



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

The ineluctable relevance of Christianity in promoting Sustainable Development: A study with special emphasis on verses from the Holy Bible

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Abstract

The contemporary societies of this fast paced world have witnessed some incredulous changes and precocious developments that of late. The recent upsurge and proliferation in the development activities has caused a sudden seismic disturbance on the resources of the earth. It is quite hard to jettison the usage of resources in order to foster the development activities while keeping in mind the myriad requirements of the modern world. In a bid to utilize the earth's resources carefully as well as to fuel the developments of the 21st century world, the term 'Sustainable Development' has been brought to the limelight. Over the years, the think tank of policy makers and environmental activists has been mulling over to fine tune the practice of Sustainable Development in order to preserve and sustain Mother Nature. But a challenging 17 Sustainable Development Goals coupled with 169 associated targets is always an arduous task. Keeping these challenges in mind, Christianity has emerged as an antecedent to provide a fillip towards promoting and integrating Sustainable Development activities. This research study intends to explore how Christianity and the activities of the churches and Christian institutions rooted in the teachings of Lord Jesus Christ is serving the purpose of promoting sustainable development by reflecting upon some key Biblical verses.

Keywords: Sustainable Development; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Christianity; Holy Bible; Biblical verses; Churches and Christian.

1. Background Observations

The ever increasing demands of mankind in the 21st century has propelled a spectacular transformation in the circa of development. It is a well-documented fact that the people of the contemporary world have a strong proclivity towards a more comfortable modus vivendi. Such metamorphic trajectories of the modern day people have triggered the utilization of earth's resources, which is fast depleting and being made unavailable for the future generations. The

present conundrum of managing the natural resources has triggered numerous debates and deliberations among the policy makers, environmental activists and other potential stakeholders. The concept of Sustainable Development coined by Brundtland World Commission Report in 1987, has bolstered with the passage of time to unshackle itself from the retrospective dynamics of environment and development process to integrate novel concepts such as economic, ecological, social, and spiritual well-being. In the current scenario, most religions have raised their concerns about the environment and are also actively involved in environmental protection activities like never before. It is a no-brainer that almost all religions today are addressing the creation of the universe in different forms and in varying degrees of lucidity or detail albeit all religions agree to the fact that creation is an act of God and should be treated with due respect. Christianity is no way behind. In fact, majority of initiatives based on Sustainable Developments or any other social cause have been taken either by the Christian nations, or the Christian churches and institutions. Thus, the role of Christianity in supporting the activities related to the society or the environment and the whole world in the broader context has been gargantuan which has been inspired by the teachings of the churches, the practice and culture of the Christian faith and through the words and teachings of Lord Jesus Christ. Bringing out the instrumentality of Christianity in supporting and promoting such just causes is the essence of our purported endeavour.

2. Introductory Reflections

The large scale globalization is having a detrimental effect on the resources of the earth and the environment in general. Fulfilling the requirements of the people as well as effectively managing the usage of resources has given the environmental practitioners and other related hotshots a lot of food for thought. The travails in achieving this aim are unfathomably gruelling. Undoubtedly major nations of the world and other environmental organizations are lurching for achieving parity on the issue of conservation and Sustainable Development but have been long missing the religious link which witnessed a much needed berth in the past few years. In fact, the first ever initiative for bridging the gap between religion and conservation was taken in 1986 on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of World Wildlife Fund (WWF) at Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, Italy. The aftermath of this meeting was that each major religion (Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism) would play their respective roles in preserving the environment. Each major religion composed a future plan as to how they could integrate conservation into its unique beliefs. With most of the countries in the world and majority of the world population being Christians, their approach towards such conservation and sustainability was always going to be worthwhile and something to look forward to. Truth to be told, the combo of Christianity and Sustainable Development is a winning formula evidenced by the recent amelioration in the ambit of environment quality and sustainability.

2.1 Sustainable Development

As stated earlier in this study, the term ‘Sustainability’ was first coined in the Brundtland World Commission Report in the year 1987 which was headed by the then Prime Minister of Norway, Gro Harlem Brundtland. However, after 28 years in August 2015, the final goals and targets of Sustainable Development called “Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” were agreed to albeit the seeds of SDGs were sown in 2012 in Rio Summit which took place in Brazil. The result of the Summit was the formation a United Nations Open Working Group on Sustainable

Development Goals which was later established in January, 2013. The group consisted members from 70 countries and published its final draft in July, 2014. There are 17 SDGs and 169 associated targets which all are expected to be achieved by 2030. The 17 SDGs if arranged in its correct sequence are No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-being, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Clean Water and Sanitation, Affordable and Clean Energy, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, Reducing Inequality, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Life Below Water, Life On Land, Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions and Partnerships for the Goals. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS) are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, all which are listed above. Sustainability is defined as “a process or state can be maintained at a certain level for as long as is wanted. It is the ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level.” There are many ways by which Sustainable Development can be defined. According to Brundtland Commission Report (1987), “Sustainable Development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Putting in simple terms it is the economic (profit), social (people) and environmental (planet) developments which are carried out without depleting the natural resources.

