

## An overview of sustainability assessment methodologies

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### ABSTRACT

Sustainability indicators and composite index are gaining lot of importance and increasingly recognized as a powerful tool for policy making and public communication in providing information on countries and corporate performance in fields such as environment, economic, social, or technological improvement. By conceptualizing phenomena and highlighting trends, sustainability indicators simplify, quantify, analyze and communicate the complex and complicated information.

There are number of initiatives exist on indicators and frameworks for sustainable development. This article provides an overview various sustainability indices applied in sustainability domain. The paper also compiles the information related to sustainability indices formulation strategy, scaling, normalization, weighting and aggregation methodology.

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### 1. Introduction

The concept of sustainable development (SD) has been an important focal point for the decision makers in the industry. As per the Brundtland report the sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987). There are number of sustainability assessment methodologies exist in practice for evaluating the performance of companies (Ramachandran, 2000). The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD, 1997), the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI, 2002a,b) and development of standards (OECD, 2002) were the key driver for adoption of sustainability management in industries. Azapagic (2004) developed a framework for sustainability indicators for the mining and minerals industry, which is also compatible to GRI. Krajnc and Glavic (2005) collected and developed a standardized set of sustainability indicators for companies covering all main aspects of sustainable development.

According to KEI (2005), “Indicators and composite indicators are increasingly recognized as a useful tool for policy making and public communication in conveying information on countries’ performance in fields such as environment, economy, society, or technological development”.

“Indicators arise from values (we measure what we care about), and they create values (we care about what we measure)”

(Meadows, 1998). The indicators are adopted by countries and corporate because of its their ability to summarize, focus and condense the enormous complexity of our dynamic environment to a manageable amount of meaningful information (Godfrey and Todd, 2001). By conceptualizing phenomena and assessing the trends and identifying the hot-spots, indicators simplify, quantify, analyze and communicate the complex and complicated information (Warhurst, 2002).

As per Bebbington et al. (2007), “There is a widely recognized need for individuals, organizations and societies to find models, metrics and tools for articulating the extent to which, and the ways in which, current activities are unsustainable”.

Bebbington et al. (2007) identifies two important questions related to evaluating sustainability:

- “How can today’s operational systems for monitoring and reporting on environmental and social conditions be integrated or extended to provide more useful guidance for efforts to navigate a transition towards sustainability?”
- How can today’s relatively independent activities of research planning, monitoring, assessment, and decision support be better integrated into systems for adaptive management and societal learning?”

According to Ness et al. (2007) “The purpose of sustainability assessment is to provide decision-makers with an evaluation of global to local integrated nature–society systems in short and long term perspectives in order to assist them to determine which actions should or should not be taken in an attempt to make society sustainable”.

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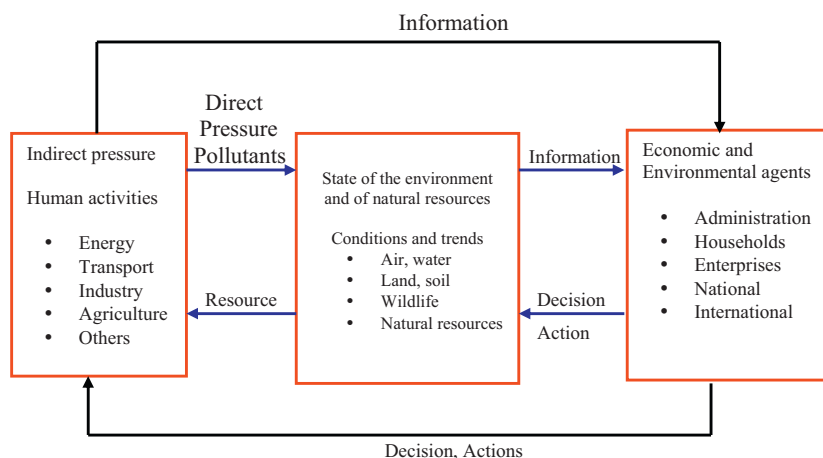


Fig. 1. The pressure-state-response framework.

