

Indigenous communities and sustainable development: A review and research agenda

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Abstract

This article examines the role of indigenous communities in promoting social change and accomplishing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Using an integrative review, we offer an unbiased assessment of indigenous communities and SDGs. We contend that indigenous communities' contribution to SDGs enhances technological innovations (via top-down or bottom-up approaches) and fosters social change. Our study identifies six themes: economy, ecology, livelihood, socio-demographic factors, sustainable development, and politics, policies, and partnerships. For each theme and SDG, we pinpoint research gaps and propose potential directions. Given the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, joint initiatives to empower indigenous people, preserve their rights, and include them in decision-making processes are critical. This study emphasizes the significance of using and strategizing indigenous knowledge in the face of environmental and other changes, thus advancing indigenous management theory. The article concludes by offering theoretical, practical, and policy implications for researchers, entrepreneurs, and the government.

KEYWORDS

appropriate technology, indigenous communities, indigenous knowledge, SDG, social change, sustainable development

1 | INTRODUCTION

While comprising only 5% of the global population, indigenous communities represent nearly 15 percent of the world's impoverished individuals (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2019). These communities are characterized by unique indigenous cultures, values, and beliefs, maintaining their kin-based structures rather than adopting market-oriented approaches (Altman, 2001). Central to their way of life is a strong

emphasis on community orientation, resource sharing, and cooperation (Schaper, 1999).

Indigenous communities hold a pivotal role in ensuring the sustainable development of the Earth's land, ecosystems, and biodiversity. In the contemporary era marked by globalization, urbanization, and the preservation of cultural identities in the face of dominance, indigenous peoples play a critical role in cultural survival and revitalization (Lawhon & Murphy, 2012; Rock et al., 2009). The active involvement of indigenous communities is

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instrumental in the achievement of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Nonetheless, their exclusion and marginalization pose a direct threat to the fundamental objective of the 2030 Agenda, which aims to leave no one behind. Therefore, it is incumbent upon researchers to remain abreast of the latest developments in this field of study. This paper's primary focus is on exploring how the expertise and perspectives of indigenous communities can contribute to the realization of the SDGs. This exploration is accomplished through an integrative review of 194 research papers sourced from the Web of Science database.

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda has led to countries around the world pledging to uphold sustainable development (Talan & Sharma, 2019). Sustainable development is the kind of economic development that promotes equality, social justice, and environmental preservation (Duhaylungsod, 2013; G. D. Sharma, et al., 2021). The key to tackling the fundamental problems of the 2030 Agenda is a fair representation of multiple knowledge systems, including scientific and conventional knowledge (Magni, 2017). Community development is the central element in the realization of sustainable development (Yu, 2018). For example, farming communities acquire knowledge through generational transformation, observation, experimentation, and trial and error methods, which have proven successful over the centuries in responding to development challenges (Mehta et al., 2010). For several centuries, indigenous communities have established the experience of living in harmony with the environment through living sustainably (Bansal et al., 2022). Due to their association with nature and natural resources, indigenous communities act as a catalyst for meeting SDGs. Indigenous knowledge and techniques are valuable and provide potential solutions to challenges such as climate change and natural resource management, while promoting food systems that provide healthy nutrition for all (Thiede & Gray, 2020; Yap & Watene, 2019).

The importance of indigenous communities' work and their role in attaining SDGs cannot be overlooked. We have gained valuable insights into how these communities can assist organizations and what those organizations can learn from these communities. Indigenous communities have much to teach about the ethics and application of sustainable development. Collaborating with these communities contributes to the achievement of SDGs by involving all stakeholders holistically and promoting the prosperity of all, causing organizations to see the advantages of a holistic approach over a narrowly focused one (Bansal, Jain, et al., 2020; Talan & Sharma, 2020). Most businesses believe their method of thinking is the only correct way, and highly value numbers, individual accomplishments, and short-term results. Trust building, collective procedures, and long-term, multi-generational benefits are

seen as less significant. Indigenous communities, on the other hand, stress the importance of self-governance, self-sufficiency, short-term and long-term needs, collective welfare, and equitable and trust-based interactions and collaborations.

We add to the current body of knowledge in the following ways. First, the study identifies the prominent and emerging research themes (presented in section 3) in the domain of indigenous communities' role in achieving SDGs. In doing this, the study maps the existing knowledge in the field to boost its further advancement. Second, it presents the thematic, contextual, and methodological propositions (traditional content analysis, presented in section 4) from the reviewed research papers representing the impact of indigenous communities on SDGs. Third, it promotes the belief that indigenous communities' contributions to SDGs may help complement technological advances and social transformation.

This work provides substantial additions to the current knowledge base in various ways. It includes a thorough examination of publications, not solely in terms of their content but also of their social, intellectual, and conceptual elements (as explained in section 4). The results of the study have identified six themes in the domain of indigenous communities and SDGs—namely, economy; ecology; livelihood; socio-demographic factors; sustainable development/conservation; and politics, policies, and partnerships—and suggested various future research propositions. These entities can leverage the study's outcomes as a practical and evidence-based guide for policy development and implementation (as outlined in section 5). The study delivers genuine and pertinent information that can inform the formulation of sound policies, the establishment of frameworks, and the initiation of programs aimed at supporting indigenous populations.

The research is organized as follows: Section 1 introduces the paper, Section 2 elucidates the study's theoretical framework, Section 3 delineates the research methodology, Section 4 presents the results and findings, Section 5 furnishes the discourse and outlines avenues for future research, while Section 6 concludes the paper.

2 | THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The present study focuses on “indigenous management theory” (Bacharach, 1989; Redding & Witt, 2015). Indigenous management theory serves as a superior facilitating mechanism that directs managerial conduct and nurtures the development of organizational structures, strategies, and formal integration procedures. In essence, it represents the shared cognitive framework among top-level executives for overseeing their enterprises. (Redding &

Witt, 2015). Akpor-Robaro (2018) opines that it is a management theory, which is developed for resolving management issues that are based on a particular environment, context, or society. This study contributes to the theory by highlighting the importance of incorporating the knowledge of indigenous communities into any adaptation and resource management strategies in response to environmental and other changes. Furthermore, the study enables organizations to strategize adaptation plans that are in line with indigenous communities' interests, abilities, and needs.

Economic development is a challenge in developing countries, especially with the focus on inclusive development. Indigenous communities can play a vital role in guiding economic growth and improving collective well-being. Indigenous communities help break the cycle of poverty, offering young people a brighter future with meaningful work, housing, water, education, and preservation of their culture. Involving indigenous communities is crucial to achieving mass economic transformation, as technology facilitates new relationships, value chains, and societal changes (Fung & Wong, 2017).

Indigenous knowledge systems are rooted in specific cultures and regions, and are passed down orally or through practical application. Indigenous knowledge is the result of a society's interaction with daily existence and forms the basis for local decision-making in areas like water management, agriculture, healthcare, and education. The technologies that are essential for addressing these community needs must be guided by principles like minimal capital, local resources, labor-intensive approaches, adaptability, and environmental sustainability.

To bridge the technology gap and enable small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) based in developing countries to compete globally, high-level technologies must be delivered and integrated effectively (Yadav & Bansal, 2020). Indigenous management principles like *blat* (Russia), *guanxi* (China), *jugaad* (India), and *ubuntu* (South Africa) play a crucial role. *Blat* utilizes informal connections to navigate formal regulations in Russia. It is often seen as a legal way to get around inefficient and inflexible formal regulations and processes. Thus, what may seem ineffective, unsuitable, or even unlawful from a Western viewpoint may be seen as effective, proper, and acceptable from a local one (Rodgers et al., 2019). *Guanxi* relies on personal connections for successful business relationships in China. It aids in reducing transaction costs caused by information asymmetry, mistrust, animosity, and confrontational acts, as well as overcoming limits imposed by a lack of formal institutions (Reynoso et al., 2015). *Jugaad* represents frugal innovation and adaptation in resource-constrained environments in India. The works

on *jugaad* and sustainable development mostly relate to green supply chain management (A. Sharma & Iyer, 2012), firms' growth (Shepherd et al., 2020), and cultural heritage (Rego & Corradi, 2018). *Ubuntu* emphasizes community cooperation and decision-making in African philosophy. Collaboration and standard protocols are necessary at local, national, and international levels to integrate technology with indigenous knowledge. The extant literature on *ubuntu* mainly emphasizes education (Kayira, 2015) and public health or well-being (van Norren, 2020).

To transition technologically toward sustainability, innovation, design, and engineering must be integrated with decision-making and behavioral change at individual, social network, workplace, and community levels. "Smart" technology can support this approach, informing policies that accommodate both social change and technological development (Battiste, 2002; Magni, 2017).

Indigenous peoples' strong connections to their lands and resources influence their way of life and knowledge systems. To harness indigenous knowledge, appropriate technologies should be developed by integrating indigenous principles. These technologies can contribute to sustainable development by addressing social needs and benefiting the entire community.

3 | DATA AND METHODOLOGY

In this study, we adhere to recognized procedures for conducting a systematic literature review, as delineated by prior research (Donthu et al., 2021; Kraus et al., 2020; Paul et al., 2021; Tranfield et al., 2003; Yadav & Bansal, 2020). A comprehensive account of the methodology and the specific procedures employed for data search and retrieval is provided in the subsequent sections.