2.2 Christianity

The term “Christianity” needs absolutely no introduction. According to history, Christianity is reported to be brought into existence in around 4BC. However, its advent in India took place around 6BC through St. Thomas the Apostle and Bartholomew (two of the twelve disciples of Jesus) who were found along the coast of Malabar and Konkan respectively at the same time period. Considered to be the most glorious, sacrosanct and peaceful religion on Earth, Christianity is firmly rooted in the gospel of Lord Jesus Christ consisting of his teachings and his words which is binding on every follower and practitioners of Christianity. His teachings and words can be found in the Holy Bible, which is the religious book of the Christians. Christianity was brought into this world by Lord Jesus Christ who was born of his mother, Holy Virgin Mary and conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. Most important fact is that He was born without sin as Mother Mary was informed by Angel Gabriel that she would be blessed by a baby boy who should be named Jesus. During His days, Judaism was dominating Israel, consisting of Pharisees and the Saducees who were descendants of Prophet Moses. The teachings of Jesus influenced and moved many people out of which 12 became his disciples. But it riled up the Jews who conspired against Him and eventually put Him to death. After His death, His disciples preached His words and the good news spread to other countries. According to the holy scriptures of Christianity, it was only that the sins of people of the world could have been forgiven so He was crucified mercilessly (this day is called Good Friday which is celebrated with passion, fast and abstinence all across the globe) and resurrected from the dead on the third day. This day is celebrated across the world as Easter Sunday. It is believed in Christianity as told by Lord Jesus Christ, that one day everyone would rise from their dead for the final judgement in which Jesus will come with all His angels in glory from the heavens. In fact, this is a well-documented fact contained in the Islamic scriptures as well. Like many religion Christianity also has many divisions most predominant being the Catholics and Protestants. As one would come to know, if he or she goes through the verses of the Holy Bible that God as well as Jesus expressed great care about the environment together with all its components especially the people. This particular essence will be brought forward in this research study.

2.3 Christianity and Sustainable Development

At the World Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro which took place in 1992, “Sustainable Development” was recognized by the international community as a nifty driving force to bring out solutions to the global issues. Over the years, the term “Sustainability” and/or “Sustainable Development” has been defined by different scholars and experts in different ways. However, in this study we should emphasize more on sustainability from the viewpoint of Christianity. So, according to Christianity, sustainability is “a categorical imperative of a modern creation responsibility. It needs more than eco-political equilibrium models. Its basis is a comprehensive culture of life.” As mentioned earlier, in this study, there are 17 SDGs and 169 associated targets. Christians want to achieve this desperately more than anybody else in the world. A manifestation of this lays in the myriad social and philanthropic activities or environment protection and conservation activities undertaken by the Christians, the churches and innumerable number of Christian institutions and other social organizations worldwide. One good example of this would be the protection of forests in Lebanon, where the Advocates for Religious Conservation (ARC) in collaboration with the local government encouraged the Mennonite Church in protecting their surrounding forest. Post 2000, they have also built two additional forests as well and are also responsible for developing environmental education programs in over 70 surrounding villages. Another example would be in Poland, where the churches beautified their surroundings. This not only increased the bird diversity but also helped in flourishing bird species in abundance in the church areas juxtaposed with the farms. Even in Tanzania, the growing concerns about the disappearing glaciers at the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro have triggered developing an environmental protection policy by the Northern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Even in a religious diversified country like India, the Missionaries of Charity, a Catholic religious congregation founded by Saint Teresa of Calcutta in 1950, caters to the refugees, people who are mentally unsound, former prostitutes, abandoned and sick children, lepers, people infected with AIDS, old and aged people, etc. They also have schools run by volunteers to educate street children and run soup kitchens as well as other services. Thus we see in a country like India where Christians constitute only a measly 2.3%, but the influence and power it has when it comes to social and philanthropic works or sustainability activities, is greater than any other religion. The best part is that Christians institutions all across the globe, are playing a prodigious part in providing quality education to students of all caste and religion and removing any sort of inequality. Myriad Christian schools, colleges’ and universities and other professional institutions worldwide provide a plethora of opportunities for students of different backgrounds, race, caste, religion and community, access to quality education where preference is given to economically weaker students and where there is no biasness. Thus we clearly see how Christianity is not only protecting and conserving the environment but also supporting, promoting and helping in achieving the SDGs.

