



# The Indian Economic Journal

JOURNAL OF THE INDIAN ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION

Volume - 6 • Special Issue • December 2025

**CONTEMPORARY ISSUES  
AND DEVELOPMENT  
IN TAMIL NADU**





# The Indian Economic Journal

One of the Oldest and fully Refereed Journal

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The Journal, a Publication of the Indian Economic Association, is dedicated to advancing scientific research across diverse domains including Economic Theory, Macroeconomic Stability and Growth, Agricultural Prospects and Rural Transformation, Industrial Development and Manufacturing, Global Trade and Geopolitical Dynamics, Social Inclusion, Employment and Human Development, as well as contemporary issues shaping Tamil Nadu's Development.



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Published by:  
**THE INDIAN ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION**

## Editor's Message

Dear Readers,

I am truly honoured to edit the special issues of the Indian Economic Journal.

It is with great pleasure that I present this special edition of the Indian Economic Journal for the 108th Annual Conference of the Indian Economic Association, which is hosted by VELS University in Chennai from December 27 to 29, 2025. The theme for this year, "Indian Economy – Navigating Domestic Realities and Global Shifts," encapsulates the dynamic crossroads at which our nation currently stands. As India progresses towards becoming a resilient and globally competitive economy, the necessity for informed dialogue, evidence-based policy formulation, and collaborative scholarship becomes increasingly crucial.

The sub-themes of this conference provide significant opportunities for such discussions. Macroeconomic stability, growth prospects, and the changing financial landscape are central to comprehending India's medium-term trajectory. Agriculture and rural transformation continue to influence livelihoods and promote inclusive development, while the industrial and manufacturing sectors promise productivity enhancements and global competitiveness. In a rapidly evolving geopolitical and trade context, India's strategic positioning demands both caution and innovation. Equally significant are the issues of social inclusion, employment, and human development, which constitute the moral and economic foundation for sustainable progress. The emphasis on contemporary development challenges in Tamil Nadu adds a valuable regional perspective to this year's discussions.

The Indian Economic Journal (IEJ) is an important organ of the Indian Economic Association (IEA) that provides support and services to professionals and researchers both in India and overseas. For over a century the IEA has been one of the largest and the oldest body of teachers, researchers, academicians, and policy makers drawn from the background of Economics and affiliate discipline. Founded in 1917, the IEA is a, "not-for-profit, non-political, and scholarly" voluntary professional association with membership open to those who fulfil the eligibility criteria laid by the constitution of IEA. Through regular outreach programs like, "Conferences, Courses, Publications and Seminars"

IEA disseminates information among scholars to increase their understanding of economics. Both IEJ and IEA work in tandem encouraging members to share their research work findings and contribute scholarly articles in Annual Conferences and for publishing in special editions of the IEJ by maintaining relevance of the journal. This special issue is being released at the 108th Annual Conference of the Indian Economic Association.

My special thanks and gratitude to our Chief Patron Dr. Ishari K Ganesh, Honourable Vice Chancellor, VELS University, Chennai, Tamil Nadu for organizing this historic 108th Annual Conference at VELS University during 27-29th December 2025. My heartfelt thanks to our Patron Conference Dr. G. Viswanathan, Founder and Chancellor VIT. Also, my special thanks to Association President, Prof. A.D.N. Bajpai for his valuable contribution for the growth of the Indian Economic Association. I express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Anil Kumar Thakur, Chief Convener of the Indian Economic Association for his countless efforts and dedication towards the pathbreaking glories of the IEA.

The Indian Economic Journal was founded by Prof. CN. Vakil and Prof. R. Balkrishna in 1953 and has over the years become a covered internationally acclaimed journal in Economics due to high ethical and quality standards maintained by successive editors. I take the opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of Prof. Sukhadeo Thorat in transforming Conference Volumes of IEA into special editions of Indian Economic Journal and Dr Anil Kumar Thakur, Chief Convener of IEA for taking efforts to sustain the quality and ratings of IEJ along with the Managing Editor of IEA, Prof. Sudhanshu Bhushan. I take this opportunity to thank all the secretaries for taking this to greater heights.