Source: OECD (1998).

The urgent requirement for a holistic approach to indicators definition and measurement is given more emphasis coupled with development of robust methodologies which enables countries and corporate to measure all important aspects of sustainability (Bossel, 1999). It is worthwhile to define the distinct policy goal for achieving sustainability and then the appropriate indicators are to be identified based on its materiality (Kates et al., 2001). This apparently looks quite easy but leads to complicated situation once the process for selection and development of indicators start. Alignment of goal with the identified indicators for reaching the sustainability is a challenging task and further it becomes more difficult when it is being measured on various dimensions and aggregated into single value (Kuik and Gilbert, 1999).

## 2. Sustainable development indicators

A two-step approach for measuring the sustainability was suggested by Warhurst (2002) viz. improvement in various areas measured through SDIs individually and assessing the overall improvement achieved towards sustainable development by a aggregating these individual areas with respect to their respective dimensions. Lancker and Nijkamp (2000) emphasize upon target values of indicators and states that, “a given indicator doesn’t say anything about sustainability, unless a reference value such as thresholds is given to it”.

Some of the highlights from Lundin (2003), Berke and Manta (1999) and Spohn (2004), SDIs can be used to:

- Assess and evaluate the performance.
- Provide trends on improvement as well as warning information on declining trend for the various dimensions of sustainability i.e. economic, environment and social aspects.
- Provide information to decision makers to formulate strategies and communicate the achievements to the stakeholders.

While developing a framework and selecting SDIs, Spohn (2004) identifies two distinctive main approaches:

- The ‘top-down’ approach, which enables experts and researchers to define the overall structure for achieving the sustainability and subsequently it is broken down into set of indicators.
- On the contrary, the ‘bottom-up’ approach requires systematic participation of various stakeholders to understand the framework as well as the key sustainable development indicators.

Holmberg and Karlsson (1992) developed the concept of socio-ecological indicators (SEIs) in order to establish the linkage between

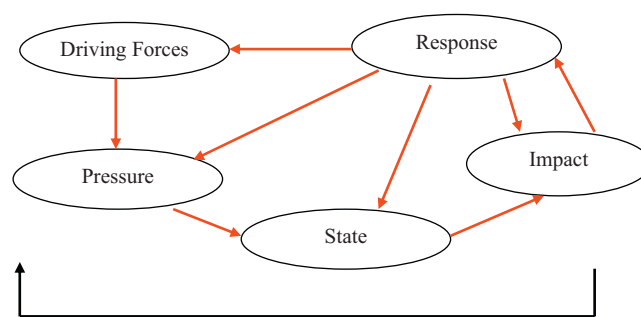


Fig. 2. The DPSIR framework for reporting on environmental issues.

Source: Smeets and Weterings (1999).

society and environment. Another important development in this area is the Pressure State Response (PSR) which is primarily based on the concept of cause and effect phenomena. This framework defines the impact of human activities which exert ‘pressures’ on the environment and results in change in the quality and the quantity of environment conditions (the ‘state’). Accordingly, society responds to these changes through environmental, economic and sectoral policies (the ‘societal response’) for its adaptation (OECD, 1993). Response of society acts as a feedback to “pressure” segment through human activities (OECD, 1998). Fig. 1 illustrates this PSR-framework of OECD.

According to Spohn (2004), “The Driving Force Pressure State Impact Response (DPSIR) model is an extension of the PSR framework and has been adopted by the European Environmental Agency (EEA) and the European Statistical Office in 1997”. Fig. 2 shows those five aspects and their connections.

Consequent to the outcome emerged in Agenda 21 on sustainable development indicators, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) came out with a list of about 140 indicators, which cover various dimensions of sustainability (CSD, 2001).