2.4 Christianity and Sustainable Development – Conceptual Framework

As brought forward in this research study just above, about the role played by Christianity in Sustainable Development, it is almost imperative to highlight certain verses from the Holy Bible which bears a strong testimony about God’s commandments to the people of the world and the teaching of Lord Jesus Christ in order to protect and sustain the environment and the world in general.

First we start with the first book in the Holy Bible which is Genesis. The meaning of Genesis is “the beginning.” It tells us about how this world came into existence which was created by God himself. According to Christianity, God was begotten and not made and through Him all things were made. Hence two important verses from the book of Genesis which reflects on environment usage, protection and conservation and thus overall sustainability have been stated below.

Environment Usage, Protection and Conservation (Overall Sustainability)

Genesis 1:28

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Genesis 2:15

“The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”

Speaking about the verse (Genesis 1:28), it can be said that God has given mankind the dominance over the resources of the earth whether living or non-living. However, numerous debates and deliberations have sparked over the word “subdue.” According to Oxford University Press the definition of the word “subdue” is “to overcome or bring under control.” Many Christians believe this means to “take control in order to protect.” A very intimate interpretation of this verse would reveal that “subduing” the earth includes harnessing its various resources as well as protecting them. “Dominion” over all living creatures is not a license to abuse them, but a contract from God to care for them.

Coming to the verse (Genesis 2:15), it can be said humans were meant to take care for the environment as commanded by God. Undoubtedly creation is meant for our use, but not only for our use. Our work, our activities can either preserve or destroy the air, land, water, biodiversity, ecosystem and even the climate with which God has blessed His creation. Hence, it is incumbent on the part of mankind to wield its activities and take proper care of the environment.

Hence, we have seen how these two verses from the Book of Genesis contained in the Holy Bible teach us and support sustainability. Next we shall also highlight some other key verses from different Books contained in the Holy Bible which reflects on protection and conservation of the environment.

Numbers 35:33

“You shall not pollute the land in which you live, for blood pollutes the land, and no atonement can be made for the land for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of the one who shed it.”

According to verse 35:33 of the Book of Numbers contained in the Holy Bible, God clearly directs mankind that they shall not pollute the land because it is murder which pollutes the land and the land where murder has been committed

can never make peace with the Lord except through the death of the murderer. Here, “murder” can be actually perceived as environment disintegration and murderer can be perceived as “pollution/hazardous activities.”

Psalm 23:1-3

(A Psalm of David)

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.”

It can be inferred accordingly to the Book of Psalm chapter 23:1-3, that Lord Jesus is the shepherd. He makes man lie down in greeneries of the earth. He leads mankind besides waters which is calm, which is not in a state of flux. He rejuvenates mankind by doing all these things. Therefore, Lord Jesus Christ is leading the mankind in the path of righteousness.

Mark 16:15

And He said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.”

From this particular verse, it can be said that Lord Jesus Christ is telling his disciples to go out to the world and proclaim the gospel to them. The gospel in this sense can mean “sustainability.”

In addition to this, we have also brought to the forefront some other verses from the Holy Bible reflecting on some key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which have been listed below:

No Poverty (SDG Goal 1)

Proverbs 19:17

“Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and He will reward them for what they have done.”

Proverbs 29:7

“The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked has no such concern.”

From the above two verses it is interpreted that the God is saying whoever is generous and kind to the poor owes to the Lord and He will reward them for what they have done while the second verse God clearly tells that the responsible persons have concern for the poor but the irresponsible people have no concern at all.

Zero Hunger (SDG Goal 2)

Proverbs 22:9

“The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor.”

The above verse clearly carries the message that God will indeed bless the generous and kind people because they feed the poor and the needy.

Quality Education (SDG Goal 4)**Proverb 22:6**

“Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old it will not depart from it.”

In the above verse God commands us to train a child in a proper manner so that even when he becomes old and aged those teachings will never leave him

Psalm 32:8

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.”

The above verse can be interpreted as that God promises to instruct and teach us through our parents and teachers; He will also counsel us through them from time to time. This is a very common manifestation as we see the parents and teachers not only educate us but also provides us with valuable advices.

Responsible Production and Consumption (SDG Goal 12)**Genesis 2:16-17**

And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

Coming to the verses (Genesis 2:16-17), it can be inferred that human imagination and skill can work with the resources of God’s creation in ways inimical to God’s intents, purposes and commands. Hence, working in harmony with the limits set by God is absolutely vital. There are limits to the earth’s capacity for resource extraction, pollution, habitat modification, and consumption of living things, etc. It is sometimes really unfathomable to detect the exact line. Nonetheless, the art of living as God’s image-bearers requires learning to discern where blessings are to be found in observing the limits set by God and evident in creation.