I would like to thank all the authors, and co-authors for their scholarly article contributions for the 108th Annual Conference. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the contributors, reviewers, and organizing team whose efforts have greatly enriched this volume. It is my hope that this edition inspires new perspectives and makes a meaningful contribution to the discourse surrounding India's economy.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to all the reviewers and the editorial support team for their invaluable contributions. I am particularly grateful to Dr. S. Narayanan, Dr. M. Dillip Anand, Dr. Pragati Krishnan, Dr. Raj Kamal Roy, Dr. Nameirakpam Taibangnganbi, Mr. R. Tharmaraj, Mr. N. Shriram, Mr. L. Suman Raj, Mr. R. Nayan Jain, and Mr. B. Nishanth for their unwavering dedication and meticulous efforts in bringing out the special issues of the Indian Economic Journal within the scheduled timeline.

I also place on record my sincere appreciation to Mr. A. Mohideen, Managing Director, Phoenix Print Hub, Mr. A.M. Seyed Ahmed Hussain, Mr. A. Abdul Rahaman, Ms. Nidhi, at the Phoenix Print Hub, Chennai, our print service partner, for their neat execution and timely delivery of the printed volumes.

**Ravindra K. Brahme**

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## Harnessing Digital Transformation for Sustainable Growth in India: Limited to Chennai City

S. Jayakani

### Abstract

*Digital transformation has emerged as a pillar for Indian economic growth and sustainability. With the momentum built under programs such as Digital India and Start-up India, along with mass adoption of smart technologies, there is a need to explore how digital means and literacy influence sustainable development. According to data gathered using a mixed sample of Final year students, young professionals, entrepreneurs, teachers, and industry professionals located in the Chennai city, this paper discusses how digital transformation is connected to growth from a sustainability angle. The research concludes that there exists a positive connection between digital literacy, employability, and sustainability mind-set for contemporary industries to thrive. From the Study, it is discovered that digital transformation is not only transforming economic planning but also impacting social and environmental dimensions, which are aligned with those of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).*

**Keywords:** Digital Literacy, Sustainable Development, Digital Competency, Chennai, Economic Growth, SDGs

### Introduction

India is currently undergoing a technology revolution that cuts across sectors—governance, education, health, transportation, and industry. As India strives towards the 2030 agenda of Sustainable Development Goals, digital technology has emerged as the enablers of inclusive and sustainable development. Digital transformation, in which digital technology is embedded into all walks of life, has the ability to reduce waste, foster the use of renewable energy, improve learning, and support improved governance.

This research targets Chennai city, which is a metropolitan city with enormous inputs in manufacturing, education, and IT, and examines how digitalization is fuelling sustainable development from the ground up. Empirical investigation will be conducted to offer actionable insights on how digital adoption influences economic growth and sustainability.

Digital technologies have transformed business models, reformed work roles, and created new solutions for climate-responsible operations. In Chennai, projects like smart mobility solutions, digital tracking of waste, and automated water monitoring system illustrate how local digital interventions feed into larger SDG objectives. These technology-driven innovations, apart from lowering the costs of operations, also fit into environmental purposes, providing an integrated model of urban growth.

In spite of these developments, inequalities continue to exist in levels of digital literacy, especially among the new workforce. There is still an urgent need to evaluate if existing education systems and industry ecosystems are able to foster a sustainability mindset as well as digital skills. Through an understanding of the nexus of digital uptake and sustainable development from the perspective of diverse stakeholders in Chennai, this research aims to guide future policy, education, and entrepreneurship strategies.

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Professor, Department of Commerce, Vels Institute of Science, Technology and Advanced Studies,

## Objective

To empirically analyse the interconnection between digital transformation (i.e., digital literacy competency) and its contribution to sustainable development and economic growth study in Chennai city.

## Review of Literature

Vasileiadou (2023) underscored the significance of schools in narrowing the skill gap required in an increasingly digital changing labor market. She believed that preparing students with current skills is paramount for their future employability and economic development of a country.

Schiuma et al. (2022) investigated the leadership competencies needed to promote digital transformation in organizations. Their research identified six key competencies that leaders must have in order to promote digital innovation that is value creation and sustainability-oriented.

Mukhopadhyay (2021) investigated the condition of digital literacy in India and found a significant difference between developed and developing areas. The investigation confirmed that digital technology is transforming conventional commerce and work, and digital literacy is crucial for access to contemporary economic structures.

