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B.Sc (Part-1) Home

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Derivation of the Newton's Law of Gravitation on the basis of Kepler's Law

Suppose that the orbit of planet is circular. Let  $M_1$ ,  $R_1$ , and  $T_1$  be the mass, radius and period of revolution respectively of a planet.

Force exerted by the Sun on the planet is

$$F_1 = M_1 R_1 \omega_1^2$$

$$F_1 = M_1 R_1 \left( \frac{2\pi}{T_1} \right)^2 \quad \text{--- (I)}$$

Let  $M_2$ ,  $R_2$  and  $T_2$  be the mass, radius and period of revolution respectively of a second planet.

Then the force exerted by the Sun on the second planet is

$$F_2 = M_2 R_2 \left( \frac{2\pi}{T_2} \right)^2 \quad \text{--- (II)}$$

$$\therefore \frac{F_1}{F_2} = \left( \frac{M_1}{M_2} \right) \left( \frac{R_1}{R_2} \right) \left( \frac{T_2}{T_1} \right)^2 \quad \text{--- (III)}$$

But from Kepler's law

$$\left( \frac{T_2}{T_1} \right)^2 = \left( \frac{R_2}{R_1} \right)^3$$

from equation (iii)

$$\frac{F_1}{F_2} = \left(\frac{M_1}{M_2}\right) \left(\frac{R_1}{R_2}\right) \left(\frac{R_2}{R_1}\right)^3$$

$$\text{or, } \frac{F_1}{F_2} = \left(\frac{M_1}{M_2}\right) \left(\frac{R_2}{R_1}\right)^2$$

$$\text{or, } \frac{F_1 R_1^2}{M_1} = \frac{F_2 R_2^2}{M_2} = \text{Constant (K)}$$

$$\text{then } F \propto \frac{M}{R^2}$$

$$\text{or, } F \propto M \quad \text{and} \quad F \propto \frac{1}{R^2}$$

Hence the force exerted by the Sun on the planet is proportional to the mass of the planet and inversely proportional to the square of distance from the Sun.

This is Newton's Law of Gravitation.