3. Objectives of the study

1. To examine and analyse how the content and practices of Christianity, teaches and enhances responsible action for Sustainable Development by highlighting some key Biblical verses that very well reflect and foster Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. To highlight some Christian activities that support and promote Sustainable Development
3. To recommend greater integration of religion to bolster Sustainable Development.
4. To bring out the significance of Christianity in today's world.

4. Review of Associated Literature

The term 'Sustainability' is not something which is new. Since its inception in the Brundtland Commission in 1987, the term 'Sustainability' or most commonly referred to as "Sustainable Development" has been defined by several scholars in several ways. According to the founding father, i.e. Brundtland Report, Sustainable Development is defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the need of future generations to meet their own needs." This definition is actually broader and apt compared to other definitions. Over the course of years sustainability was successfully blended with religion. The integration of these two meant a more dynamic approach and road to achieve environmental parity. It was once said by the great Albert Einstein, "science without religion is lame; religion without science is blind" (Einstein, 1940). Imminently, religions also started raising their concerns over environment sustainability. The hallowed Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi, located in Italy, served as the stepping-stone of integration of religion and conservation in the year 1986, where each religion composed a future plan of how to integrate conservation into its unique beliefs (Awoyemi, 2012). As per the reports of States News Service, 2011, Bishop Fredrick Shoo of Northern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Tanzania also said, "almost every religious institutions are talking about the environment." Thus, we can see the importance of religion in bolstering Sustainable Development. Considering the 17 SDGs and its 169 associated targets, it will not be a hesitation to say that these goals lack certain humanitarian emotions which are vital for the existence of mankind. Emotions like love, compassion, sacrifice, etc. are absolutely incumbent on the part of Christian practitioners. In the words of Niamir-Fuller, 2016, "to deal with environmental problems we need a spiritual and cultural transformation." Hence, all religions need to adopt ways that foster Sustainable Development. "To an extent all religions can in some way mould practices to encourage conservation, but if grass-root institutions do not accept these concepts as truth, they will be unsuccessful" (Awoyemi, 2008).

5. Research Model and Hypothesis Formulation

Researches have been conducted in the past in the domain of Christianity and Sustainability, Catholic churches and environment protection and other similar and related areas. Keeping that in mind, this research is somewhat new and innovative in that it brings out some key verses from the Holy Bible which well and truly reflects and supports some major Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). So the verses which are more consistent with specific SDGs have been listed and categorized under those specific SDGs. The following research model has been developed reflecting upon the key Biblical verses that support SDGs. The following hypotheses have been developed and substantiated with the help of the following research model.

