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## Editorial

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**Biographical notes:** Rameshwar Dubey is currently working as an Associate Professor at the Symbiosis International University. His research interests lies in sustainable supply chain network, humanitarian supply chain network and sustainable manufacturing practices. At present, he and his colleagues are attempting to examine current operations management theories using big data. Besides teaching and full time research, he is actively engaged in organising research methodology workshops for PhD scholars and faculty members. He has over 55 research publications indexed in Scopus, SCI, and SSCI. He is a guest editor with reputable publishing houses like Inderscience, Springer and Elsevier.

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## 1 Introduction

Sustainable development has been at the forefront of management recent years, having received increasing attention from scholars and practitioners, but at the same time been assigned different and sometimes, inconsistent, meanings (Hopwood et al., 2005). Hopwood et al. (2005) in one of their seminal articles have attempted to offer an operational definition of sustainable development as "... an attempt to combine growing concerns about a range of environmental issues with socio-economic issues..." Christmann (2000) has examined best practices of environmental management on organisational performance using the theory of resource-based view of the firm (RBVT). Since then, however, the sustainable business development (SBD) concept has evolved from focusing merely on environmental practices approach to the triple bottom line (TBL) approach that includes social, environmental, and economic sustainability and literature has attracted significant attention from scholars (see Ageron et al., 2012; Gunasekaran and Spalanzani, 2012; Schoenherr, 2012). However, the contributions from developing economies such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) is still fewer in comparison to the USA, the UK, Finland, and Sweden. With notable exceptions (see Matos and Silvestre, 2013; Gunasekaran et al., 2014; Jabbour et al., 2015; Pallaro et al., 2015; Dubey et al., 2015b, 2016), the contributions from developing countries are still fewer.

Hence, the objective of the current special issue (SI) is to attract articles which are either conceptual, reviews, or empirical papers focussing on SBD from both a theoretical and managerial perspective.

The rest of this editorial has been organised as follows. The next section focuses on the review of submitted articles to this SI and the methods adopted for final selection of the articles. Section 3 deals with discussions in which we will draw the unique contributions of the present SI in terms of theory and managerial implications. Finally, we have concluded with limitations and further research opportunities.

## 2 Review of articles included in SI

In current SI, we have included six articles after multiple rounds of reviews. The articles that are finally included have addressed the reviewers' comments. Those articles that have failed to meet the strict ethical guidelines or rejected by the reviewers or failed to undertake major revisions were finally dropped from the current SI.

Singh and Behl have addressed one of the key issues related to SBD in India. Drawing upon the unified theory of acceptance (UTAUT), they proposed an environmentally sound technology framework (EST) and tested it using data collected using a structured questionnaire. The study makes an immense contribution to EST theories and has immense applications for farmers which constitute the bottom of pyramid (BOP).

Shibin et al. have undertaken an extensive review of literature to explore the research gaps in sustainable production and consumption (SPC) theories and identify multiple research directions which can help future researchers to take the SPC research to next level.

Bag and Anand have undertaken a survey-based research to explore the impact of innovation leadership and its impact on supply chain performance. The study has made

unique contributions to innovative leadership theories. Their article has provided numerous further research directions.

Mukherjee and Kumta have contributed to sustainability theory using a knowledge management (KM) tool. The current study has embraced a qualitative research method approach to identify enablers of KM and proposed a theoretical model. The article can be useful for policy makers who are struggling to use KM tools to achieve their SBD goals.

Singh et al. have undertaken survey-based research to address flexibility issues within sustainable development using dynamic capability theory. The manufacturing organisations in these days are hard pressed to address sustainable development issues due to environmental uncertainty including threats from supply uncertainty, demand uncertainty, technological uncertainty, political risk, rapid change in climate leading to natural disasters, shortage of skilled manpower's, regulatory bodies, and intense competition from neighbouring countries. The study offers contributes to manufacturing flexibility theory and offers specific guidelines to managers who focus on manufacturing flexibility related issues. The authors suggest mixed methods as a way forward for the study of flexibility in sustainable development.

Dixit et al. have attempted to address manufacturing sustainability using tribology theories to address wear and tear of machine parts. The findings of research can be highly useful to the automotive component manufacturers and other manufacturing industry which are facing similar challenges.

### **3 Contributions of the SI**

Our SI entitled 'Sustainable business development in India' makes several contributions to the extant literature and developing economies for theory and practice, as follows.

#### *3.1 Contributions towards theory*

The current SI makes several contributions to extant literature in several ways.

Firstly, Singh and Behl's contribution to EST literature is by extending the current UTAUT literature. The study has addressed the pressing concerns related to Indian farmers who have failed largely to embrace sustainable technologies due to multiple barriers. The current paper has addressed each barriers using survey-based research and offers multiple future research opportunities. Secondly, the paper by Shibin et al. has suggested multiple opportunities to researchers from both developed and undeveloped economies to use theory-based empirical research to advance the current SPC literature. Thirdly, Bag and Anand's contribution lies in understanding the impact of innovation leadership on sustainable supply chain performance. Mukherjee and Kumta, in the fourth paper in our SI, contribute to the studies of KM in sustainability context. They highlight the need for qualitative methods in the line of prior scholars (see Eisenhardt, 1989; Meredith, 1998; Voss et al., 2002; Barratt et al., 2011; Ketokivi and Choi, 2014; Dubey et al., 2015a) to generate comprehensive theories that help in explaining complex phenomena. The study of Singh et al. is an attempt to contribute to the existing debates related to manufacturing flexibility and sustainability, whereas the study of Dixit et al. analyses manufacturing sustainability using principles of tribology. Our SI, therefore,

builds on scholars' studies to argue for the use of mixed methods to advance extant literature on sustainable development.

### 3.2 Managerial implications

The findings of the six contributions to the current SI offer guidance to the managers who are involved in SBD-related issues. Though the current SI has attracted contributions from Indian scholars, however, the findings of these studies can be used for examining SBD related issues of other developing economies. The policy makers may find the current SI very useful to address the existing SBD needs of the country.

### 3.3 Limitations and further research opportunities

Though we believe that we have adopted rigorous process to finally accept six articles which attempts to contribute to the extant literature, we enumerate several limitations of our SI. Firstly, we have received good submissions but the submissions to this SI have failed to attract theory guided empirical articles. This is the current problems with almost every *Operations and Supply Chain Management Journal* with notable exceptions (see *Journal of Operations Management*, *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, *International Journal of Operations and Productions Management*, *Production and Operations Management*, and *Journal of Business Logistics*). The articles submitted in recent days lack guiding theories (see Ketchen and Hult, 2007). Hence, in future, we believe that articles which lack enough theoretical justifications may attract rejections.

Secondly, we have not attracted enough articles that use multiple case studies to generate comprehensive theories. For instance, we believe that the study by Mukherjee and Kumta could be extended using the lens by Ketokivi and Choi (2014).

Thirdly, we have not seen any submissions from scholars following a 'big data' approach. However, we firmly believe that current articles can be further extended by testing existing hypotheses or generating more comprehensive theories using big data (see, Dubey et al., 2015a) or build comprehensive models using unstructured data.

Notwithstanding, the aforementioned limitations, we firmly believe that the current articles can be further used as grounding papers to compare SBD practices of other developing economies.

## Acknowledgements

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