

Concept Note: Sustainability, Innovation and Technology: Emerging Perspectives in a Technology-Driven World

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Sustainability has recently emerged as a central pillar of organizational philosophy and societal progress. As the environment has become more dynamic, a new set of environmental, ethical and societal challenges have emerged that need immediate attention. Simultaneously, rapid advancement in technology and the advent of data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) have fundamentally transformed how organizations operate, innovate, and interact with stakeholders. Pertaining to these major shifts, a widespread adoption of the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) has happened.

This volume brings together a diverse set of scholarly contributions that examine the intersection of sustainability, digital transformation, and responsible management practices. With a major stress on the Indian context across the National Education Policy (NEP), Unified Payment Systems (UPI), and emerging digital consumer platforms, the volume offers insights that are globally relevant. The papers collectively explore how technological innovation can be aligned with sustainability goals while addressing challenges related to ethics, governance, and human well-being.

Primarily, the conference aimed to offer a platform for research that enhances the understanding of sustainability in the digital age. Therefore, the proceedings intend to present interdisciplinary research at the intersection of sustainability, technology, and business. The papers highlight the role of AI and digital transformation in advancing sustainable practices across sectors, examine the changes driven by digital innovation, and offer actionable insights for academia, industry practitioners, and policymakers.

The proceedings are organized into six major thematic areas, each reflecting a critical dimension of sustainability and responsible management. The theme on sustainability, ESG and corporate responsibility includes studies that extend the scope of sustainability and show how the sustainability principles are integrated into varied institutional contexts such as religious and education systems. Bhattar and Patre's paper demonstrates the evolution of sustainability-oriented discourse in cultural institutions through a bibliometric analysis. The insights emphasize the challenges of financial transparency, digital transformation, and heritage preservation, underscoring the need for sustainable, inclusive governance frameworks. The future studies must capture the strategies for conservation of temples and meeting these challenges. Mirja and Alam explored AI-based education under NEP 2020 to emphasize the transformative potential of digital technologies in fostering inclusive and sustainable learning ecosystems. Particularly, there is a significant association between NEP 2020 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) particularly SDG 4 and SDG 10 that advocate for access to quality education and equality. The findings demonstrate that AI-based digital education can enhance equitable access for marginalized populations. Collectively, these contributions illustrate the transition from symbolic commitments to sustainability toward data-driven, strategic implementation.

The theme on sustainable innovation and entrepreneurship includes papers on the dynamic landscape of financial innovation and its implications for sustainability. The study by Kshirsagar,

Sharma, Dadhich and Rout show the negative sides of digitization. The findings show how lack of awareness, financial discipline and negligence cause financial mismanagement in context of the UPI payments. The transition from cash-based to digital payment systems, particularly through UPI, has significantly enhanced financial inclusion and efficiency. However, this transformation also introduces challenges related to financial mismanagement, user negligence, and systemic vulnerabilities. Dhindhra, Arora and Alagappar assessed the investment behavior of Gen Z and the findings demonstrate a growing influence of digital platforms, financial literacy, and technological familiarity on their financial decision-making. These insights underscore the need for responsible innovation frameworks that balance accessibility with accountability, ensuring the long-term sustainability of digital financial ecosystems.

AI and data analytics play a prominent role in improving the efficiency and establishing trust in the system as shown by the papers in the theme of digital transformation, AI and sustainable systems. Salim et al. highlight the use of data-driven AI systems for innovative and sustainable business solutions. In the industrial domain, machine learning-based fault detection in wafer sensors demonstrates how AI can optimize operational reliability and reduce resource wastage. Vohra and Purohit demonstrate how advanced AI tools can be used for assessing consumer sentiments to build trust in the digital financial platforms. The use of sentiment analysis on Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) application reviews provides valuable insights into consumer perceptions and highlights the importance of user feedback as a tool for improving service design and governance. These studies collectively emphasize the role of intelligent systems in promoting sustainability through predictive capabilities, efficiency gains, and enhanced decision-making.

The contributions under the theme of sustainable operations, supply chain and logistics exemplify the integration of sustainability into core operational processes. Singh and Deogaonkar use case based analysis to show how predictive analytics, resource optimization, and automation can result in quantifiable carbon footprints and reduced operational expenses. They also highlight that fair and ethical systems are needed for a positive impact on the global sustainability objectives. This exploration of AI-driven sustainability practices highlights how advanced technologies can redefine global operational standards by improving efficiency, minimizing environmental impact, and enabling circular economy models. Reepu, Ozen and Taneja delve into the critical determinants of green information and communication technologies such as organizational readiness, technological infrastructure, and policy support and their application to improve the operational efficiency and sustainable development. This theme reinforces the notion that sustainability must be embedded within operational strategies rather than treated as an auxiliary concern.

Human capital emerges as a central driver of sustainable transformation in organizations. The studies in the theme of human capital, HRM, and sustainable workplaces examine how digital and AI technologies are redefining the sustainable human-centric management practices in organizations. Bhokare et al. adopted a bibliometric approach and established a conceptual linkage between HR analytics, ESG integration, and organizational performance. The findings highlight the growing importance of HR analytics in achieving organizational goals. Panda and Swamy investigated how employees' intentions to adopt artificial intelligence drive innovative work behavior in support of resource-conserving innovations and digitalized green practices in information technology companies. Furthermore, the redefinition of HR practices around employee well-being, ethical considerations, and digital work environments highlights the need for inclusive and resilient workplace models as shown by Lanjewar et al. These contributions advocate a balanced approach that integrates technological efficiency with employee welfare and organizational ethics.

The theme of sustainable marketing, consumers, and society addresses the emerging dynamics of consumer behavior and market practices in the digital era. Gajikunta and Jonna establish a positive connection between sustainable practices and ethical perceptions. The customers perceive ethical products, fair pricing, and eco-initiatives in retail favorably. At the same time, the

alignment between consumer expectations and retailers' sustainability practices remains a critical concern, particularly in the context of Indian supermarkets. The findings suggest a gap between consumer demand for sustainable products and retailers' strategies. Furthermore, the study by Arpita et al. demonstrates the importance of a human-centric approach for the efficient use of trading apps and for retail investors' decision-making. While there is a shift towards technology-enabled financial participation, the critical role of human mediation cannot be ignored. In the service context, AI chatbots can help build trust and stronger brand relationships with customers. The study of Chelladurai shows the role of AI-powered chatbots in shaping omnichannel customer experiences and highlights the potential of technology to humanize digital interactions and strengthen brand engagement. Across all the themes, certain overarching insights emerge. AI serves as a key enabler of sustainability across sectors, and the digital transformations are reshaping the behaviors. While data-driven approaches are central to the sustainable outcomes, trust, ethics and governance are critical to the responsible use of technology. Overall, the papers reflect a paradigm shift in how sustainability is conceptualized and implemented in the contemporary era. No longer confined to environmental concerns alone, sustainability now encompasses technological innovation, social responsibility, and ethical governance.