Agarwal (2019) considered digital literacy issues in urban India, especially for women. According to her research, there was growing interest in employing digital platforms for self-improvement. She stressed the necessity of affordability and training in usability.

Yazon et al. (2019) evaluated the digital literacy of education faculty and concluded that educational qualifications, pedagogical experience, and organizational support are instrumental in developing digital competence among faculty.

Bhatia and Soni (2020) analyzed the contribution of digital infrastructure in smart urbanization. According to them, in the metropolitan city like Chennai, they found direct proportionality of access to the internet and advancement of livelihood.

Jain and Narayanan (2021) explained the methods through which India's start-ups are adopting AI and data science to overcome green issues. They pointed to the development of a sustainability-oriented startup ecosystem within India's cities.

Ravi and Kapoor (2022) examined Indian youth's inclination to adopt green technologies. In their research, they discovered that digital platforms, combined with education and incentives, can encourage young citizens to behave in an environmentally friendly manner.

## Research Gap

Although current literature heavily associates digital transformation with economic growth and changing employment patterns, there is not much empirical evidence on how digital literacy supports sustainability objectives at the city level, particularly in Indian metros such as Chennai. Most research is either nationally aggregated or addresses only economic results. There is a lack of understanding the synergistic effect of digital transformation and sustainability practices through a local perspective with multiple stakeholders. This study bridges that gap by examining how people from different backgrounds in Chennai view, embrace, and contribute to digital-led sustainable growth.

## Research Methodology

S.No.	Reserch Methodology	Research Source
1	Research Design	Exploratory and Descriptive
2	Data Source	Primary and Secondary Data
3	Data Instrument	Structured Questionnaire
4	Sample Respondents Nature	Mixed Cohort (Students, Faculty, Entrepreneurs, Professionals, HRs)
5	Sample Size	150
6	Sampling Way	Non-Probability – Purposive Sampling
7	Data Collection Method	Online (Google Forms), Direct Interviews
8	Research Period	February 2025 – March 2025
9	Statistical Tools Used	Correlation Coefficient, Percentage Analysis

## Data Analysis

Digital literacy was correlated with sustainability awareness among the 150 respondents using a Pearson correlation analysis. The findings showed that there was a high positive correlation ( $r = 0.912$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), which meant that individuals with higher digital literacy also had greater awareness and participation in actions and careers related to sustainability.

Breakdown by cohort indicated:

- 78% of students in the final year did not think their curriculum adequately addressed digital tools for sustainability.
- 85% of young professionals concurred that digital skills assisted them in making better contributions to sustainability practices in the workplace.
- 90% of entrepreneurs stated that digital uptake (such as CRM, inventory systems, and payment systems) minimized wastage and enhanced resource productivity.

## Findings and Suggestions

- There is a significant gap between academic exposure to digital sustainability and industrial expectations.
- Institutions must revise curriculum frameworks to include modules on green tech, ESG frameworks, and digital project management.
- Digital India initiatives should be localized and partnered with city-level skill development missions.
- Start-ups and SMEs must be encouraged with digital literacy workshops, particularly focusing on sustainable practices.
- A standard digital-sustainability index could be constructed at city scales to track and inform future interventions.

- Supporting research studies combining technology and sustainability can induce an innovation-driven scholarly culture.
- Public-private collaborations need to be facilitated to provide real-life case studies and internships on digital tools with a sustainability emphasis.
- Platforms for continuous learning and upskilling must be encouraged amongst professionals to fill the mid-career digital skills gap.
- Urban local governments must utilize the study's findings to customize smart city initiatives and integrate them with workforce readiness initiatives.

Government policies must incorporate a requirement for sustainability reporting training as part of digital skilling programs.

### Conclusion

This study validates that digital transformation is an essential accelerator for sustainable development in India. Particularly in Chennai, a city bustling with talent and technological infrastructure, there is tremendous potential to align digital literacy with economic and environmental goals. While the current trajectory is promising, sustained efforts are required from educational institutions, industries, and policy makers to embed digital-sustainability consciousness in the workforce. Digital transformation is not just an economic enabler—it is a sustainability enabler as well.

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