

# EFFECTS OF LIFESTYLE CHANGE ON SUSTAINABILITY FOR ‘REFORMING THE INDIAN ECONOMY’

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**Abstract:** From 19<sup>th</sup> century it has become our slogan that economy must develop following a sustainable path- a path of sustainable society and sustainable environment which are very much interdependent to each other. The linking parameter between the two interrelated concepts of sustainability is the sustainable lifestyle. Objective of the study is to assess the behavior of lifestyle change and sustainability of the secondary school students and the correlation between the two. The sample comprises 150 students, both boys & girls ranging in age from 15-17 years and studying from various secondary institutions under WBBSE in West Bengal. In our study we have considered stratified purposive sampling due to short time period. Two validated questionnaire vetted by experts and researchers in measurement and research was used as an instrument for data collection and analyzed by employing quantitative research approach. In the study we have considered two categories of lifestyle namely positive lifestyle and negative lifestyle. The study reveals that a different category of lifestyle has some effects on sustainability. Also it has been found that a relationship exists between lifestyle change and sustainability. Understanding the effects of lifestyle change on sustainability has become a challenging issue now days. Students are the future of world so if they are in the habit of positive lifestyle then it would not take much time to turn our society into a sustainable society and this indirectly reform the economy.

**Keywords:** Lifestyle change, Secondary school students and Sustainability

## Introduction

In the day of consumerization when economy is running behind high economic growth and high consumption, we the researchers must formulate plans to achieve sustainability in respect of society, environment and economy. The mission of all round development through sustainability has gained much momentum starting from 19<sup>th</sup> century. The core idea of sustainability has established itself as an integrated concept for many of the present discussions about development and environment. Efforts like environmental management, greening of industries, environmental education and many more are being adopted to achieve sustainability and still things are developing in the wrong direction (Meadows et al., 1991). The transition to sustainability in all aspects is much low. Every person in the current scenario are very much aware of the changes that are taking place continuously in the surroundings but very few people are not behaving which the environment is demanding from them to gain sustainability in all spheres. Many research papers have shown that consciousness and attitude is necessary for sustainability. However, to cope with the fast life, people have no other alternatives other than to depend on technology in a way they are getting self-centered. For example, with sporting attitudes, children have to depend on technology for computer games to enjoy their childhood. In a way, they are losing their physical strength and in the long run it may affect the health resources in a chronic way. To avoid congestion in the public transport system, people prefers to have individual car and hence indirectly dampening the transport system and has become a major cause of global warming. To tackle the situation of global warming the use of Air Conditioner has increased gradually which is again becomes the culprit of global temperature to rise. Running shortage of time, people have to depend on fast food and this ultimately in the long run affects the health system. This dependency ultimately puts a question before us the problem of sustainability. The effects of change in lifestyle have become a matter of concern for sustainability. The set of effective actions and consumption are needed for current lifestyle to be sustainable.

Consumption behaviour can only be sustainable if the individuals build their own identity and socialize through practices and choices enabling them to meet their needs and aspirations with a sense of responsibility. This requires the setting of a new groundwork to rethink about the effect of changing lifestyle in our near future. Responsible consumption patterns stand for a crucial component of this process. In one way, responsible consumption deals with all aspects of day to day life and hence needs to be approached as a crosscutting issue encapsulating lifestyles as a whole and on the other way, the development of more responsible patterns of consumption, notably based on a better understanding of life-cycles, positive impact on the environment, societies and communities. The questions of sustainability through sustainable behaviour take a centre stage in today’s world. All of whom are engaged in quest of matching wants and needs with the limited resources available. Close to half of that population are young people below the age of 30. At this stage we may thank God for giving a powerful opportunity for society if these young people can participate positively in all aspects of life such as governance, culture, environment, and commerce to promote sustainable development. Young people have an enormous stake in the present and future state of the planet. For instance, through their lifestyles, they influence commerce and media - and shape the process of production, marketing, and consumption patterns of goods and services (UNEP/UNESCO 2001). Since young people are also tomorrow’s workers, entrepreneurs, parents, and political

leaders, policy makers know that they will greatly influence the future of their nations and global governance (World Bank 2006). In the era of Globalisation, fast flow of goods and information forced young generation to live an attractive lifestyle. The study mainly tries to assess their behavior towards sustainability.

### Operational Definitions

#### a) *Lifestyle Change:*

SPREAD project of Sustainable Lifestyle 2050 has referred lifestyle as the way we fulfil our needs and aspirations. They serve as “social conversations” in which people signal their social position and psychological aspirations to others since many of the signals are mediated by goods, lifestyles are closely linked to material and resource flows in the society. Lifestyle change refers to the change in the pattern of action and consumption used by people to affiliate and differentiates themselves from others.

#### b) *Sustainability:*

The DEFRA report has succinctly highlighted the concept of lifestyle and sustainability in the following words-

- Lifestyles relate to our ways of “doing”, “having”, “using” and “displaying”.
- Sustainable lifestyles aim to ensure that everything we do, have, use and display meets our needs and improves our quality of life while minimizing the consumption of natural resources, emissions, waste and pollution and ensures that resources are safeguarded for future generations.
- Sustainability has three pillars: environmental, social and economic.
- Ideally sustainable solutions would not undermine choice or personal identity and rather open up new choices for many.

