

## Editorial

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**Biographical notes:** Gagan Deep Sharma holds PhD in Management and Masters in Philosophy and Commerce. He has an academic experience of over 18 years. Currently, he is Associate Professor in the University School of Management Studies (USMS) of Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University (GGSIPU), New Delhi. He also holds the position of Associate Director, Office of International Affairs of the University. Current areas of his research interest include investment management, sustainable & holistic development, and value-based business. His recent publications are in *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews*, *Energy Policy*, *Current Issues in Tourism*, *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *Heliyon*, *Journal of Sustainable Finance and Investments*, *Environmental Science and Pollution Research*, and *Sustainability*, to name a few.

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## 1 Introduction

Sustainable consumption research has evolved substantially in recent times to investigate several interrelated issues such as sustainability, consumption patterns, environmental effect, and energy consumption. The idea of sustainable consumption contains a terminological conflict between the terms “sustainable” and “consumption” (Peattie and Collins, 2009). The literature is bifurcated into a prevalent weak strategy (focused on improving consumption efficiency, primarily through technology) and a much-needed robust approach (focussed on the consumption variations and level changes) (Bălan, 2021).

The need to focus on the environmental consequences of production and consumption is critical, especially in light of criticisms that the environment is a “secondary priority for the world community”. However, the lack of attention paid to the inequities that underpin present production and consumption patterns is at best problematic. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted in 2015 as a call for action to transform the world we live in. The United Nations suggested a change strategy based on global sustainability objectives achieved through national efforts; however, it often highlighted that the gap between sustainability goals and environmental realities is still widening in high-consumption nations. The twelfth UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 12), Responsible Consumption and Production, demands a fundamental shift in how we think about production and consumption standards, particularly among resource-poor countries (Partiti and Arcuri, 2021).

An emphasis on purchasing is also problematic from a sustainability perspective, as determining the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of any variation in

consumption requires knowledge of the product's overall environmental and social impacts throughout its production and consumption cycle (whether it is a physical good, an intangible service or the mixture of these two). Areas such as the influencing factors of sustainable purchasing and consumption (Bove et al., 2009; Chang and Watchravesringkan, 2018), consumer perceptions (Binnekamp and Ingenbleek, 2008; Normann et al., 2019), motivational drivers (Chekima et al., 2016), attitudes toward sustainable consumption (Edbring et al., 2016; Panzone et al., 2016), readiness to pay and its predictors (Michaud et al., 2017; Powell et al., 2019), and pro-environmental (or sustainable) purchasing behaviour (Goh and Balaji, 2016; Moser, 2016) have all been studied in relation to sustainable consumption and consumer behaviour.

After examining the literature on sustainable consumption and the contributions to this special issue, I highlight some key themes regarding sustainable consumption. According to sustainable consumption research, several distinct segments or social groups differ in their willingness to engage in the sustainable consumption agenda (Peattie and Collins, 2009). Continuity in consumption patterns is still tough to obtain, especially across specific market sectors as well as within individual behaviours.

This necessitates an understanding of consuming as a series of decisions and acts that consists of purchasing, product usage, and the disposal of any actual goods left over after use. In addition to having a limited view of consumption, the extant literature has a limited view of sustainable development as well. The environmental elements of sustainability have received far more attention than the social and economic dimensions, and even among the environmental dimensions, some consequences, such as energy consumption or carbon emissions, have dominated over others, such as biodiversity impact (Nghiem and Carrasco, 2016).

Despite all of the efforts by governments, non-governmental groups, and the business sector to identify and modify unsustainable behaviours, the behaviours are magnified by the global economy's continuous expansion (Assadourian, 2010). Consequently, the problems associated with unsustainable consumption are becoming more prevalent, necessitating a more deliberate, thorough, and systematic strategy to resolving them. This special issue offers the combined viewpoints of a broad collection of scholars on some of the most pressing research needs. Through this special issue, I bring together a variety of viewpoints on sustainable consumption that represented various elements of consumption, techniques, countries, policy initiatives, corporate intervention and disciplines, and research traditions.

## **2 Contributions to this special issue**

Table 1 summarises the papers published in this special issue.