For measuring sustainability with a focus on integration of environmental and social aspects, a barometer of sustainability has been developed (Prescott-Allen, 1995). It comprises of two parts, namely ecosystem well-being for environmental aspects and human well-being for social aspects, which clearly shows that improvement in both dimensions, is equally needed for achieving sustainable development. Another landmark achievement in sustainability assessment demonstrated through development of the ecological footprint (Wackernagel and Rees, 1996) which measures the total land area which is needed to maintain the food, water, energy and waste-disposal demands per person, per product or per

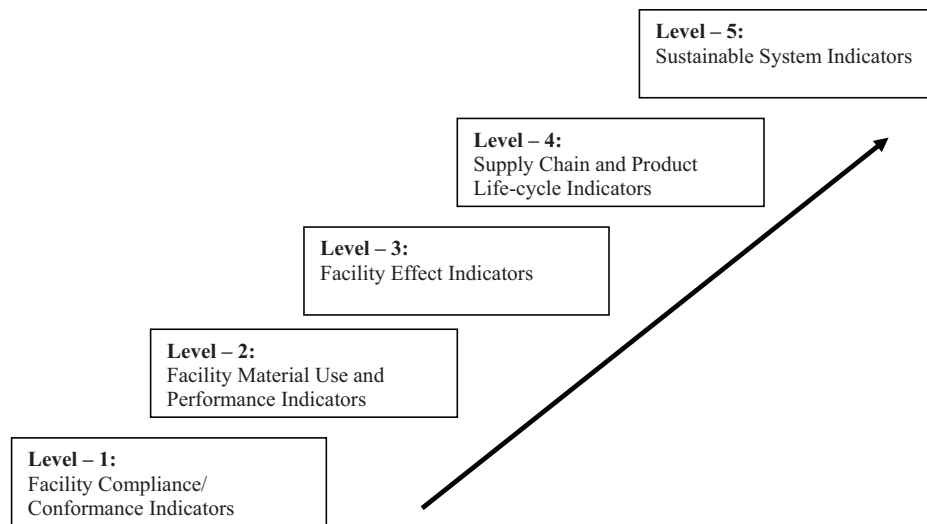


Fig. 3. Lowell Center for sustainable production indicator framework.

Source: Spohn (2004).

city. The eco-efficiency framework of the WBCSD allows assessing the performance related to economic and environmentally sustainability using set of appropriate indicators which are important for organization (WBCSD, 1999).

Spohn (2004) explained the LCSP framework which primarily focuses on the environmental, health and safety aspects of sustainable production. The framework has five step approaches for arriving towards sustainable system indicators as depicted in Fig. 3.

In order to achieve progress in sustainability, the trend of SDIs needs to be systematically monitored, measured, quantified and interpreted (Zdan, 2010). Though lot of research work has been carried out in the area of sustainability metrics. There is still lot of scope exists in this domain as sustainability context for countries or for any organization is diverse and complex in nature (Welsch, 2005).

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in association with the United States nongovernmental organization, Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economics (CERES) launched the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) in 1997 for improving the quality, structure and coverage of sustainability reporting (Labuschagne et al., 2005).

Sustainability Reporting is the focal point of the guidelines. The GRI uses sustainability reporting on three dimensions viz. social, economic, and environmental (Fig. 4).

The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) devised a framework of monitoring the various sustainability indicators for assessing the performance of government towards sustainable development goals (Labuschagne et al., 2005). The structure of framework comprises four dimensions viz. social, environment, economic and institutional and it is broken down into 38 sub-indicators and 15 main indicators (Fig. 5) another set of indicators formulated by The Institution of Chemical Engineers (IChemE) has also formulated sustainability metrics covering three dimensions environment, economic and social which are further sub-divided into set of indicators (Labuschagne et al., 2005). This metrics was initiated to assess the sustainability performance of process industry (Fig. 6).

The Wuppertal Institute also developed framework of sustainability by addressing the four dimensions of sustainable development, as defined by the United Nations CSD. These four aspects are linked through set of various indicators (Labuschagne et al., 2005) (Fig. 7).