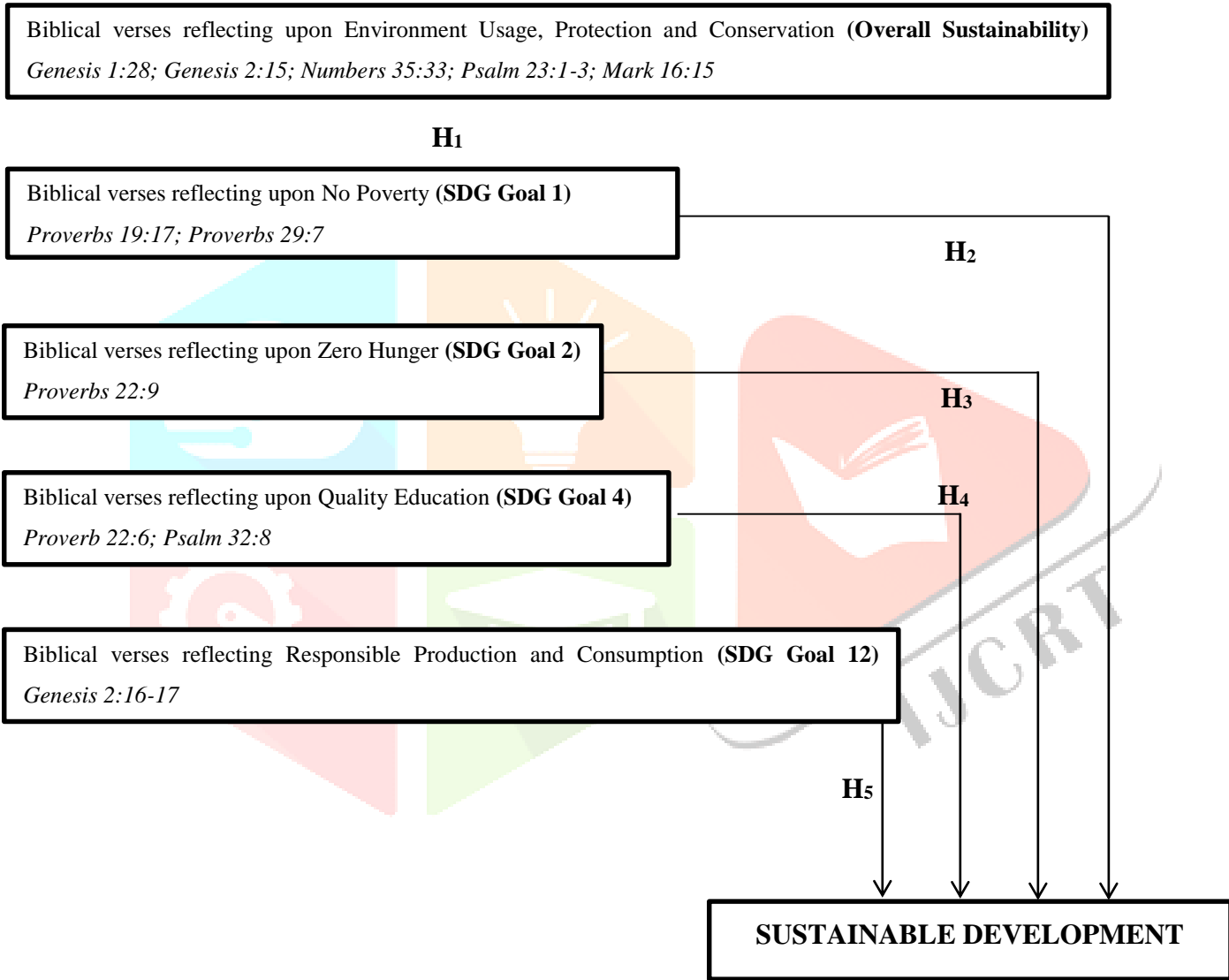


Exhibit 1: Research Model showing different Biblical verses supporting Sustainable Development

H₁: There is a significant relationship between Biblical verses and Overall Sustainability

H₂: There is a significant relationship between Biblical verses and No Poverty (SDG Goal 1)

H₃: There is a significant relationship between Biblical verses and Zero Hunger (SDG Goal 2)

H₄: There is a significant relationship between Biblical verses and Quality Education (SDG Goal 4)

H₅: There is a significant relationship between Biblical verses and Responsible Production and Consumption (SDG Goal 12)

6. Data and Methodology

The present study was conducted inside West Bengal within specific districts like Kolkata, Howrah, Hooghly and North 24 Parganas. The sample size was restricted to 200 respondents. Such respondents include both males and females of different religions falling in the age group of 18-55 years, who were employed in occupations. Since, this endeavour is least focused in dealing with or including commercial outcomes rather than blending the domain of spiritualism and environment, the demographic variable of income has been left out. Also, by excluding the income variable as one of the demographic representation has actually helped us to overcome the responses of the mercurial respondents who would have otherwise been reluctant to furnish the details of their income, knowing deep down that responses needed in the questionnaire of Christianity and Sustainable Development has got nothing to do with income. For the purpose of conducting the research a questionnaire was developed and doled out randomly to the respondents. But, for the purpose of conducting the survey outside the district of Kolkata questionnaires were mostly mailed to the respondents who were mostly Christians. Almost all the questions contained in the questionnaire has been self-developed albeit two to three questions have been adopted from previous research studies. There are a total of 14 questions under 5 heads which are shown in the research model above. The concepts have been measured by a Five-Point Likert Scale (1= Strongly Agree; 2= Somewhat Agree; 3= Neutral; 4= Somewhat Disagree and 5= Strongly Disagree). The initial responses were exactly 200 but some responses were not considered due to errors or mistakes from the respondents. The final valid responses stood at 168. The responses have been processed using IBM SPSS version 23.0 software package.

Presentation of Data

6.1 Graphical representation of Demographic Profiling

The data analysed has been presented in the form of pie-charts rather than tables to make it more alluring to the eyes and easy to comprehend. Demographics of the respondents like gender, age, occupation and religion have been presented in the form of charts.