Sindhu et al. map the drivers for the adoption of sustainable practice by entrepreneurs by using a three-step approach based on interpretive structural modelling (ISM). Initially, they conduct a literature search for identifying significant variables. Next, they survey 59 entrepreneurs to identify the relevancy of variables in the present study. Lastly, they take the expert opinion of four academic researchers and two industry people for authenticating and contextualising the relationship among variables, post which nine variables are finalised and analysed using the ISM approach. Their results reveal nine variables that have high to low driving power to impact entrepreneurs' sustainable business practices adoption.

**Table 1** Summary of papers in the special issue

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Research question</i>	<i>SDGS addressed</i>	<i>Data and sample</i>	<i>Analytical method</i>	<i>Findings and conclusions</i>
Sindhu, Dahiya, Siwach, Panghal	<p>Q1. What are the factors driving entrepreneurs to adopt sustainable business practices?</p> <p>Q2. How can be the adoption of sustainable business practices amongst entrepreneurs be promoted?</p>	<p>SDG 3: Good Health and well-being</p> <p>SDG 5: Gender Equality</p> <p>SDG 10: Reducing inequality</p>	<p>Three step approaches: Literature Screening, structured questionnaire based primary data collection and expert opinion.</p>	Interpretive structural modelling (ISM)	<p>Nine variables are discovered through interpretive structural modelling (ISM). The model posits that 'public funding in promoting sustainable business' can strategically influence the linkage variables and the dependent variable viz. 'attitude of entrepreneur'.</p>
Mathur and Singh	<p>Q1. What is the need for raising public awareness regarding plastic pollution in Indian?</p> <p>Q2. What are the government initiatives for plastic waste reduction and management in India?</p>	<p>SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production</p> <p>SDG 13: Combating climate change</p>	Sample of 108 Indian respondents of 18-67 years were surveyed	Empirical and analytical analysis	<p>Suggestions are presented for improving of the Indian framework associated to plastic waste based on the study of the global practices associated to plastic waste and analysis of data</p>
Sehrawat, Vij, Sehrawat	Q1. How are self-control, financial behaviours and financial well-being interrelated?	SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities	Sample of 172 respondents from National Capital Region (India) were surveyed.	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM)	<p>Savings behaviour, informed decision making and planning are three significant predictors of positive financial behaviour.</p>

**Table 1** Summary of papers in the special issue (continued)

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Research question</i>	<i>SDGS addressed</i>	<i>Data and sample</i>	<i>Analytical method</i>	<i>Findings and conclusions</i>
Pratibha, Bhayana, Neeraj	What is the socio-economic status, bank-linkages service, living conditions, and livelihood activities of the women self-help groups (SHG) members?	SDG 1: Zero poverty SDG 5: Gender Equality SDG 10: Reducing inequality	Sample of 160 women respondents from 40 self-help groups.	Percentage analysis using bar chart feature in SPSS	Results indicate that SHG membership led to the improvement and upliftment of lifestyle and socio-economic status of the members.
Pratibha, Bhayana, Neeraj	Q1. What is the usage pattern of social media platforms among youth? Q2. What are their attitudes towards sustainability in relation to the effects of social media and sustainability advertising?	SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities	Sample of 514 undergraduate and graduate students of age 15-25 years filled the online survey	Factor analysis; Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using SPCC and AMOS	Social media advertising has a positive influence on the behavioural intention and sustainable behaviour of young consumers.
Dash Aggarwal, Yadav, Singh	Q1. How women "negotiate" their workspace alongside men? Q2. How gender relations are built, sustained, and altered in the petrol pumps? Q3. What are the strategies adopted, and impediments faced by women to regulate themselves in this occupation?	SDG 5: Gender Equality	Semi-structured questionnaire, in-depth interviews, and a focus group discussion - 85 petrol pumps were surveyed, with women in the age bracket of 20-42 years	Qualitative approach complemented with secondary statistical data	The challenge of gender mainstreaming is multifaceted, and the results highlight on the importance of complementarities in ensuring improved access to women of erstwhile masculine workspaces
Gautam and Tiwari					