Over the years, there have been consistent efforts at local, regional, national and international level to identify appropriate

sustainability indicators as per the sustainability context and coverage. The UN Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) has derived a list of 58 indicators from the overall list of 134 indicators for all countries to use.

### 3. Classification and evaluation of Sustainability Assessment methodologies

Dewan (2006) elaborated two key methodologies for Sustainability Assessment viz. monetary aggregation method and physical indicators and further explained that Monetary aggregation method is primarily used by economist, whereas physical indicators are used by scientists and researchers. The examples of economic approaches include natural resource accounting and modeling, sustainable growth modeling, and defining weak and strong sustainability conditions. Dewan (2006) also classified and discussed economic frameworks such as Lindahl and Solow–Hartwick framework in detail.

According to Dewan (2006) “The Hicks/Lindahl requirement for sustainable income is non-declining value of the aggregate capital stock (per capita produced capital and per capita natural capital) over time. *Weak sustainability condition* assumes perfect substitutability between produced and natural capital and *strong sustainability condition* assumes no substitutability”.

According to Dewan (2006) “In the Solow–Hartwick framework, sustainable growth path is different from the optimal growth path, which means that sustainability can be achieved at the cost of efficiency”.

Ness et al. (2007) developed a holistic framework for sustainability assessment tool which is shown in Fig. 8. Bebbington et al. (2007) categorized these in three areas viz. (1) indicators and indices, which are further classified into non-integrated and integrated, (2) product-related assessment tools with the major focus on the material and/or energy flows of a product or service from a life cycle perspective, and (3) integrated assessment.

Bohringer and Jochem (2007) discussed about three key inadequacies about SD indices which are to be systematically addressed. First issue is the selection of appropriate indicators where in one should have focus that themes determine the thematic aggregation method and units determine the technical aggregation method. Further, weighting and normalization should be done in transparent manner with proper sensitive analysis. For achieving commensurability of input variables is the third important concern.

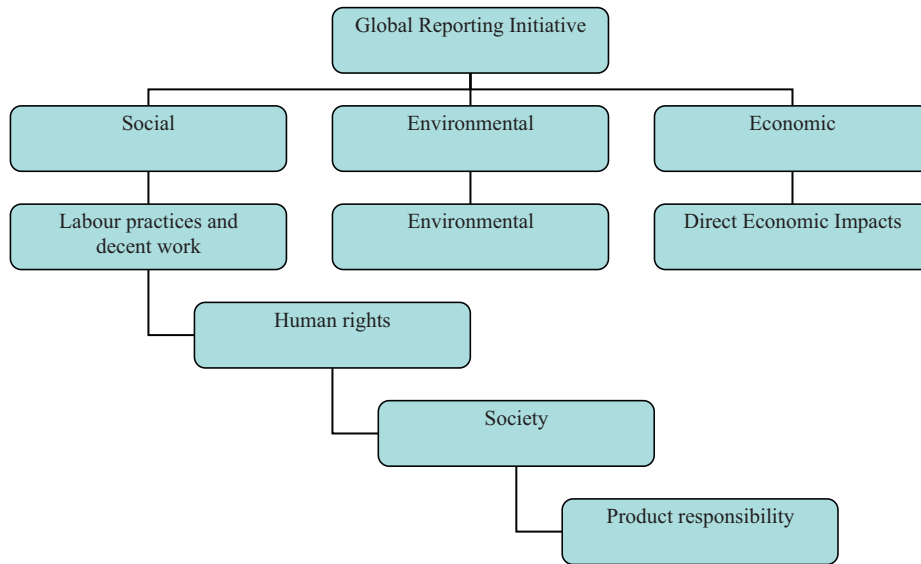


Fig. 4. The hierarchical structure of the global reporting initiative (GRI) framework.

Source: GRI (2002a).