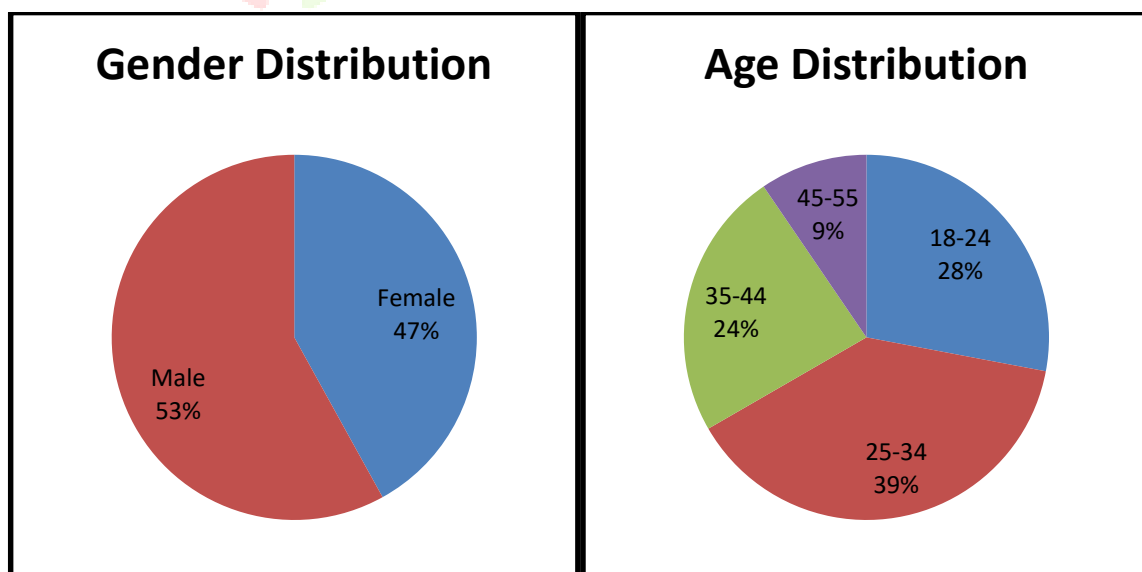


Diagram 1: Graphical Representation of Gender

Diagram 2: Graphical Representation of Age

From the above two diagrams, we see that gender distribution is moderately balanced between male and female in the proportion 53:47. In case, of age distribution, we see that a major chunk of respondents fall in the age group of 25-34 years. Also, the age group of 18-24 years and 35-44 years are very closely balanced accounting for 28% and 24% of the total respondents.

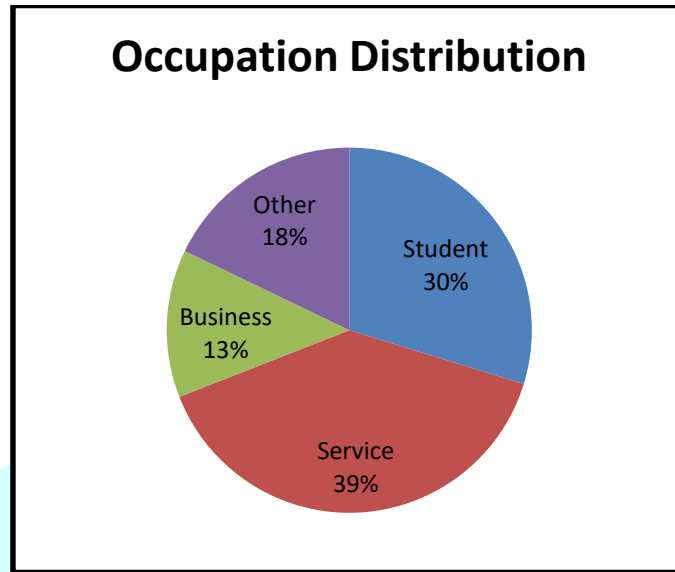


Diagram 3: Graphical Representation of Occupation

The diagram above shows that majority of the respondents were employed in service and also another large proportion of respondents were students. 13% of the respondents were engaged in business and 18% were associated with some other occupation.