**Table 1** Summary of papers in the special issue (continued)

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Research question</i>	<i>SDGS addressed</i>	<i>Data and sample</i>	<i>Analytical method</i>	<i>Findings and conclusions</i>
Mer and Virdi	What are the various human resource challenges confronted by registered regional NGOs?	SDG 8: Decent work and Economic Growth	Exploratory design – Multiple case study method is used and the data is collected from 6 registered NGOs, by conducting one to one semi-structured interviews	Nvivo-12 pro software	Findings of the study provide strong evidence of salary, followed by employment insecurity, workload and employee turnover as major challenges confronted by registered NGOs
Verma, Bhatnagar and Singh	To what extent does environmental knowledge and awareness and openness to experience influence green purchase behaviour?	SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	Random Sampling technique with 160 respondents	Multiple Regression technique and Hayes Process	Findings suggest that environmental knowledge and awareness and openness to experience positively affect green purchase behaviour
Patel and Kumar	What are the theoretical perspectives on carbon accounting and it's reporting in financial statements on examining the carbon emissions sources, the procedure for measurement and disclosure?	SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy and SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	Qualitative Descriptive and Inductive approach that draws on the guidance notes of ICAI, GHG Protocol and ISO-14064	Accounting practices and reviewed on different sources of carbon emissions in industries	Companies can set targets by measuring carbon footprints, and put carbon management initiatives to reduce carbon emissions in the future
Srivastava, Rathore and Singh	What is the relevance of multi-channels with reference to the Indian scenario?	SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth and SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	5 steps of Engel-Kollat-Blackwell (EKB) model - using 41 questions comprising of 216 respondents across 6 Indian states	Multiple Regression technique and ANOVA	All the five stages of EKB consumer decision making, i.e., Problem recognition, Information search, Evaluation of alternatives, Purchase, After-purchase behaviour are significantly contributing to the overall decision-making process

Mathur and Singh discuss an international and national framework for managing plastic pollution by using empirical and analytical analysis. To fulfil their objective, they collect primary data with the help of a questionnaire containing 20 questions filled by a sample of 108 respondents in the bracket of the age group of 18–67 years, part of the urban population. The study calls for the need for a systematic approach as well as cooperation among all stakeholders such as consumers, producers, recyclers and waste managers. Additionally, waste management via waste reduction, segregation, reuse, recycling, and promoting sustainable use of resources shall promote an ethical circular economy that will further aid in fulfilling the SDGs.

Shrawat et al. investigate the linkage among financial behaviours, financial well-being and self-control by conducting an online survey in National Capital Region (India). Total 172 complete responses are tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). Their findings unveil a significant positive effect of self-control on both endogenous constructs: financial behaviours and financial well-being. Moreover, the direct and indirect influence of self-control and financial behaviour on financial well-being is also highlighted. The findings of this study are useful for policymakers and academicians who are responsible for the framing of the policy and providing knowledge to aid people in attaining positive financial well-being.

Pratibha et al. measure the socio-economic status, living conditions, bank linkages service, and livelihood activities of the SHGs members. A sample of a total of 160 SHGs members, selected from 40 newly formed (2014–2017) self-help groups (SHGs), working under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) belonging to Karnal district of Haryana (India), contribute to the primary data of this study. The findings reveal that after joining the SHGs by the rural area women, their lifestyle became better, increased awareness, better educational status, a better financial situation through participation in entrepreneurial activity, and increased women empowerment and decision-making ability inside and outside the house. Additionally, it is expected that the SHGs operational with government policies bring radical changes in the weaker sections of rural society.

Aggarwal et al. study the significance of social media and sustainability advertising on the sustainable behaviour of consumers aged from 15 to 25 years. A generalised linear model employing structural equation modelling is used to assess the answers of 514 undergraduate and graduate students. The results indicate that advertising on social media had a favourable impact on young customers' behavioural intention and sustainable behaviour. Based on the findings, the article offers insights into this population's knowledge of sustainability and particular design concepts for building effective social media campaigns that make more sustainable behaviours appealing to people of all viewpoints. The study indicates that sustainable marketing and social network support influence behavioural intentions to support sustainability. By using sustainable advertising to market their product (which is an unavoidable reality for a business), a corporation may empower society, improve sustainable behavioural intention, and ultimately impact sustainable consumer behaviour. As a result, this research study takes a more practical approach to understand sustainable behaviour as a whole.

Guatam and Tewari study a variety of combinations of the workforce in the petrol pumps in Delhi. The study elaborates on how women “negotiate” their workspace alongside men, how gender relations are built, sustained, and altered in the petrol pumps, strategies adopted, and impediments faced by women to regulate themselves in this

occupation. The methodology adopted is a semi-structured questionnaire, in-depth interviews, and a focus group discussion held at three kinds of petrol pumps – one, all women operated petrol pump, two, petrol pump where both women and men work simultaneously. The study indicates that the challenge of gender mainstreaming is multi-faceted, with several areas needing to be addressed. The organisation needs to reconsider its approach to close the perceived gender gaps in different work sectors, both from an organisational culture and a management perspective.

