ABSTRACT

Globalization and industrialization have motivated industries to adapt their sustainable practices, in addition to the concerns of environmental degradation and resource scarcity. Along with the societal and environmental pressures, to satisfy the stakeholders and to gain the license to operate, these sustainability practices became mandatory in the current realm. Hence, in the last decade firms have begun to integrate these sustainable strategies in their production, operations, and management. In recent years, the sustainability practices are integrated into supply chain management. The supply chain management became a hot research topic due to its momentous impact over the firm’s economic value. Ineffective supply chain management leads to chaos throughout the whole supply chain, which further deteriorates the firm. Due to these considerations, researchers seek to improve the efficiency of the supply chain with various strategies and, as a result, now the supply chain is extended with sustainable strategies. Even though the supply chain management includes many activities, sourcing gained more attention among the supply chain practitioners. Since generally more than half of the initial investment of any firm is spent only in sourcing operations, ineffective sourcing strategies will suppress the firm.

In primitive days of sourcing, firms only considered the basic qualities and mainly concentrated on the economic profit from the
suppliers. But in the recent business realm, examining only the economic concern is never sufficient for the long run of any firm. Instead, they need to manage the environmental degradation and get the societal support to stay alive in the market. Many branded industries in both developed and developing nations were washed out from the market due to many unethical issues; hence, ethical activities are also needed to sail in a safe boat on the sea of globalization. While considering all of these aspects, the supplier selection process gets evolved and as a result of this evolution, the green supplier selection came into play. This green supplier selection starts with the environmental concern of the supplier in addition with the economic concern. But it is not enough in the current competitive business edge, because as mentioned earlier, the societal support and ethical concerns are the main strategies to stay alive in the global market. Even after the integration of green supplier selection, there is still something more needed than that which helps the ethical and societal concern. A firm needs to consider qualities such as environmental conservation and economic profit. In this urge, the researchers integrated the sustainable supplier selection within the scope. While considering sustainable strategies, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and triple bottom line (TBL) approaches gained more attention among researchers and practitioners. But researchers tended to shift their focus on CSR strategy rather than on the TBL, because the CSR addresses all the dimensions of sustainability. Hence, some researchers are engaged with the integration of CSR in the supply chain context, but only a very few studies exhibit the CSR based supplier selection in the scenario of a developing country.
Hence, this study aims to address this gap by achieving sustainability in supply chain through the integration of CSR in supplier selection by selecting the suppliers based on the rating of CSR issues. This study considers India as a case origin where the CSR issues are quite common. Indian industries are striving hard to implement sustainable strategies in their operations due to various known and hidden reasons like poor governance, less transparency, lack of knowledge, etc. The success of CSR implementation depends on various factors, and one of the main factors is economical support if developed nations are to move forward with various supporting amendments. Hence, this study considers Indian application sectors for the study.

To analyse and evaluate the CSR issues, this study involves three work phases and they are:

- WP 1 – Analysing the interrelationships and interdependencies among the CSR issues.

- WP 2 – Evaluating the interdependencies and interrelationship between CSR issues in supplier selection.

- WP 3 – Evaluating the essential CSR issues and establishing a priority ranking among the common CSR issues in supplier selection.

With the assistance of these three work phases, the aim of the research is achieved. In all the three work phases, a model framework is
proposed and validated with a case industry for analysing and evaluating the CSR issues. The common CSR issues are collected from various sources like the literature review and the notions of technical experts. Once the common CSR issues are collected, then they are analysed and evaluated based on the responses from the industrial or purchasing managers of the case industry. For analysing the interrelationship between the common CSR issues and for identifying the most influential CSR issues, interpretive structural modelling (ISM) is used in WP I. To evaluate the CSR issues, the AHP is used but the model is purely based on the decision maker’s opinion. Hence, there is a chance of uncertainty and to tackle these uncertainties, the fuzzy approach is integrated with AHP to increase the accuracy of the results and to decrease the vagueness as mentioned earlier in the remaining work phases.

On the whole, this study serves many scientific and societal contributions which will enable the purchasing managers to select their suppliers based on these CSR issues. This kind of CSR based supplier selection increases the reputation of the local firm in the global supply chain which, in turn, increases trade with multinational companies which further results in a growth in the nation’s revenue. This study also addresses the main issues such as human rights, labor rights etc. which helps to increase job opportunities and to decrease the mental pressure of workers which is a major problem in an Indian context.