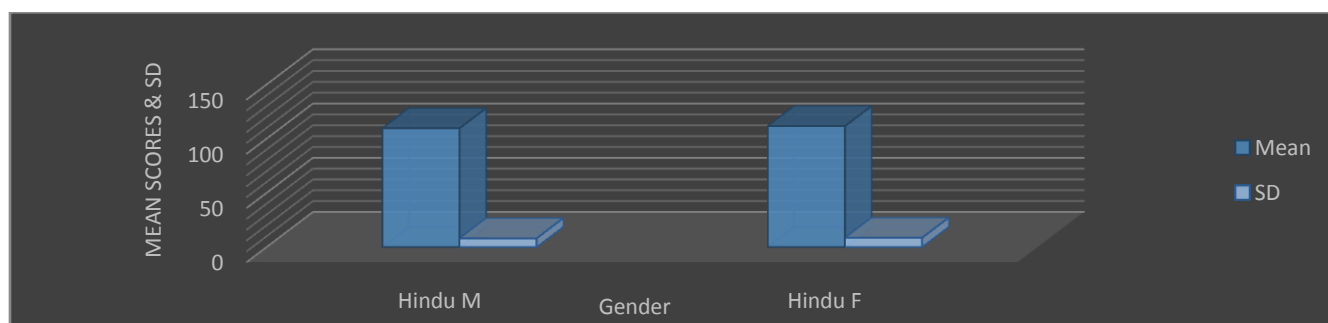


Figure-4. Showing the attitude of Hindu male and Hindu female under-graduate students towards sustainable development.

As shown in Table-5, the mean scores for undergraduate Hindu male is 109.46 and Hindu female is 111.42, but t-value was calculated as 1.18 at 98 degree of freedom. The calculated t-value is not found to be significant at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it is concluded that Hindu male and Hindu female undergraduate students did not differ in their attitude toward sustainable development and hence null hypothesis-4 is accepted. The data is also given in Figure-4.

Objective-6: To find out the difference between the mean scores of attitude of Muslim and Hindu male undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

Hypothesis-5: There will be no significant difference between the attitude of Muslim male and Hindu male undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

Table-6: Showing the attitude of Muslim male and Hindu male under-graduate students towards sustainable development.

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	d.f	t-value	Level of Significance
Muslim Male	50	109.68	9.58	98	0.01	Not Significant at 0.05 level
Hindu Male	50	109.66	8.21			

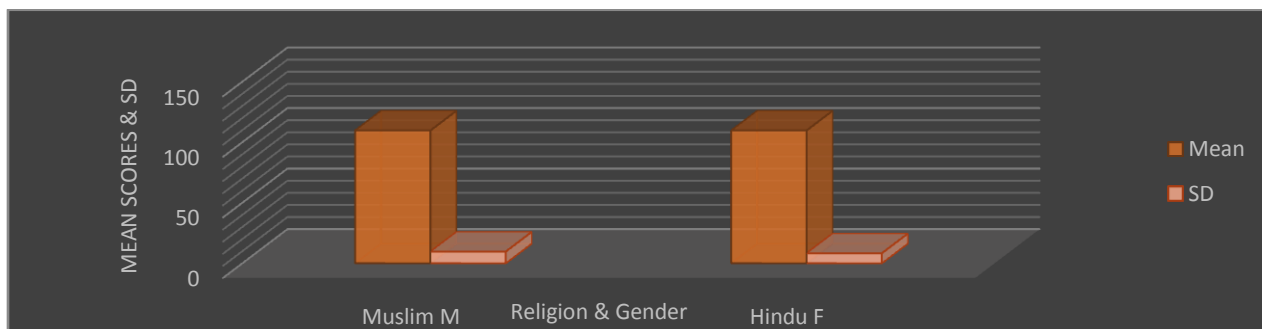


Figure-5. Showing the attitude of Muslim male and Hindu male under-graduate students towards sustainable development.

As given in Table-6, the mean scores for undergraduate Muslim male is 109.68 and Hindu male is 109.66, but t-value was calculated as 0.01 at 98 degree of freedom. The obtained t-value is not found to be significant at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it is inferred that Muslim male and Hindu male undergraduate students did not differ in their attitude toward sustainable development and hence null hypothesis-5 is accepted. The data is also shown in Figure-5.