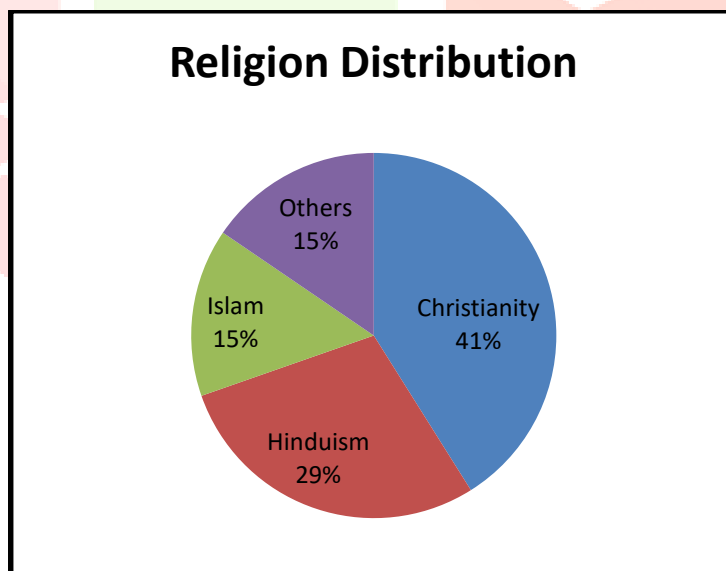


Diagram 4: Graphical Representation of Religion

From the above diagram, it is quite evident that majority of the respondents belonged to Christianity which is nicely perched at 41%. Hinduism follows next with a mediocre 29%. Practitioners of Islam and other religions have accounted for exactly 15% each.

6.2 Reliability Statistics

Reliability analysis was conducted to check the internal validity and consistency of the items used for each factors by using SPSS 23.0. We see that Cronbach's Alpha score is more than 0.6 for every item which proves the questionnaire along with all its variables fits adequately.

Factor	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Biblical verses reflecting upon Environment Usage, Protection and Conservation (Overall Sustainability)	6	0.906
Biblical verses reflecting upon No Poverty (SDG Goal 1)	3	0.816
Biblical verses reflecting upon Zero Hunger (SDG Goal 2)	1	0.705
Biblical verses reflecting upon Quality Education (SDG Goal 4)	3	0.870
Biblical verses reflecting upon Responsible Production and Consumption (SDG Goal 12)	1	0.876

Table 1: Representation of Reliability Statistics

6.3 Correlation Analysis

We have used Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation using SPSS 23.0 to find out and measure the strength of the relationship existing between the Biblical verses and Sustainable Development to support and validate our proposed hypotheses and research model in the long haul.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between Biblical verses and Overall Sustainability

Correlations

		Biblical verses	Ovl_Sus
Biblical verses	Pearson Correlation	1	.910**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	168	168
Ovl_Sus	Pearson Correlation	.910**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	168	168

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

Table 2: Representation of Correlation between Biblical verses and Overall Sustainability

So, as per our first hypothesis we wanted to examine the relationship between Biblical verses and Overall Sustainability. As we can see, there is an extremely strong and positive relationship between Biblical verses and Overall Sustainability, which was statistically significant at ($r=.910$, $n= 168$, $p= .005$)

H₂: There is a significant relationship between Biblical verses and No Poverty

Correlations

		Biblical verses	No_Pov
Biblical verses	Pearson Correlation	1	.770**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	168	168
No_Pov	Pearson Correlation	.770**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	168	168

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

Table 3: Representation of Correlation between Biblical verses and No Poverty

So, as per our second hypothesis we wanted to examine the relationship between Biblical verses and No Poverty. As we can see, there is a quite strong and positive relationship between Biblical verses and No Poverty, which was statistically significant at ($r=.770$, $n= 168$, $p= .005$)

H₃: There is a significant relationship between Biblical verses and Zero Hunger

Correlations

		Biblical verses	Zer_Hun
Biblical verses	Pearson Correlation	1	.600**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	168	168
Zero_Hun	Pearson Correlation	.600**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	168	168

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

Table 4: Representation of Correlation between Biblical verses and Zero Hunger

So, as per our third hypothesis we wanted to examine the relationship between Biblical verses and Zero Hunger. As we can see, there is a moderately strong and positive relationship between Biblical verses and Zero Hunger, but was statistically significant at ($r=.600$, $n= 168$, $p= .005$)

H₄: There is a significant relationship between Biblical verses and Quality Education

Correlations

		Biblical verses	Qly_Edu
Biblical verses	Pearson Correlation	1	.840**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	168	168
Qly_Edu	Pearson Correlation	.840**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	168	168

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

Table 5: Representation of Correlation between Biblical verses and Quality Education

So, as per our fourth hypothesis we wanted to examine the relationship between Biblical verses and Quality Education. As we can see, there is a very strong and positive relationship between Biblical verses and Quality Education, which was statistically significant at ($r=.840$, $n= 168$, $p= .005$)

H₅: There is a significant relationship between Biblical verses and Responsible Production and Consumption

Correlations

		Biblical verses	Res_PC
Biblical verses	Pearson Correlation	1	.860**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	168	168
Res_PC	Pearson Correlation	.860**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	168	168

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

Table 6: Representation of Correlation between Biblical verses and Responsible Production and Consumption

So, as per our fifth hypothesis we wanted to examine the relationship between Biblical verses and Responsible Production and Consumption. As we can see, there is a very strong and positive relationship between Biblical verses and Responsible Production and Consumption, which was statistically significant at ($r=.860$, $n= 168$, $p= .005$).