3.1 | Data search, retrieval, and sample

The research data was sourced from the widely used Thomson Reuters Web of Science (WoS) index, known for its comprehensive social science coverage and influential publications (Li et al., 2010). The search was executed on April 11, 2023, employing a Boolean operator and a set of specified keywords, such as "(SDG, sustainable development, triple bottom line) AND (aboriginal, indigenous) AND (group, organization)." This search encompassed all available research published up to and including 2023, and it was restricted to peer-reviewed journal articles in the English language exclusively. This stringent refinement process resulted in the identification of 194 research articles (as indicated in Figure 1), which were subsequently exported in a ".txt" file format. This file contained

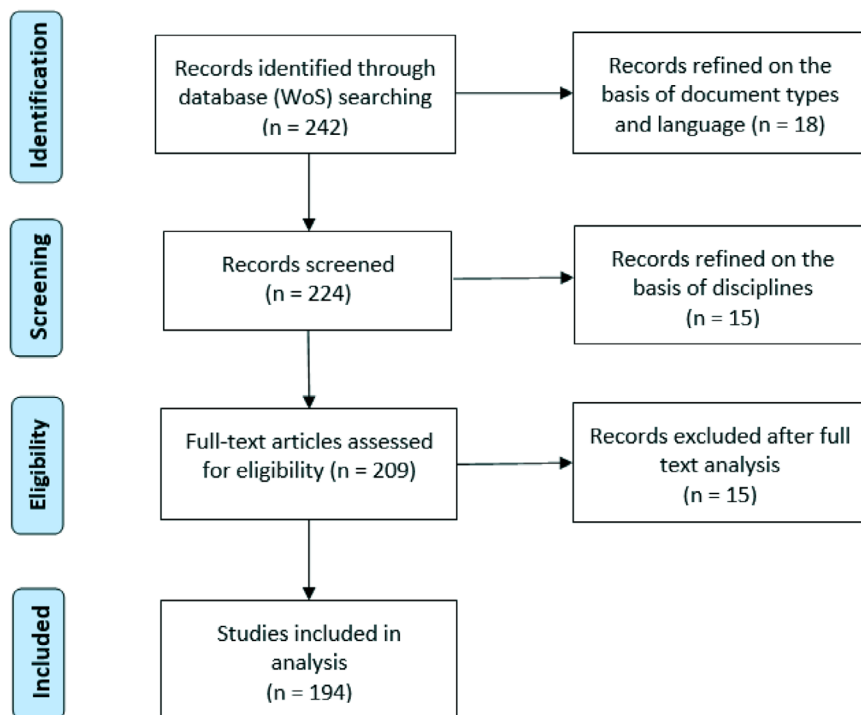


FIGURE 1 Data search and retrieval.

comprehensive details, including the article titles, author information, affiliations, countries, abstracts, keywords, publication sources, citation data, references, and other pertinent information.

3.2 | Bibliometric methodology and data analysis

This study endeavors to address the research inquiry through an integrative review approach, which combines elements of bibliometric review, systematic review, and narrative review, thereby making a substantial contribution to the existing body of literature (Donthu et al., 2021; Kraus et al., 2020). To this end, our integrative review is unique as it employs both conventional content analysis and scientific bibliometric methodologies to provide a more comprehensive and unbiased assessment of indigenous communities and SDGs. This research encompasses an examination of factors such as authorship, geographic origin, citation frequency, and other variables to scrutinize overarching research trends. To gather and assess document data, we employed the Bibliometrix R package software (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). R, known for its versatility and statistical capabilities, is an open-source software environment.

As a result, the bibliometric analysis (quantitative approach) aids in visualizing the whole area of indigenous communities and SDG research in terms of its historical evolution, theoretical underpinnings, and emerging

topics (Garfield et al., 1965). Our primary objective was to investigate the sources of information, citations, and publications. This distinctive review approach enabled us to meticulously chart how diverse disciplinary literature strands have investigated the connection between indigenous communities and SDGs. The methodological aim is to analyze the sources of information, citations, and publications. Our comprehensive review method allows us to thoroughly explore the various disciplinary literature strands' exploration of the connection between Indigenous Communities and SDGs.

Bibliometric analysis, a widely employed research methodology in the realm of library and information science, leverages statistical tools for the scrutiny of academic studies (Kraus et al., 2020). Using this methodology, we constructed the intellectual, social, and conceptual frameworks for our substantial research endeavor. Our quantitative analysis encompassed an overview of annual publications and citations through the analysis of Web of Science (WoS) records, while we explored the source impact using the bibliometrix R package. The qualitative study concentrated on identifying conceptual themes and trends, intellectual structures pertaining to the impact of specific works on the academic community, and social structures pertaining to individual author partnerships and international collaborations across nations. For a visual representation of our methodological approach, please refer to Figure 2.

Threshold Criteria: Louvain clustering algorithm is used to generate figures, which display normalized

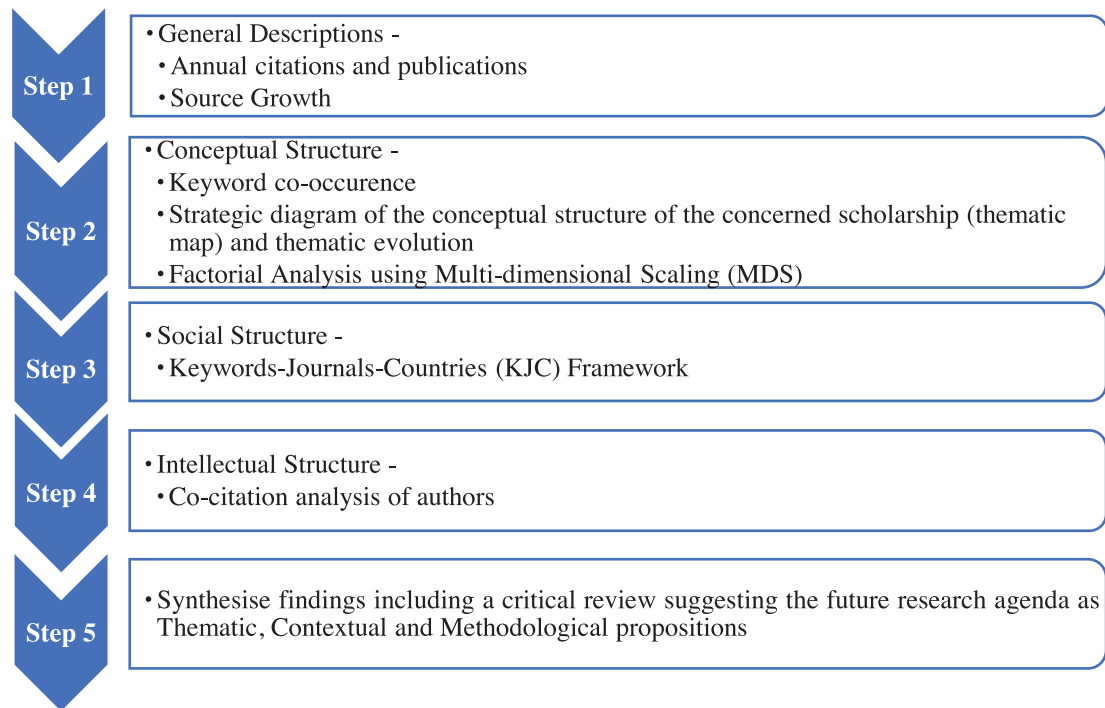


FIGURE 2 Methodological flowchart for the review.

associations (De Meo et al., 2011). The cluster diagrams show variability in the minimum threshold for edges, co-occurrence, co-citation, collaboration, and nodes, influenced by keywords, authors, and countries.

