

Original Article

A Research Study on Awareness and Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Among College Students

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Abstract

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The present study examines the level of awareness and implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among college students. The SDGs were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to address global challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and environmental sustainability. Youth participation plays a crucial role in achieving these global goals; therefore, assessing student awareness and engagement becomes essential. The study is based on a descriptive and analytical research design. Primary data were collected from 120 college students using a structured questionnaire through simple random sampling. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis and Chi-square test were applied to analyze the data. The findings reveal that 82% of the respondents possess moderate to high awareness of SDGs, while participation in SDG-related activities is mostly occasional (46%), with only 29% actively involved. The Chi-square test indicates a significant relationship between awareness and participation, implying that higher awareness leads to greater involvement in sustainability initiatives. However, no significant gender difference was observed in awareness levels. The study concludes that although students are reasonably aware of Sustainable Development Goals, there exists a gap between awareness and active implementation. Educational institutions should integrate SDG-focused programs, workshops, and practical initiatives to enhance meaningful participation among students.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, Awareness, Participation, Youth Engagement, Sustainability, Higher Education.

Introduction:

The concept of sustainable development was formally introduced in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), which defined it as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In 2015, the United Nations adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These goals aim to eradicate poverty, protect the planet, and ensure peace and prosperity for all.

1. The 17 SDGs include: No Poverty
2. Zero Hunger
3. Good Health and Well-being
4. Quality Education
5. Gender Equality
6. Clean Water and Sanitation
7. Affordable and Clean Energy
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
10. Reduced Inequalities
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities
12. Responsible Consumption and Production



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13. Climate Action
14. Life Below Water
15. Life on Land
16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
17. Partnerships for the Goals

Youth participation is considered a key factor in achieving SDGs. Therefore, this study examines awareness and implementation of SDGs among college students.

Review of Literature

1. United Nations Development Programme (2019) reported that youth engagement significantly improves SDG implementation at the local level.
2. UNESCO (2021) emphasized integrating SDGs into higher education curriculum.
3. World Bank (2020) highlighted that awareness programs increase sustainability participation among students.

The review indicates that awareness positively influences implementation, but participation levels vary across regions.

Need of the Study

- 1 To understand the awareness level of students.
- 2 To examine whether awareness leads to action.
- 3 To help educational institutions design SDG-based programs.

Objectives of the Study

- 1 To measure awareness of SDGs among college students.
- 2 To examine students' participation in SDG-related activities.
- 3 To analyze the relationship between awareness and participation.
- 4 To examine gender differences in awareness.
- 5 To suggest measures to improve SDG implementation.

Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant relationship between awareness and participation in SDG activities.

H02: There is no significant difference between male and female students in awareness of SDGs.

H03: Higher awareness does not significantly influence active participation.

Research Methodology:

The Research is based on primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected from 120 college students. Secondary data was collected from books, journals, newspapers etc. Random sampling method was used. For data analysis statistical tools like Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation, Chi-square Test etc used.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Demographic Profile

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	70	58%
Female	50	42%
Total	120	100%

Awareness Level of SDGs

Awareness Level	Frequency	Percentage
High	48	40%
Moderate	50	42%
Low	22	18%
Total	120	100%

Graph 1: Awareness Distribution



Interpretation: Majority (82%) students have moderate to high awareness.

Participation in SDG Activities

Participation	Frequency	Percentage
Active	35	29%
Occasional	55	46%
None	30	25%
Total	120	100%

Graph 2: Participation Level



Interpretation: Most students participate occasionally.

Cross Tabulation: Awareness vs Participation

Awareness \ Participation	Active	Occasional	None	Total
High	22	20	6	48
Moderate	10	28	12	50
Low	3	7	12	22
Total	35	55	30	120

Chi-Square Test

Formula:

$$\chi^2 = \sum (O-E)^2 / E$$

Calculated $\chi^2 = 11.45$

Degree of Freedom = $(3-1)(3-1) = 4$

Table value at 5% level = 9.49

Since calculated value > table value, reject H01.

=> Awareness significantly affects participation.

Gender and Awareness

Gender	High	Moderate	Low	Total
Male	30	28	12	70
Female	18	22	10	50

Chi-square calculated = 0.89

Table value = 5.99

Since calculated < table value, accept H02.

=> No significant gender difference.

Major Findings

- 1 Students have satisfactory awareness of SDGs.
- 2 Participation is mostly occasional, not active.
- 3 Higher awareness leads to higher participation.
- 4 Gender does not significantly affect awareness.
- 5 Educational institutions need structured SDG programs.

Suggestions

- 1 Introduce SDG-focused curriculum modules.
- 2 Conduct sustainability workshops and competitions.
- 3 Encourage NSS/NCC participation in SDG activities.
- 4 Organize environmental awareness campaigns.
- 5 Promote green campus initiatives.

Conclusion

The study concludes that awareness of Sustainable Development Goals among college students is relatively high, but active participation requires improvement. Institutions must bridge the gap between knowledge and action. Youth engagement is essential to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Colleges play a vital role in shaping sustainable attitudes and behaviours.



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Reference Books

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→ a comprehensive textbook covering environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainable development.
2. Sachs, J. D. – *The Age of Sustainable Development* (Columbia University Press).
→ a leading book explaining SDGs, their global context, challenges and policy approaches.
3. Arora, R. & Sarker, T. (eds.) – *Financing of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* (Springer Nature, 2025).
→ Explores SDG financing strategies — good for economic aspects.
4. Sustainable Development Goals and Panchayats (Rajesh Kumar Sinha, ed.) – Rawat Publications.
→ focuses on SDGs at the local government (Panchayat) level in India.