Objective-7: To find out the difference between the mean scores of the attitude of Muslim and Hindu female undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

Hypothesis-6: There will be no significant difference between the attitude of Muslim female and Hindu female undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

Table-7: Showing the attitude of Muslim female and Hindu female under-graduate students towards sustainable development.

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	d. f	t-value	Level of Significance
Muslim Female	50	110.76	8.57	98	0.38	Not Significant at 0.05 level
Hindu Female	50	111.42	8.41			

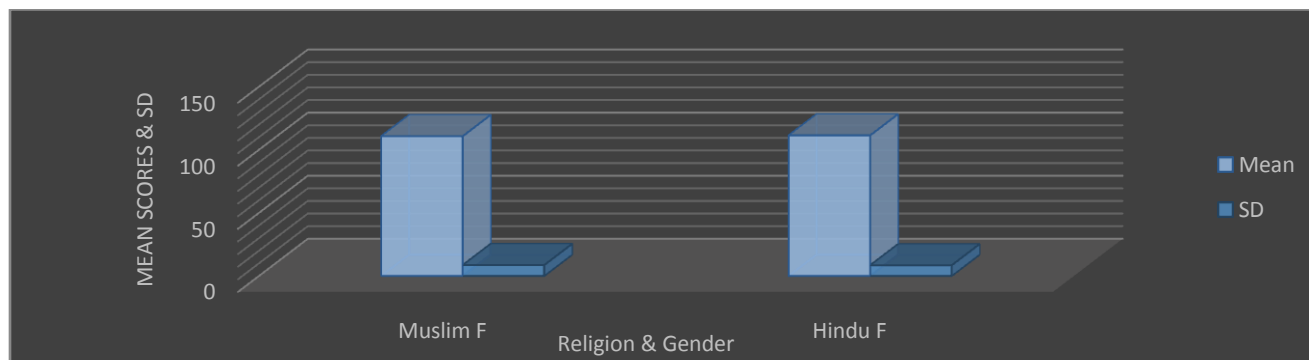


Figure-6. Showing the attitude of Muslim female and Hindu female under-graduate students towards sustainable development.

As illustrated in Table-7, the mean scores for undergraduate Muslim female is 110.76 and Hindu female is 111.42, but t-value was calculated as 0.38 at 98 degree of freedom. The obtained t-value is not found to be significant at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it is concluded that Muslim female and Hindu female undergraduate students did not differ in their attitude toward sustainable development and hence null hypothesis-6 is accepted. The data is depicted in Figure-6.

Findings of the Study:

- After assessing the attitude of undergraduate students, it was found that majority undergraduate students are having highly favourable attitude towards sustainable development.
- Male and female undergraduate students did not differ in their attitude towards sustainable development.
- Insignificant difference was found in the mean scores while comparing the attitude of Muslims and Hindus undergraduate students towards sustainable development.

- There was no significant difference in the attitude of Hindu Male and Hindu Female students at undergraduate level towards sustainable development. Thus, they do not differ in their attitude towards sustainable development.
- On comparing the attitude of Muslim Male and Muslim Female undergraduate students there was also no difference in their attitude towards sustainable development. It is concluded that there is no variation in attitude on the basis of gender.
- Insignificant difference was found while comparing the attitude of Hindu Male and Muslim Male undergraduate students towards sustainable development.
- There is no significant difference in the attitude of Muslim Female and Hindu Female towards sustainable development at undergraduate level.

Educational implications of the study:

- ❖ Knowledge of sustainable development at undergraduate level helps the students to learn conservation and preservation of limited resources for better future.
- ❖ All educational institutions should be based on a practical approach which directly affects the attitude of the students toward sustainable development.
- ❖ Apart from students, special efforts on the part of teachers, administrators and parents are also required in order to enhance positive attitude towards sustainable development among students.
- ❖ Education for sustainable development should compulsorily be included in the syllabi at all levels of education.
- ❖ This study proves that undergraduate students possess a certain level of positive attitude towards sustainable development that can be enhanced by making environmental awareness course compulsory at all levels, especially at undergraduate and postgraduate level.
- ❖ Knowledge of sustainable development should be made compulsory at all levels of education.
- ❖ Common masses should be made aware about the do's and don'ts regarding sustainable development through different agencies of education.

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