3.3 | Descriptive analysis

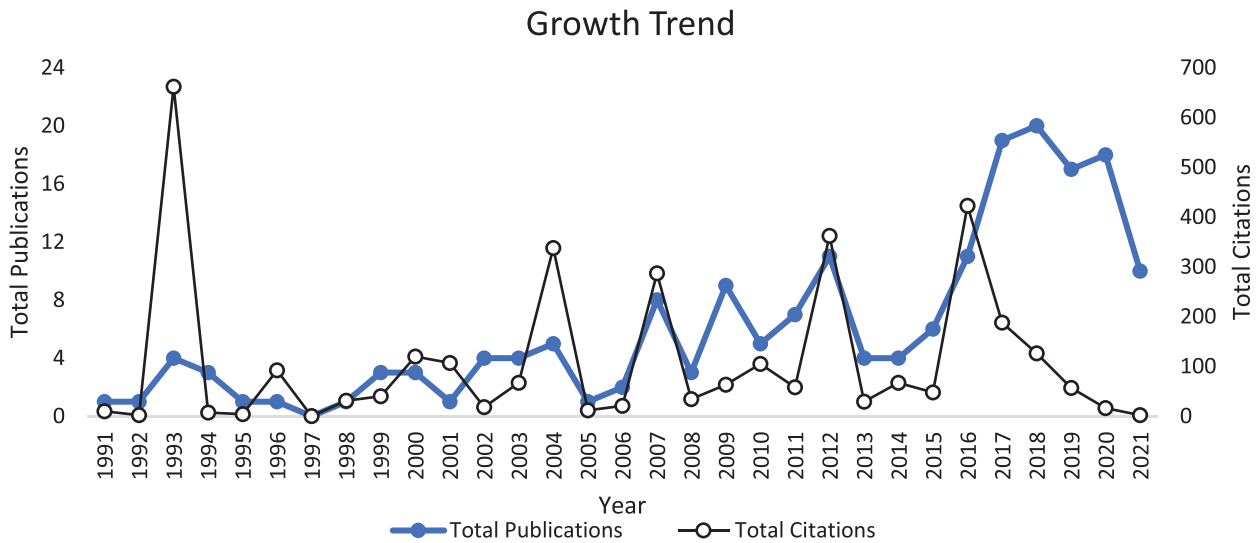
Figure 3 illustrates the annual count of publications and their corresponding citations. The graph portrays a consistent upward trajectory in the total number of publications each year. However, when examining the total count of citations per year, there is a noticeable fluctuation. Notably, the year 1993 saw the highest number of citations, reaching 662, whereas the year 1997 recorded no citations. The study by Gadgil (1993), garnered the highest number of citations (662) across all databases. These findings indicate that research in the realm of Indigenous Communities with a specific focus on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is gradually transitioning towards a “growth” phase. This is evident in the emergence of studies exploring this area in novel contexts and with a particular emphasis on distinct SDGs, thus indicating diversification and expansion in research directions. Nevertheless, it is essential to note that the rate of research production is not exceptionally high, and it appears to be scattered, indicating the potential for future researchers to delve into various aspects of the subject. In this context, the results underscore the significance of systematic reviews, such

as the one proposed in this study, to provide a comprehensive and organized assessment of the existing body of literature.

Figure 4 illustrates the progressive increase in the publication of articles within this research domain across the top 10 journals over the past three decades. Additionally, it provides insight into the journals’ impact, as gauged by their h, g, and m indices. The h-index, a metric at the author level, quantifies an author’s scholarly influence by counting the number of their publications cited at least that many times by other authors (Hirsch, 2005); The g-index, on the other hand, identifies the largest number such that the top g papers collectively amass g^2 or more citations (Egghe, 2006). The m-index, also known as the m-quotient, measures the median number of citations and is expressed as h/n , where n signifies the number of years elapsed since the author’s first paper was published (Bornmann et al., 2008). Among these journals, *Sustainability* stands out at the top, with nine publications, underscoring its prominence in this field. Furthermore, *Resources Policy* emerges as the journal with the highest count of citations in this particular research domain.

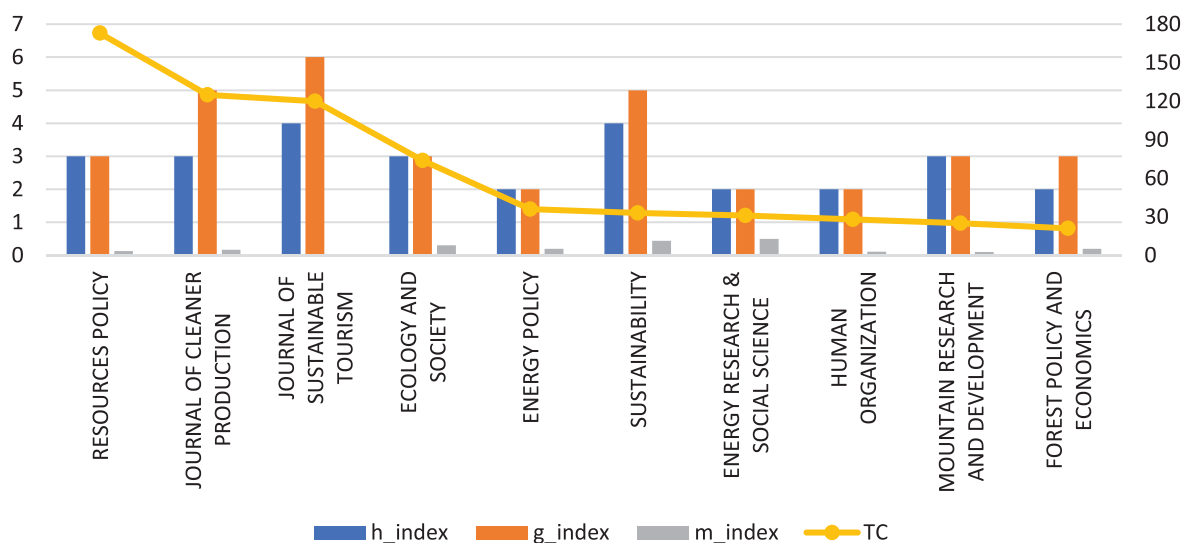
4 | RESULTS AND FINDINGS

In this section, we delve into the findings and insights derived from the integrative review of research papers and articles sourced from the database.



Note: Total publications are the total number of articles published in that year. Total citations are the total count of citations of all the articles in that year.

FIGURE 3 Annual citations and publications. Note: Total publications are the total number of articles published in that year. Total citations are the total count of citations of all the articles in that year.



Note: Here, h_g_m index are measured on the left axis whereas TC (is the total citations of the reviewed research papers in every journal) is measured on right axis.

FIGURE 4 Source Growth. Note: Here, h_g_m index are measured on the left axis whereas TC (is the total citations of the reviewed research papers in every journal) is measured on right axis.

4.1 | Conceptual structure of the publications

To gain a more intricate understanding of the specific research domain, we have adopted a network approach, as advocated by previous studies (Aria & Cuccurullo,

2017; Bamel et al., 2020). Within this section, we present strategic visual representations, including the keyword co-occurrence map, the thematic map, and the application of multi-dimensional scaling (MDS) in factorial analysis to explore the underlying structure and relationships within the pertinent scholarly literature.

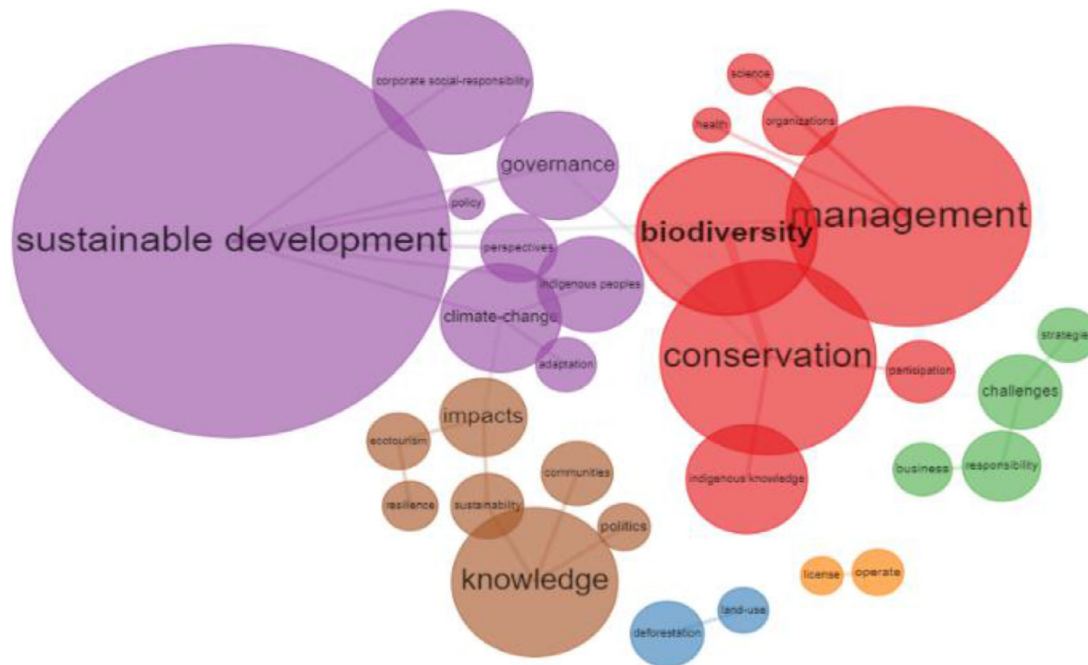


FIGURE 5 Keyword co-occurrence.

4.1.1 | Keyword co-occurrence and thematic map

In this phase of the analysis, we examine the significant keywords used by the authors by employing co-occurrence and co-word analysis to generate strategic visual representations, namely, Figures 5 and 6, which serve to highlight the key themes explored within the corpus of 194 publications.

Figure 5 specifically portrays the co-occurrence network analysis of 50 keywords that appear at least twice across the 194 articles. The size of the nodes in this diagram corresponds to the frequency of keyword usage. The lines connecting these nodes indicate instances of co-occurrence. Notably, the co-occurrence analysis reveals six distinct clusters, each representing closely related terms among the top 50 keywords with a minimum of two co-occurrences. For instance, publications within the purple cluster delve into the examination of indigenous communities in the context of achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), encompassing diverse contexts and subthemes, such as climate change (Stephen, 2018; Tilahun et al., 2017), corporate social responsibility (Fordham et al., 2018; Fordham & Robinson, 2018), and governance and policy (Basiago, 1995; Stetson & Mumme, 2016). Similarly, the red cluster studies relate to management, biodiversity, conservation, and indigenous knowledge (Arambiza & Painter, 2006; Gadgil et al., 1993; Segger & Phillips, 2015).