Mer and Viridi aim to gain insight into various human resource challenges confronted by registered regional NGOs. The study's novelty stems from three new insights i) unethical practice of taking back some part of salary by the employer from employees; ii) The intensity of job insecurity and salary issues were less in one of the NGOs that used the concept of social enterprise for supporting their mission; iii) A new trend is emerging, wherein employees of NGOs are seeking job opportunities (as salary does not commensurate with their efforts) in vacant positions in the societies, which are associate organisations of their funding agency/corporate donors' trust. The research employs an exploratory design. Multiple case study method is used. Data were collected from 6 registered regional NGOs, by conducting one to one semi-structured interviews. Data were analysed. The findings of the study provide strong evidence of salary, followed by employment insecurity, workload and employee turnover as major challenges confronted by registered NGOs.

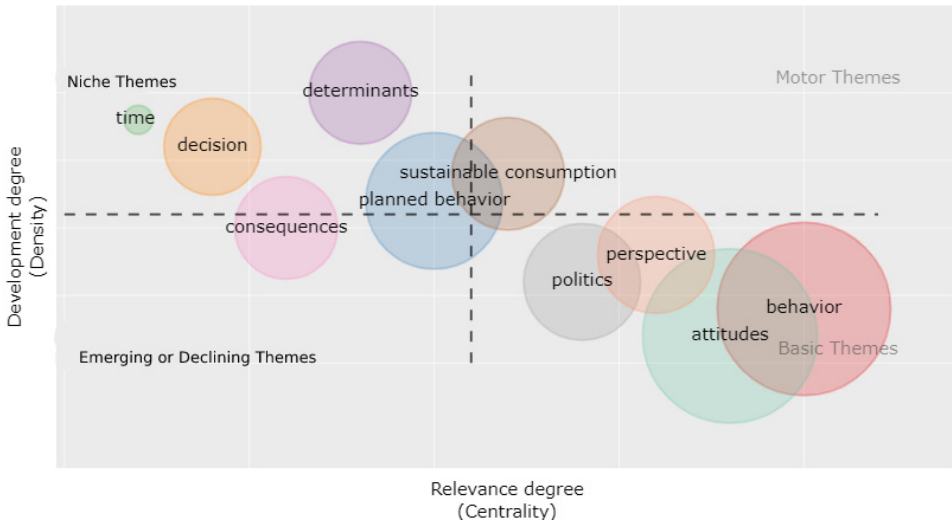
Verma et al. examine the influence of environmental knowledge and awareness and openness to experience on green purchase behaviour. The moderation effect on openness to experience on the relationship between environmental knowledge and awareness and green purchase behaviour is studied. The study also tries to predict the mediation effect of need for affiliation on the relationship between openness to experience and green purchase behaviour. The findings suggest that environmental knowledge and awareness and openness to experience positively affect green purchase behaviour. It was also shown by the results that need for affiliation does not mediate the relationship between openness to experience and green purchase behaviour.

Patel and Kumari study the relevance of focusing on carbon accounting and its reporting for a sustainable future. This paper participates in the debate on the importance of carbon accounting for a sustainable future and argues how carbon accounting can help better organise the use of energy, fuel, and transport to increase eco-efficiency in the atmosphere during measurement practice. The findings of the study have practical implications for stakeholders, corporations, accounting standard setters, and policymakers for the effective building of carbon measurement and reporting standards and managing corporates' carbon emissions.

Srivastava et al. study the significance of the multi-channels with reference to Indian scenario, by employing the 5 steps of Engel-Kollat-Blackwell (EKB) model of consumer decision making process to identify the applicability of multi-channel using 41 questions comprising of 216 respondents across 6 states to India to identify the relevance of each of the channels using statistical findings and critical values. The findings confirm that all the five stages of EKB consumer decision making, i.e., Problem recognition, Information search, Evaluation of alternatives, Purchase, After-purchase behaviour significantly contribute to the overall decision-making process.