7. Findings and Discussions

As we have found out that all the Biblical verses strongly support Sustainable Development and hence each of the Biblical verse has a significant relationship with Sustainable Development. We had been able to prove the consistency of the items used as variables in the questionnaire through a reliability test and we had also done the correlation analysis to find out the relationship between our proposed hypotheses. It is evident from our results that the first hypothesis (H_1) is very much positive and significant with Sustainable Development. Almost all people supported God's creation history contained in the Bible and desired their wishes to help the Christian organizations in achieving Sustainable Development. Even the H_2 , H_4 and H_5 have been found to have a strong correlation with Sustainable Development. In case of H_4 , a majority of the respondents were in complete agreement to the fact that all teachings and trainings although done by parents and teachers come from God. God Himself takes care of us and counsels us. A major chunk of respondents were in complete with the Biblical verses as said by God in how we should be responsible towards production and consumption. However, the correlation between H_2 and Sustainable Development was not found to be that strong enough. An explanation could be that people who could possibly donated and fed the poor did not reap the rewards the way they would have expected or that they feel they have not been adequately blessed compared to the kind of works they have performed. However, this does not undermine the verses of the Holy Bible which promises to reward us if not today, then in the world to come, i.e. life after death. Life after death is a common and a very powerful belief not only in Christianity but also in Judaism and Islam. It is something that even people of several religions barring the above mentioned names of three religions have started to believe nowadays. However, the SDGs and the aftermath of achieving all the SDGs along with its 169 associated targets are somewhat imaginary and unreal. The world we all long for, is actually the post-apocalyptic world, i.e. the

world after the return of Lord Jesus Christ as mentioned in the Holy Bible and as well as mentioned in the holy book of the Muslims in the Holy Quran. The second coming of Lord Jesus Christ is the ultimate truth which all Christians firmly believe in. The world after His return will see no poverty, no hunger, no destruction, no enmity, no pollution, etc. It is something which has been promised to everyone where we shall witness only friendship, happiness, peace, care and viewing from the aesthetic side wide green pastures, clean water and sanitation, communities and surroundings beyond imagination. Putting in nutshell, God promises all the righteous and the just people an unfathomably happy, peaceful and aesthetically sound world without any suffering, thus ultimately meeting the SDGs and achieving Sustainable Development in the long haul.

8. Conclusive Remarks

The 17 SDGs along with its 169 associated targets are undoubtedly ambitious but limited until they are viewed from a Christian perspective. Christianity believes that a human being is more than the sum of their parts. Human flourishing does not come from the fulfilment of human's material needs as articulated by the SDGs. A closer examination would reveal that there is no mention of words like compassion, love, sacrifice, selflessness, generosity or faith which are extremely vital for the survival of mankind and very much binding of the legitimate teachings of Christianity as preached by Lord Jesus Christ which are adopted worldwide by Christian practitioners.

With much pomp and gala the United Nation's SDGs have been adopted by world leaders including His Holiness Pope Francis. His Holiness Pope Francis has even published an encyclical on 18th June, 2015, named "Laudato Si" which means "Praise be to You, my Lord." The subtitle of the encyclical is "on care for our common home." The hallowed document has been released in a number of international languages including Arabic. His Holiness Pope Francis has "critiqued irresponsible development and consumerism, rued environmental degradation and global warming." He has also called the whole people of the world to take a "swift and unified global action."

To an extent almost all religion preaches sustainability but it is very important for the practitioners of such religion to embrace, practice and preach sustainability just like their faith. The myriad social, philanthropic and environment related works done by the Christian countries; Christian NGOs, Christian institutions, Christian churches, eminent Christian personalities and practitioners of Christianity are inexorable. Such profound influence has not been found stemming from other religions. Truth to be told, sustainability without Christianity is vulnerable to become ethically superficial and trivial. Therefore, an extension of Christian social principles and moral values is the ultimate need of the situation. From a Christian perspective, sustainability is categorical imperative of a modern creation responsibility needing much more than just an eco-political equilibrium model. Hence, Christianity has proven that it is a religion which not only preaches sustainability but also practices it prodigiously and in turn encourages others to do the same. It is the ultimate religion which brings peace and stability in this ramified world. Over all these years Christianity through its teachings and works along with the blessings of Lord Jesus Christ has touched and won millions of hearts worldwide and will continue to do so. Hence, it can rightly be concluded that a new era of Sustainable Development piloted by Christianity has spectacularly arrived.

9. References

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