In a corresponding aspect of the analysis, the examination encompasses the co-word analysis of 50 keywords, with the purpose of constructing a strategic diagram that portrays the keywords employed by authors across the 194 publications (as illustrated in Figure 6). The strategic diagram categorizes themes based on centrality and density (Cobo et al., 2015). Centrality measures the extent of interactions among these themes, while density quantifies the robustness of internal connections within a given theme (Aparicio et al., 2019). Within the strategic diagram, Figure 6, four distinct quadrants come into view, each housing a different category of theme: Motor Themes are situated in the upper right quadrant, marked by high centrality and density. This placement signifies their pivotal position within the research discourse. Peripheral or Niche Themes are positioned in the upper left quadrant, these themes display high density but lower centrality, denoting their specialization or niche status within the research domain. Emerging or Disappearing Themes are found in the lower left quadrant, these themes are characterized by low density and low centrality, suggesting their potential emergence or diminishing importance. Transversal, General, or Basic Themes are housed at the lower right quadrant, noted for their low density and high centrality, indicating their overarching and fundamental significance within the research context.

The strategic diagram (Figure 6) displays 12 themes distributed across four quadrants. The core themes quadrant includes topics such as sustainable development,

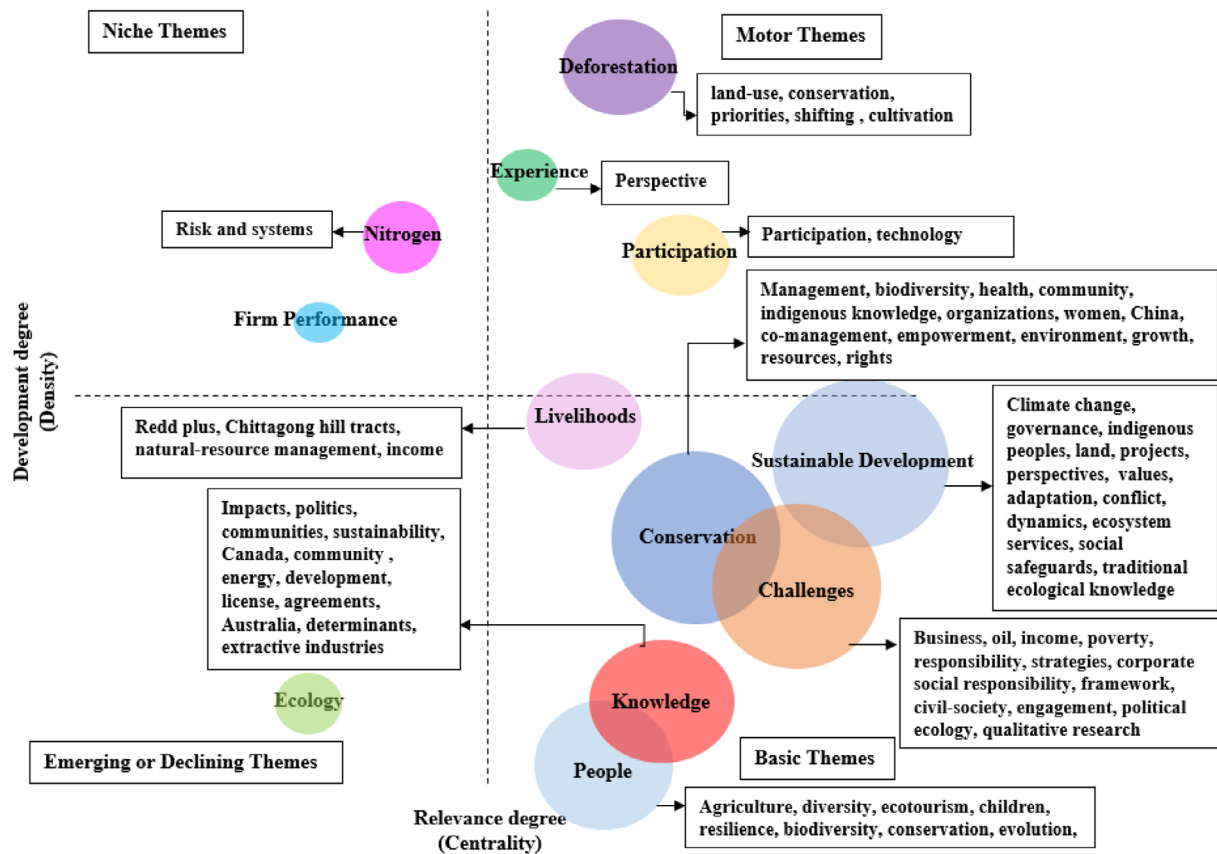


FIGURE 6 Strategic diagram of the conceptual structure (thematic map).

conservation, problems, knowledge, people, and livelihoods, all of which are very essential in the field of research. Themes in this quadrant have a reduced strength of internal linkages, indicating the need for future research to thoroughly investigate these sub-themes, while the strength of their ties with the other themes has grown over time. Furthermore, the size of the circles demonstrates that, while these topics have been thoroughly investigated, more scholarly research is still required.

“Sustainable development,” “challenges,” and “conservation” are seen to be the largest in size and the top three sub-themes in terms of the degree of centrality, their values being 15.62, 12.84, and 11.89, respectively. “Sustainable development” constitutes keywords such as climate change (6), governance (6), indigenous organization (4), land (4), perspectives (4), adaptation (3), conflict (3), etc. This appears to be the most important theme in studies analyzing the role of indigenous communities in achieving SDGs. Furthermore, the keyword “sustainable development” exhibits the highest link strength in Figure 5, indicating that future studies should look to accumulating knowledge that draws the focus to the sustainable approaches of indigenous communities (Carter et al., 2006; Yu, 2018). However, the literature focusing on sustain-

able development from the context of analyzing the role of indigenous communities has evolved from the initial theme of business, which remained in focus from 1991 to 2015, to eventually shifting to the achievement of SDGs by 2016 (Magni, 2017; Yap & Watene, 2019; Yu, 2018).

“Challenges” was the second-largest theme, constituting keywords such as business (4), operate (4), poverty (4), responsibility (4), strategies (4), corporate social responsibility (3), etc., in the order of highest occurrences. Indigenous communities’ efforts to integrate their knowledge and practices into the achievement of SDGs are threatened and hampered by weak human and institutional capacities, a lack of targeted focus, and exclusionary public policies. These challenges include barriers for indigenous women to access maternal healthcare facilities (Aker et al., 2019), challenges to free the people from feelings of inferiority and confusion (Battiste, 2002), and challenges of indigenous knowledge and the medium to understand, research, and integrate this knowledge into classroom teachings (Magni, 2017).

“Conservation,” which is the third-largest theme, addresses keywords such as management (14), biodiversity (11), health (5), community (4), indigenous knowledge (4), organizations (4), women (4), etc., in order of highest

occurrences. Additionally, the keyword conservation along with two other keywords, namely management and biodiversity, have exhibited the strongest link strength in Figure 5, highlighting that these disciplines are among those that are impacted the most by the use of the indigenous knowledge system (Martinez-Reyes, 2014; Nnamani et al., 2017). Researchers in this theme have analyzed the ways in which indigenous communities depend on indigenous knowledge and techniques of biodiversity conservation to promote development initiatives that contribute to their improved quality of life (Arambiza & Painter, 2006; Gadgil et al., 1993). Some of the case studies further conclude that indigenous natural resource systems, their rich knowledge, and cultural diversity play a vital role in conservation and achievement of SDGs (Basiago, 1995; P. K. Mishra & Rai, 2013; Nnamani et al., 2017). The theme of conservation evolved during the period from 1991 to 2015, and bifurcated post-2015 into other themes, such as knowledge, women, and management.

“Knowledge” constitutes keywords, namely, impacts (7), politics (6), communities (4), sustainability (4), etc. It is the fourth most commonly occurring theme, exhibiting the strongest link strength between indigenous knowledge and SDGs (Ernstman & Wals, 2009; Segger & Phillips, 2015; Singh, 2010). Extant literature has studied indigenous cultures and indigenous knowledge systems to understand how successfully they respond to ecological and developmental challenges and assist in achieving the SDGs (Magni, 2017; Priyadarshini & Abhilash, 2019; Rawat et al., 2010). The literature demonstrates how traditional knowledge-based products aid resource conservation and indigenous peoples’ subsistence survival (McCallum & Carr, 2012; Singh et al., 2010).

The theme “people” includes keywords, namely, agriculture (4), diversity (4), ecotourism (4), children (3), etc. Some research articles have sought to provide alternate approaches to development that aim to increase self-reliance and local production (Ernstman & Wals, 2009; Islam, 2021; Spann, 2018). These papers challenge conventional development models that often prioritize external interventions and globalized economic systems. Instead, they advocate empowering local communities, fostering self-sufficiency, and utilizing local resources and knowledge to achieve sustainable development. They highlight the importance of community participation, context-specific strategies, and the utilization of local resources and knowledge for sustainable development. By doing so, these papers offer valuable insights and recommendations for rethinking and reshaping development practices toward more sustainable and locally grounded approaches. Ernstman and Wals (2009) concludes that, rather than imposing organic agriculture as an alternative form, alter-

native paths that take into account differing perceptions of what “sustainable land use” means in a specific context are required. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the plight of daily wage earners as well as indigenous and marginalized people (Souza, 2020; Times, 2020). Adhikari (2021) propose policies to improve subsistence farming systems by establishing a dependable supply network that connects farming to markets and ensures input supply.