The SPREAD project has chosen four lifestyle areas for deeper investigation-

- consuming (food, household and leisure consumer products)
- living (the built environment and homes)
- moving (individual mobility and transport)
- health and society (individual and society-wide health and equity)

c) *Economic Reform:* Economic policies which were constructed under Economic Reform i.e., under globalization, privatization and liberalization undoubtedly puts a question of sustainability besides improving the economic growth of the country.

### Objective of Study

- To assess the behavior of lifestyle change and sustainability of the secondary school students and the correlation between the two.

### Methodology

The present study is based on cross-sectional empirical data. The sample comprises of 150 students, both boys & girls ranging in age from 15-17 years and are studying in various secondary institutions under WBBSE in West Bengal. In our study we have considered stratified purposive sampling due to short time period. Two validated questionnaire vetted by experts and researchers in measurement and research is used as an instrument for data collection and are analyzed by employing quantitative research approach.

### Instruments

#### i) *Scale of Lifestyle Change (SL)*

The researchers initially used the Environmental awareness scale constructed by *Maji and Sengupta (2015)*. However, for the present analysis, the scale was completely redesigned, modified and have standardized following 15 statements covering 8 important thrust areas of environmental concern viz. environmental pollution, conservation of natural resources. Reliability of the scale was 0.71(KR-21). Tetrachoric correlation of each item has been used for testing the item validity. Both reliability and validity was found to be adequate. The original scale had 25 items. The adapted version included 15 ones. Each item has two alternatives, one related to positive and the other to negative lifestyle. The participant has to choose one of the alternatives. Scoring was done by granting 1 for item indicating positive lifestyle and 0 for the item indicating negative lifestyle. The high scores (9-15) indicate positive lifestyle and low scores (1-8) depict negative lifestyle.

#### ii) *Scale of Sustainability (SS)*

By sustainability it is meant that the observable and reported behaviour of the individuals, either done or willingness to do in future, regarding the protection of the environment. The factors included were behaviour related to civic responsibility, personal change, individual civic action and cooperative civic action etc. The researchers developed the Likert type (5-point) scale (15 items) having a reliability (KR-21) value of 0.73. The item validity was tested by Tetra choric correlation and the values varied from 0.2-0.8. Face and Content was ascertained by experts. The sample items were ‘do you complain to authority if you hear that somebody is falling tree in your area?’ ‘Do you make sure that water taps are turned off after it has been used?’

Results and Discussion

Table-1: Descriptive Statistics Concerning Distribution of Lifestyle and Sustainability

	Lifestyle	Sustainability
N	150	150
Mean	9.29	47.79
Median	9.00	48.00
Mode	10	46
Std. Deviation	2.720	7.670
Variance	7.400	58.836
Skewness	-0.232	0.097
Kurtosis	-0.526	-0.072

The descriptive statistics in Table -1 reflects lifestyle scores of mean, median and mode indicating an average performance ranging 9.29. However the S.D. (2.720) showed that the distance with the scores was very minimal. The skewness is negative (-0.232) and high indicating more number of students has scored on the higher side of the scale. The negative value of Kurtosis (-0.526) indicates slightly flatness of the distribution.

The descriptive statistics in Table -1 also reflects sustainability scores for mean, median and mode. The values indicate an average performance ranging 47.79. However the S.D. (7.670) showed that the distance with the scores was very minimal. The skewness is positive (0.097) and high indicating more number of students has scored on the lower side of the scale. The negative value of Kurtosis (-0.072) indicates slightly flatness of the distribution.

Table-2: Mean & S.D. of the of the Scores of Sustainability of the Sub- Sample Groups based on Type of lifestyle

Lifestyle	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Positive	106	49.06	7.025	3.228	0.002
Negative	44	44.75	8.364		

From the Table-2, it might be concluded that scores in sustainability of students with positive lifestyle (M = 49.06& S.D.= 7.025) is higher than students with negative lifestyle (M= 44.75& S.D.= 8.364). It is evident from the analysis that there is a significant difference of the two groups (students with positive and negative lifestyle) in sustainability scores (t-value =3.228, P<0.01).

Table No.-3: Correlation between Scores of lifestyles change and Sustainability

		Lifestyle Change	Sustainability
Lifestyle Change	Pearson Correlation	1	0.320**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	150	150
Sustainability	Pearson Correlation	0.320**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	150	150

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the Table-3, it has been observed that, lifestyle change was significantly and positively associated with sustainability (r = 0.32, P<0.01) score. The correlation between lifestyle change scores and sustainability scores is significant at 0.01 levels. It implies that positive lifestyle participants are likely to be more active environmentally.

Conclusion

In the study we have considered two categories of lifestyle namely positive lifestyle and negative lifestyle. The study reveals that a different category of lifestyle has some effects on sustainability. Also it has been found that a relationship exists between lifestyle change and sustainability. Understanding the effects of lifestyle change on sustainability through the determinants considered in the study has become a challenging issue now days. Students are the future of world so if they are in the habit of positive lifestyle then it would not take much time to turn our society into a sustainable society and this indirectly reform the economy. The study supported the theoretical under pinning of the importance of the effects of lifestyle change on sustainability for ‘reforming the Indian economy’.

Limitation of the Study

Small size of the sample is the main limitation of the study. A sample from a larger group including school students would have given a broader perspective. The qualitative study of the research has not been included due to paucity of time. An in depth analysis is required to understand the relationship between the variables. Also the effect of different psychological variables like attitude, values, belief, locus of control etc. were not included in the present study.

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