### 3 Research opportunities

**Figure 1** Thematic map



To better understand the current status of literature on the themes covered in this special issue, I present a thematic map of the existing scholarship in the area (Figure 1). The strategic diagram categorises the themes based on centrality and density (Cobo et al., 2015). Centrality denotes the degree of interaction between the themes, and density measures the strength of internal ties within a theme (Aparicio et al., 2019). The strategic diagram displays four quadrants presenting four types of themes – motor theme; the peripheral/ niche theme; emerging or disappearing theme and the basic theme (Bamel et al., 2020; Rodríguez-Soler et al., 2020).

Attitudes (values, materialism and antecedents), behaviour (consumption, green and ethics), politics (anti-consumption, choice and policy) and perspective (cognition, evolution and framework) fall under the category of basic themes, indicating that the strength of its ties with the other themes is well developed over the years, which is also evident from the size of the circles, however, scholarly inquiries into these themes are still required. Sustainable development requires considering all ecosystem services, which are a function of both the quantity and quality of the resources involved. The level of wealth, institutional infrastructure and social safety may make the goal of environmental sustainability more attainable, but with the changes in policies, behaviour, perception and attitude in light of the ignorance, inertia and vested interests might make it difficult to achieve (OECD, 2001). There is a need to create a policy environment that supports long term basic research through funding, increase research on ecosystems and the long-term impact of the human activity on the environment (Bansal et al., 2020).

Alternatively, most of the part of the theme - consequences (model and motivation) fall in the emerging or declining themes quadrant indicating that is relatively high on density but low on centrality. The decisions we make and actions we take today will have momentous consequences for future generations. Restoring our planet is fundamental to sustainable development (Sharma et al., 2021). However, the forests are being cut down,



biological diversity is declining, and terrestrial ecosystems are being degraded at alarming rates, with profound consequences for human survival and well-being (United Nations, 2021).

Other varied themes namely, time, decision (labour, property and resistance), determinants (discourse and inequality) and planned behaviour (pro-environmental behaviour, ethical decision-making, habit and social responsibility), appear in the top-left quadrant of the thematic map indicating the peripheral theme. The size of these themes denotes the number of publications, indicating that these are very focused themes with publications studying the synergy between sustainable development, public policies and corporate interventions. In the context of the greenhouse gas emissions, the divergence between past responsibilities for greenhouse gas emissions (mainly in industrialised countries), future pressures and vulnerability to climate impacts (in some of the poorer developing countries) makes issues of equity between countries central for climate policies.

There is a need to strengthen the coherence between trade, investment, environmental and social policies by encouraging the use of environmental and social codes of conduct in the corporate sector, providing supportive regulatory and institutional framework for private sector activity comprising of the multinational enterprises, corporate governance and bribery (OECD, 2001). Relevance of the research is determined by the increasing influence of the sustainable development values on the consumer behaviour and the lack of research-based features and models of sustainable consumer behaviour in different countries.

The global community is at a critical moment in its pursuit of the SDGs. The current COVID-19 crisis is threatening decades of developmental gains, further delaying the urgent transition to greener, more inclusive economies (Sharma et al., 2020). Government and policymakers have an important responsibility in setting up the conditions necessary to encourage changes in behaviour that favour sustainable development and provide access to the information needed for effective participation. In organising this special issue, I identify a number of research opportunities and methods in this emerging and rapidly maturing field:

- The need for new investments in data and information infrastructure, as well as the human capacity to get ahead of the crisis and trigger earlier response
- To conduct qualitative/quantitative studies while exploring the purpose-driven and work-intensified non-profit organisations
- There is a need for a more contextualised governance, decentralising power and offering genuine participation to support the engagement of marginal communities in the management of their natural resources
- Policy commitments towards financing for R&D, especially in developing economies, need to continue and be strengthened
- There is a need to strengthen the social protection systems and public services (including health and well-being systems, education, sanitation, and other basic services); creating fiscal space in developing countries; taking a green-economy approach, and transitioning to sustainable food systems
- In the case of the post-crisis era, there is a need for future research to develop and propose framework and management strategies for guiding the entrepreneurs

This special issue addresses the theoretical and empirical issues related to recent developments and new directions integrating sustainable development, policies, and corporate interventions. Papers draw on the recent theoretical and empirical research that explores the reasons, importance, and implications of the relevant policies and corporate interventions aimed at achieving sustainable development goals. I hope this issue will contribute comprehensively to this rapidly growing disciplinary area and be relevant to academics, practitioners, and policymakers.

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