“Livelihoods” is the sixth theme that majorly falls into the basic themes quadrant, while a small portion of the circle spills over to the motor themes quadrant, suggesting a high degree of both centrality and density. It includes keywords such as reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation program (REDD+) (3), Chittagong hill tracts (2), income (2), etc. Bayrak and Marafa (2020) and Dawson et al. (2018) explore the national policy processes through REDD+ policy framework and suggest features to upgrade the policy to make it more effective. One method is to influence the localization of international rules in order to promote more equal routes and prevent deforestation and damage.

The themes of “deforestation,” “experiences,” and “participation” are positioned in the quadrant of motor themes, indicating that these themes are extensively researched in the prior literature. The studies on deforestation started from the year 1991 and then diverted to the theme of management post 2015. Deforestation presents the keywords of land-use (4) and conservation priorities (2), the theme of experiences discusses perspectives (2), and participation includes technology as one keyword. Since the technologically creative abilities of indigenous communities are limited, Waller (2008) concludes that they are heavily reliant on non-indigenous technologies, which has serious implications for the entrepreneurs involved in this initiative’s future prospects.

The themes “nitrogen” and “firm performance” are placed in the niche themes quadrant, indicating high degrees of density, where nitrogen also includes the keywords of risk and systems. This suggests that these two themes are not studied in accordance with each other, while few studies analyze them individually with respect to indigenous communities.

Lastly, the theme “ecology” is located in the emerging themes quadrant, indicating that the theme has not been well-explored by scholars and there is a scope of extensive research to be performed from the perspectives of social, economic, and ecological considerations. Indigenous communities have been existing in the sustainable industry for decades, developing knowledge about how to live in harmony with the environment (Mohamed Shaffril et al., 2020). However, the sustainability of their lifestyles and intact ecosystems (International Fund for Agricultural

Development, 2019; International Labour Organisation, 2016) are threatened by changes such as their integration with modern society, conflicts with non-indigenous communities, and globalization of national economies across the globe (Yap & Watene, 2019). Extant literature has attempted to study environmental, economic, social, cultural, and political aspects of the areas inhabited or protected by native and indigenous populations. For instance, De Freitas (2015) and Freitas (2004) analyze the areas inhabited by indigenous people in the central Amazon lakes and conclude that international cooperation and eco-certification can help indigenous communities enhance their quality of life while also preserving their ecosystems.

Poverty, climate change, education, and access to justice are other issues affecting the lives of indigenous peoples and their communities. However, the traditional knowledge developed over the years has helped them overcome different kinds of ecological and developmental challenges (IISD, 2020). Concurrently, the implementation of well-targeted policy measures aimed at enhancing income levels, women's and children's health, and education within these communities, alongside broader tribal well-being initiatives, holds the potential to significantly mitigate the enduring impacts of climate change. Few studies examine indigenous communities and their knowledge as a viable solution for sustainable development in India (Bisht, 2021; Priyadarshini and Abhilash, 2019). They underscore the significance of an integrated knowledge system wherein indigenous communities actively engage in knowledge dissemination and decision-making processes.

4.1.2 | Factorial analysis using multi-dimensional scaling (MDS)

The MDS method provides a visualization of literature using prominent keywords to highlight relationships among frequently cited works. Figure 7 shows research themes in the domain of indigenous communities and their role in advancing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Core keywords include conservation, livelihoods, indigenous knowledge, communities, people, policy, perspectives, land, sustainable development, and ecosystem services. Another cluster, knowledge, participation, climate change, indigenous peoples, adaptation, and governance, captures the dimensions explored within this research. These keywords are in conformity to the high frequency keywords shown in Figure 7 that have been studied in the past literature. For instance, previous studies have concentrated on themes such as sustainable development (Magni, 2017; Yap & Watene, 2019; Yu, 2018),

conservation (McAlpin, 2008; Reed, 2016; Zimmerman et al., 2001), indigenous knowledge (Akter et al., 2019; Battiste, 2002; Sjöberg et al., 2019), governance, communities, and ecotourism. The outliers located at the extremes are land-use, women, dynamics, resilience, community development, and sustainability.

The blue themes cluster of keywords, including corporate social responsibility, responsibility, poverty, business, challenges, oil, and framework, exemplifies themes in outliers, suggesting future research should explore their role in achieving SDGs, particularly the core theme of indigenous communities.

4.2 | Social structure

4.2.1 | Keywords-journals-countries (KJC) framework

Figure 8 presents a three-field plot illustrating the interactions between keywords, sources, and countries within the interface of indigenous communities and SDGs. The most researched subject is the management and conservation of resources (biodiversity) through indigenous knowledge, which are published in various tourism-related journals. (Carr et al., 2016; Hoque et al., 2020; Warnholtz et al., 2020), food (Bisht, 2021; Guzmán Luna et al., 2019; Wolff & Gomes, 2015), mountains (Bencherifa & Johnson, 1991; Nischalke et al., 2017), marine life, (Kourantidou et al., 2020; Mahon & Fanning, 2019; Robinson & Mercer, 2000; van Bets et al., 2016) and pollution (Boiral et al., 2019; Chiu & Yong, 2004; Gusmão Caiado et al., 2018; Mohamed Shafri et al., 2020; Patnaik & Bhowmick, 2020). Sources like the *International Journal of Sustainable Development and World Ecology*, *Ecology and Society*, *Futures* and *Sustainability* all have inter-disciplinary research contributions from all over the world.

4.3 | Intellectual structure of the publications

The research focuses on corporate social responsibility models for supporting minorities and indigenous peoples, as well as their health and social status, highlighting socio-economic inequalities (Fordham & Robinson, 2018; Gilberthorpe & Banks, 2012). National governments must develop targeted policy responses, improve access to health services, and incorporate indigenous data into surveillance systems, following the United Nations SDGs (Anderson et al., 2016). This research reveals how ideas evolve over time and builds on each other (Bamel et al., 2020).

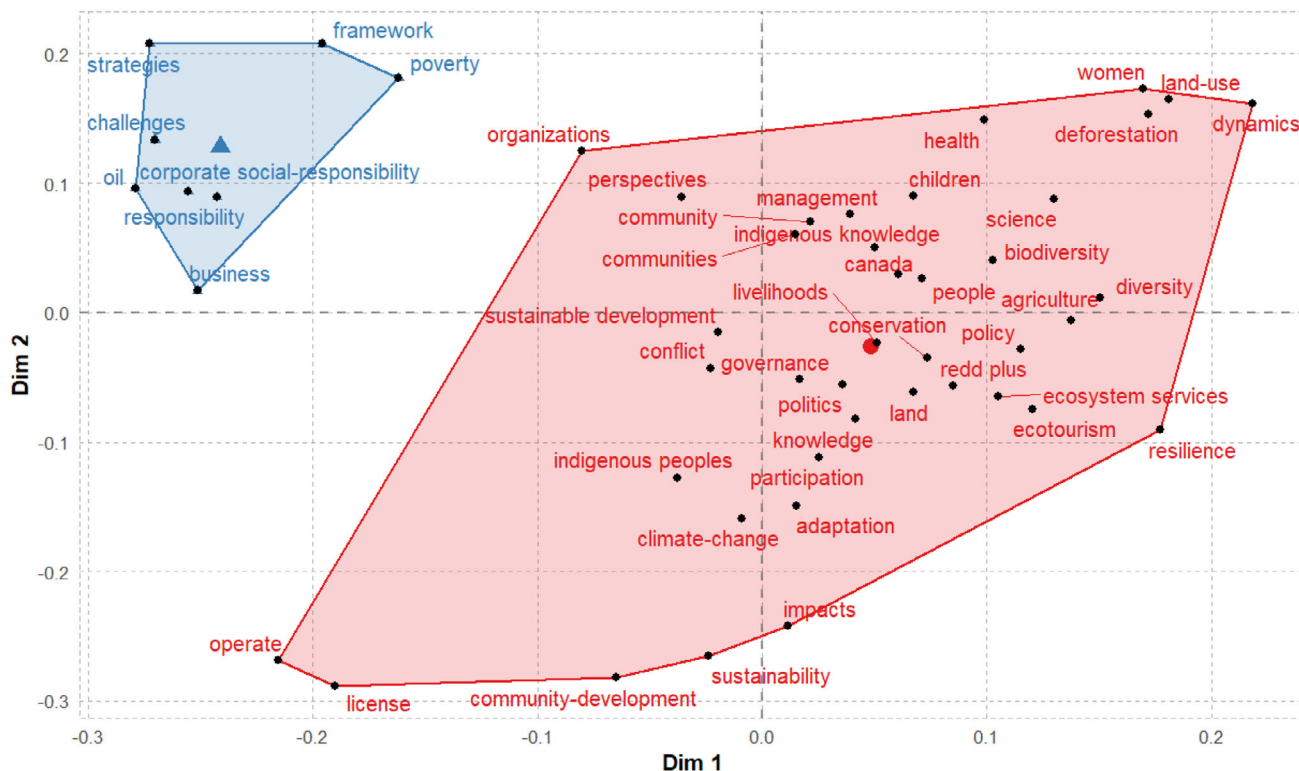


FIGURE 7 Factorial analysis using multi-dimensional scaling (conceptual structure map).

4.3.1 | Co-citation analysis of highly cited authors

This section introduces co-citation analysis, a method that establishes similarity measures between authors, documents, and journals by identifying documents that are cited together, signifying their thematic relatedness (Bamel et al., 2020). A network of the top 50 highly cited authors, each with a minimum of two co-citations, has been constructed, as shown in Figure 9. The co-citation analysis has revealed three distinct clusters, illustrated in the figure. In this network, node size corresponds to the number of citations, and closely linked nodes are positioned in proximity to one another (Zupic & Čater, 2015).

Cluster one (red nodes) focuses on the evaluation of the effectiveness and shortcomings of policies related to the management of mountain environments. It also digs into the establishment of criteria for evaluating sustainability in alpine environments, with a focus on cross-cultural aspects of sustainable development in these areas (Berkes et al., 2000). Cluster two (blue nodes) investigates the engagement of local communities in environmental management practices undertaken by various organizations. This cluster explores how the relationship between indigenous peoples and organizations has contributed to the development of

environmental values within these organizations (Boiral et al., 2020; Buergin, 2015; Wilson, 2003). Cluster three (green nodes) underscores the significance of recognizing indigenous peoples' knowledge in the sustainable management of biodiversity and ecosystems, highlighting its role in promoting sustainability (Gadgil et al., 1993; Singh et al., 2010, 2020).

5 | DISCUSSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

This paper explores the role of indigenous communities in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It analyzes publications on indigenous community involvement and identifies theoretical foundations for future research (refer Figure 10). The study suggests that interactions with indigenous communities, their land, and resources should be guided by mechanisms that involve organizations in decision-making processes and ensure prior consent (UN Report, 2021). The paper highlights the profound indigenous knowledge and expertise, rooted in their harmonious relationship with nature and community, and their efficacy in advancing specific sustainable goals. It calls for exploring successful bottom-up instances of SDG achievement to benefit marginalized communities

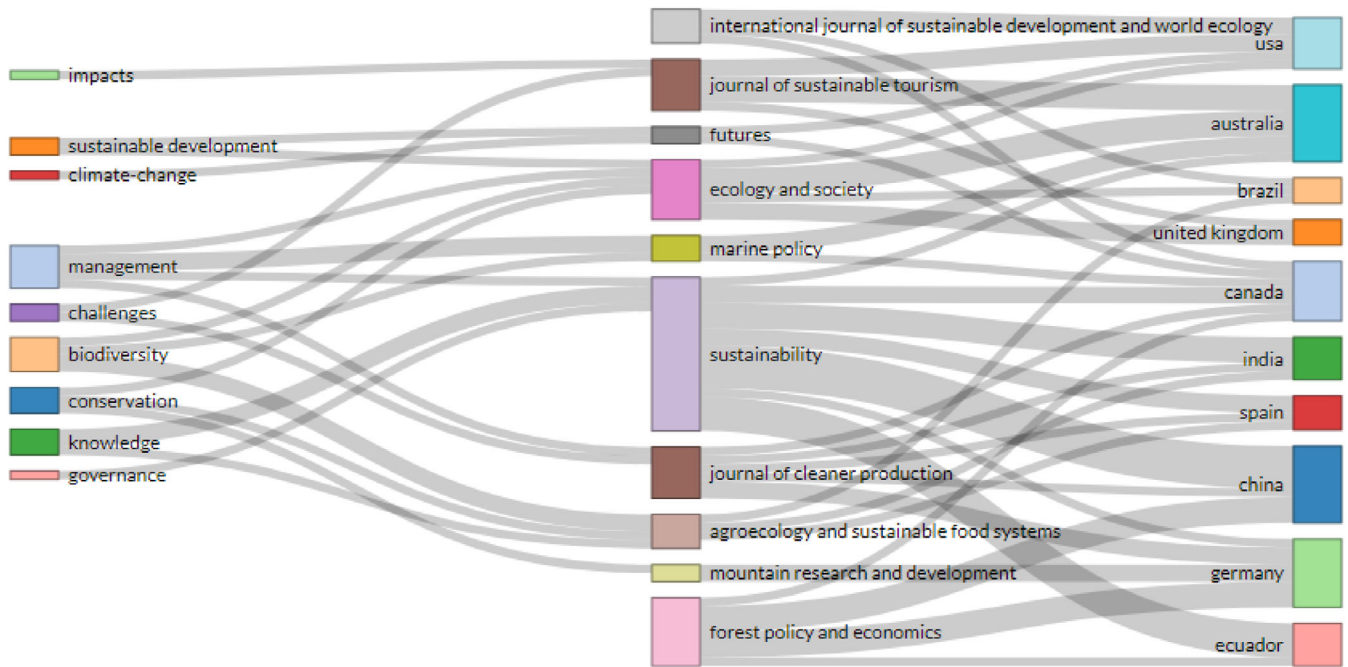


FIGURE 8 Keywords-journals-countries (KJC) framework.

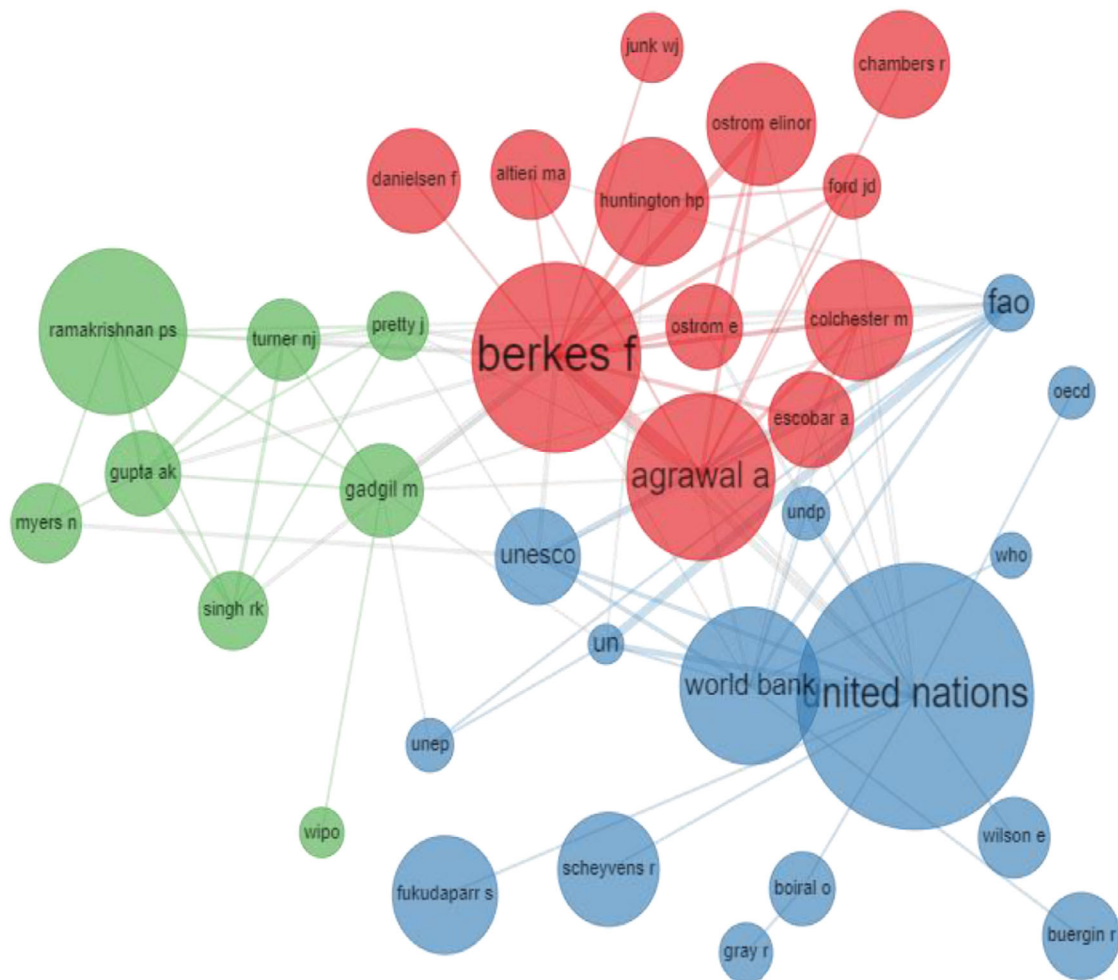


FIGURE 9 Co-citation analysis of highly cited authors.

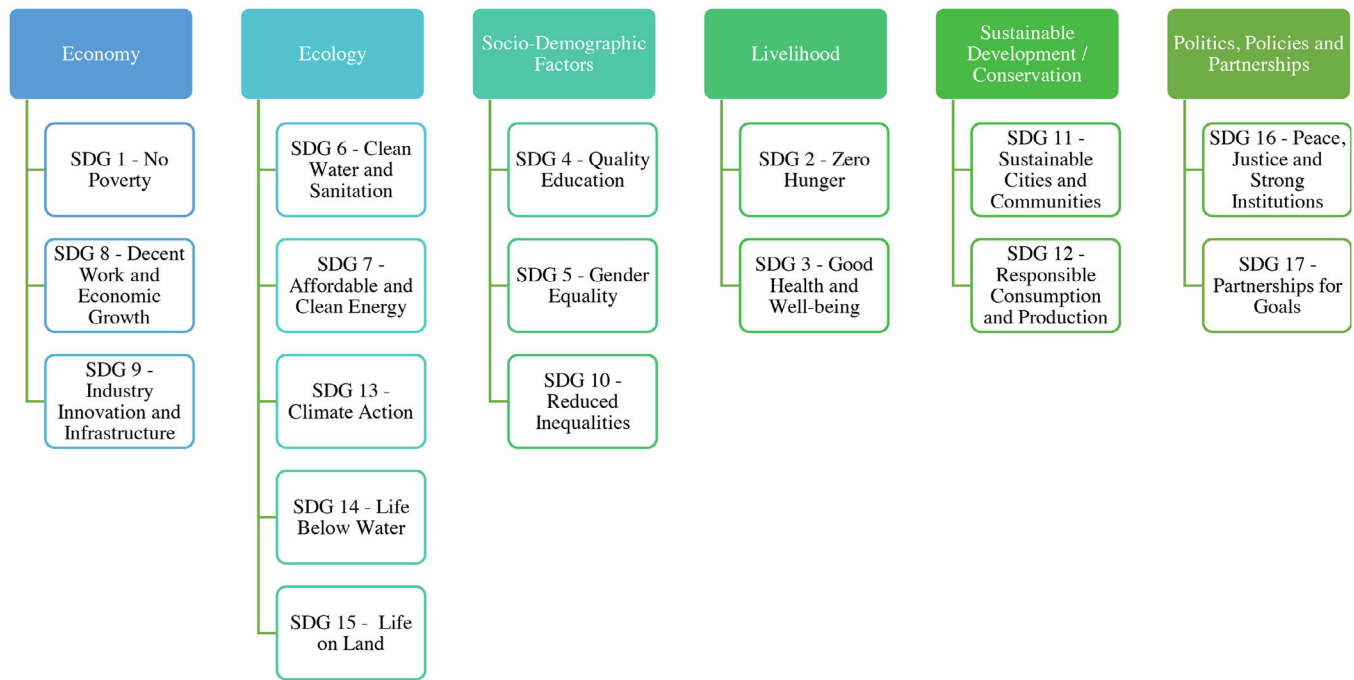


FIGURE 10 Future research agenda.

and bridging the gap between UN-level policies and micro and local community policies (Magni, 2017). It also calls for collaborations and participation in innovative sustainable practices between developed and developing countries.

5.1 | Thematic propositions

Indigenous communities' knowledge holds the potential to enrich the development of indicators and empirical or applied research. This can be achieved through the execution of real-world case studies, ethnographic studies, cross-sectional in-depth qualitative interviews, and surveys in developing or emerging countries. These research methodologies provide a means to gain a deeper comprehension of diverse cultures and geographical regions.

Furthermore, the use of indigenous knowledge can help to integrate Industry 4.0 technology into long-term supply chain management, notably in the logistics and distribution of important resources such as medicines, food, and water between high- and low-income nations. By investigating the significance of indigenous knowledge in achieving the SDGs, this paper delivers valuable insights, enhances our understanding, and fosters further research in the realm of sustainable development, particularly concerning its nexus with indigenous communities. Additionally, the paper delves into future research proposals for each thematic area identified from the research results, aligning them with various SDGs.

5.1.1 | Economy

Within the economic dimension, it is imperative to foster the economic development of indigenous communities as a means to alleviate poverty and mitigate income disparities (UNDP, 2020), for instance, by promoting investment in green economic strategies (Jain, 2019) through research publications and by empirically motivating non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government agencies, and communities to work together toward indigenous poverty alleviation (SDG 1). For future research, there exists an opportunity to enrich the existing literature by constructing a framework that evaluates key elements. Such a framework can potentially furnish policymakers with a conceptual model aimed at fostering champions of environmental sustainability at the grassroots level, aligning with the objectives of Sustainable Development Goals 8 and 9. This becomes especially pertinent in the post-crisis era, emphasizing the importance of forward-looking planning (SDG 8 & 9).

5.1.2 | Ecology

From the context of ecology, developing countries may adopt industrial ecology as a strategic vision for indigenous communities, and as an approach for planning their economic, social, and ecological development (SDG 6, 7, 13, 14 & 15). Another emerging theme is concentrated toward

water resource development projects with significant ecological and economic implications (G. D. Sharma, Tiwari, Erkut, et al., 2021), but it is crucial to ensure these projects do not lead to real economic costs that outweigh potential benefits, as seen in indigenous communities' approach (SDG 6 & 14). Future researchers must attempt to evaluate the response of indigenous communities to the issue of climate change, drawing upon their traditional knowledge, land, and resources (IISD, 2019) to regulate carbon levels and the climate cycle (Nathaniel et al., 2020; G. D. Sharma, Rahman, et al., 2020) through the abundance of trees, plants, and other sources of biodiversity (SDG 13).

5.1.3 | Socio-demographic factors

Indigenous communities' socio-economic factors, including traditional ecological expertise, cultural values, women's rights, and active participation in decision-making mechanisms, are emerging as a key focus for sustainable development. International research is needed to strengthen cultural impact assessment (CIA) practices, establish agreed definitions of culture, and provide validated tools (The Daily Star, 2021) (SDG 4). Empirical studies utilizing advanced information and communication systems could help understand the importance of indigenous knowledge (Thomas, 1994). Integrating traditional ecological expertise with western science is crucial for sustainable development. A social learning approach and synergy between mainstream development and indigenous values is needed. Legislative reforms, capacity building, and support for indigenous women's organizations are needed to overcome discrimination and ensure land rights for women (Food Tank, 2021) (SDG 5). Affirmative policies must be developed to ensure indigenous women's participation in decision-making processes (SDG 10).

5.1.4 | Livelihood

To guarantee indigenous peoples' access to excellent health services, including critical medications and vaccinations, it is required to design targeted programmes with full indigenous peoples' participation, as well as to devote adequate funding and manpower (SDG 3). To ensure food security, indigenous peoples' traditional occupations and livelihood practices must be protected and supported (Food Tank, 2021) (SDG 2). Specific interventions to address mental health issues, particularly for adolescents at risk of self-harm, must be created and implemented in conjunction with indigenous communities (SDG 3).

5.1.5 | Sustainable development/conservation

Future researchers may conduct a comparative analysis of cases in developed versus developing nations to better understand the relationships between resource monitoring systems, local empowerment, and conservation (SDG 12). Indigenous groups' traditional knowledge, which has been nurtured for centuries, provides a channel for sustainable development that needs to be effectively integrated into decision-making procedures through increased protections and local empowerment of indigenous communities for governance and equitable benefit sharing (SDG 11). There is an urgent need to strengthen conservation practices by integrating contemporary scientific domains and indigenous techniques in order to harness and incorporate rich indigenous knowledge in local communities for improved scientific knowledge, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable natural resource utilization (Wongnithisathaporn & Worsdell, 2021) (SDG 12).

5.1.6 | Politics, policies, and partnerships (3P's)

Better policies would help address the barriers that indigenous communities identify as impeding their development initiatives (IWGIA, 2020), as well as support the critical work of establishing effective and legitimate community governance structures to drive development (SDG 16). More contextualized governance, decentralization of power, and genuine participation are required to support marginal forest-dependent communities' management of their natural resources (SDG 17). It is necessary to look at how indigenous communities build their own indicators to guide their development requirements while also minimizing the negative governance consequences of national objectives and target setting (SDG 16).

5.2 | Contextual propositions

In terms of contributing countries (keywords-journals-countries framework), this study reveals that the top 10 most contributing nations are mostly developed countries (Australia, Canada, USA, UK, etc.) In terms of contextual propositions, the research gaps and future research avenues identified during the analysis suggest that prospective authors and institutions from the developing regions, for instance, African nations, must pioneer further research and initiate collaborations with western countries (country collaboration map).

The intellectual structure of publications presents the extensively researched themes—that is, the role played by indigenous communities in maintaining sustainable development in and around their regions. Bencherifa and Johnson (1991) is among the oldest study in this domain and presents cultural determinants as the reason behind the radical changes in indigenous resource-use practices. The literature fails to analyze the social inclusion of indigenous/aboriginal communities in catering to their SDGs according to their circumstances. Encouraging more bottom-up research on sustainable development will help to gather expertise and experiences, building a trend of progress that could assist other disadvantaged communities and help in bridging the policy gaps between the UN and local communities (Wang & Wang, 2019; Yu, 2018).

It is also evident that most of the papers in this domain are single-authored. Hence, potential researchers and authors should concentrate on inter-collaborations to extend the knowledge covered in the domain of indigenous communities and SDGs.

5.3 | Methodological propositions

In terms of the methods used to explore the role of indigenous communities in attaining the SDGs, existing research reveals that, notwithstanding the many approaches and techniques used in the literature, methodological concerns must be addressed.

The link between indigenous communities and SDGs has been extensively studied, both conceptually (Dockry et al., 2016; Magni, 2017; Segger & Phillips, 2015) and empirically (P. K. Mishra & Rai, 2013; Rakib et al., 2017; Verma & Attri, 2008). Despite that, the majority of the research papers have used case studies (Akimichi, 1995; Ba et al., 2018; Berkes et al., 2000; Gagnon, 2011) to achieve their objectives, and very few have used an experimental research design (Liu, 2017; McCallum & Carr, 2012) to conduct their study. Thus, future studies can benefit by focusing on survey or interview methods while defining more clear constructs. To facilitate comparative studies (for instance, between/among countries or cultures or ethnicities), sharing datasets from the context of various qualitative methodologies, such as case studies, interviews, and so on, will aid in understanding the cross-national and dynamic attainment of SDGs by indigenous communities.

The achievement of SDGs is measured through indigenous communities' performance, which cannot be measured through traditional performance parameters (age and size, profits, or income) (Vázquez Maguirre et al., 2018). Instead, studies have attempted to analyze different types of organizations that have directly or indirectly facilitated the use of indigenous knowledge on achieving

SDGs. As a result, further analysis should opt for objective measurements to overcome standardization errors in performance metrics. There is no agreement on the relationship between indigenous knowledge and performance in terms of sustainable development. Panel data as well as cross-sectional and time-series data yield no conclusions (Ceddia et al., 2019; Islam, 2021). As a result, future researchers must examine this difficulty in order to increase the evidence basis.

6 | CONCLUSION

The paper focuses on how the skills and experiences of an Indigenous community help achieve SDGs. As a result, an analysis of the role of Indigenous Communities in achieving the SDGs is carried out, offering a complete assessment of related literature and identifying possible research avenues. Indigenous knowledge and experiences play a vital role for Indigenous Communities in maintaining sustainable development, considering their long-standing use and understanding of ecosystems. The present study aims at to conducting an integrative review of the interdisciplinary research based on the role of Indigenous Communities in attaining Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with document information retrieved from the Web of Science database and analyzed using the Bibliometrix R package (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

This research paper provides a clear trajectory for advancing the existing body of knowledge in the direction of comprehending the institutional logic that governs the actions and facilitates strategies, organizational structures, and formal integration mechanisms within Indigenous Communities. To progress in our comprehension of Indigenous management theories, it is imperative to embark on a journey that encompasses the incorporation of alternative frameworks for sense-making. These frameworks operate at both the societal and organizational levels. It is noteworthy that many Indigenous communities encounter challenges related to the use of indicators, particularly in the context of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These indicators are designed to represent and monitor their circumstances. However, they are situated within broader power dynamics that often impede their development aspirations and ongoing struggles for self-determination. Governments regard the generation of indicators as a political process, one that plays a significant role in decision-making concerning the equitable allocation of resources and in ensuring accountability for the utilization of public funds under public scrutiny. From an indigenous perspective, it is crucial for indicators to represent indigenous ideologies, indigenous communities' lived experiences, and their struggles for self-governance.

This is significant because it extends beyond using ethnic characteristics to deconstruct already known indicators. It mandates that we incorporate indicators that reflect indigenous perspectives and worldviews. As a result, in order to employ indigenous knowledge systems, relevant technologies must be created using diverse indigenous concepts as deemed acceptable. These technologies should help achieve sustainable development by addressing the indigenous communities' social demands and so contributing to the communities' overall growth. Within this context, the current research offers the following contributions. In this backdrop, the present study makes the following contributions: (i) theoretical/thematical propositions (emphasizing the conceptual foundations of the body of literature relating to indigenous communities and SDGs) (ii) contextual propositions (shedding light on research deficiencies with regard to various dimensions, encompassing geographical perspectives, social inclusion, and collaborative aspects), and (iii) methodological propositions (pointing out the methodological problems resulting from various empirical/quantitative approaches implemented in previous literature).

6.1 | Theoretical implications (for researchers)

The thematic propositions presented here have categorized all 17 SDGs in major themes: economy, ecology, socio-demographics, livelihood, conservation, and 3P's (Figure 10). Most of the studies under this review examined only a single SDG or a combination of SDGs (from the major themes in Figure 10), thus directing future works toward a comprehensive or inclusive study integrating all 17 SDGs in particular research. By examining the skills and experiences of indigenous communities in relation to achieving SDGs, the paper offers valuable insights into the role of indigenous knowledge in sustainable development. This analysis adds a unique perspective to the existing literature (Lim, 2022; A. Mishra & Pandey, 2023), highlighting the potential contributions of indigenous communities to global business and organizational excellence. By suggesting possible avenues for investigation, the paper encourages researchers to delve deeper into the relationship between indigenous knowledge and SDGs. This can contribute to the advancement of knowledge in both academia and practice, facilitating the integration of sustainable practices derived from indigenous communities into business and organizational contexts.

6.2 | Practical and policy implications (for entrepreneurs)

The results of the study have important practical implications for indigenous entrepreneurs from indigenous communities. Most indigenous communities have their own goals through which they help attain sustainable development. Sustainable development is approached by researchers from a variety of perspectives. The principles of social entrepreneurship and sustainable development cross paths, thereby involving social entrepreneurs as the change agents that use entrepreneurial means to provide structural solutions to social and environmental problems (Bansal et al., 2019; Bansal, Garg, et al., 2020). Liao et al. (2022) report that the entrepreneurial mindset, shaped through entrepreneurial education, plays a pivotal role in driving entrepreneurial intentions. Furthermore, social innovation is viewed as a consequence of the capacity for collective adaptation in the face of environmental, political, economic, and social (Ciasullo et al., 2023).

This perspective invites policymakers to jointly examine and assess the intricate relationship between social representation and economic representation, with firms occupying a central role in driving social innovation. Given the unprecedented global changes propelled by groundbreaking technological advancements, intensified competitive pressures, shifting demographics, evolving societal expectations, and ongoing global crises or mega-disruptions, the nature of work is swiftly evolving. In light of these transformations, businesses and organizations are compelled to adapt to new realities. Consequently, innovative leadership and human resource management strategies become imperative in ensuring long-term success and sustainability (Lim, 2023). In view of these insights, it is paramount for governments to actively promote social small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by eliminating obstacles and implementing policies and initiatives that bolster their operations (Bansal, Garg, et al., 2020). Subsequent research endeavors should thus direct their focus toward comprehending the role of social entrepreneurs or SMEs in advancing and facilitating sustainable development. The study's outcomes function as a policy and practice-oriented guide, delivering dependable information for the benefit of policymakers, government officials, and non-governmental organizations. This information aids in the formulation of precise policies and frameworks and the development of support programs for Indigenous Communities.

6.3 | Policy implications (at the national level)

Furthermore, the results obtained can be useful from a public policymaking angle (G. D. Sharma, Talan, et al., 2020). To foster and sustain a state or nation's development, it is imperative to accord utmost priority to a comprehensive range of issues (outlined in points 4.1-4.6) at the national level, particularly in countries that are home to indigenous communities. This prioritization enables the promotion of sustainable development, requiring the dedicated allocation of resources, endeavors, and time towards the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Within the context of the newly introduced 2030 Agenda, there is a pressing call for collaborative endeavors aimed at formulating and embracing suitable strategies. These strategies are designed to encourage indigenous communities to assert and acknowledge their rights and actively partake in decision-making processes. This proactive involvement positions them as influential agents of change, facilitating the pursuit of sustainable development objectives (Magni, 2017). In terms of policy implications, indigenous peoples need support at the state, federal, and international levels to maintain their sustainability. In particular, the threat of external exploitation can be reduced through international programs designed to improve monitoring and enforcement capabilities. Demand policies and properly designed research can also boost the return on sustainable indigenous economic activities (C. E. C. Freitas et al., 2004).

The current research is not without limitations. We utilized an integrative review to better understand the context of indigenous communities contributing to SDGs, and further analysis might help us better understand the direction and severity of the link between indigenous knowledge systems and SDG attainment. As such, future research may design and evaluate scales linked to indigenous communities and SDGs, taking into account a variety of other variables or employing indigenous communities as a moderating/mediating variable to determine their influence on SDGs.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Sanchita Bansal: Conceptualization; Investigation; Resources; Software; Supervision; Validation; Visualization; Writing—review & editing. Tapan Sarker: Conceptualization; Investigation; Resources; Software; Supervision; Validation; Writing—review & editing. Anshita Yadav: Data curation; Formal analysis; Methodology; Resources; Software; Visualization; Writing—review & editing. Isha Garg: Data curation; Formal analysis;

Methodology; Visualization; Roles/Writing—original draft; Writing—review & editing. Mansi Gupta: Conceptualization; Data curation; Formal analysis; Methodology; Visualization; Roles/Writing—original draft; Writing—review & editing. Harsha Sarvaiya: Methodology; Resources; Software; Visualization; Roles/Writing—original draft; Writing—review & editing.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The author has provided the required Data Availability Statement, and if applicable, included functional and accurate links to said data therein.

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