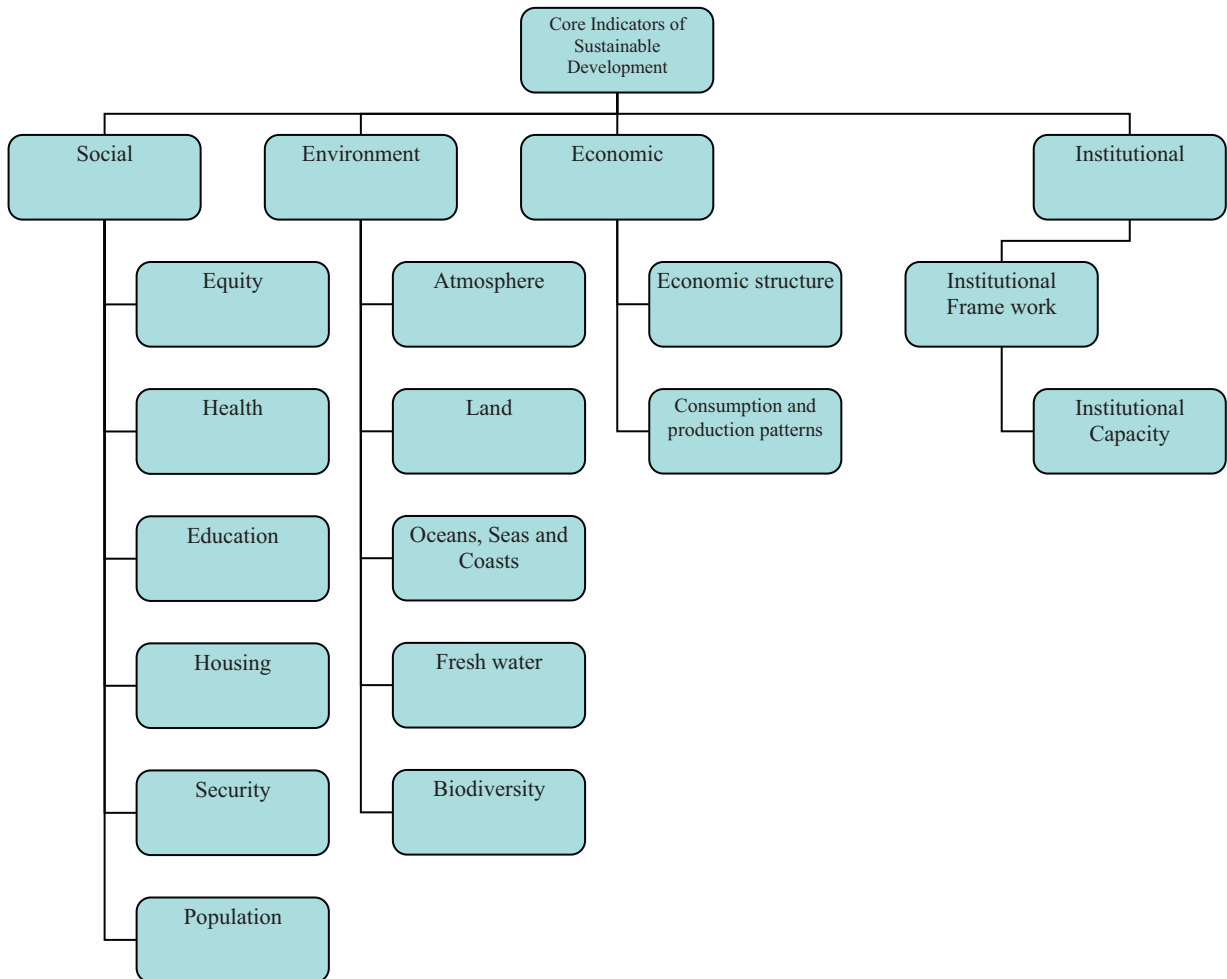


Fig. 5. The United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development (UNCSD) theme indicator framework.

Source: Labuschagne et al. (2005).

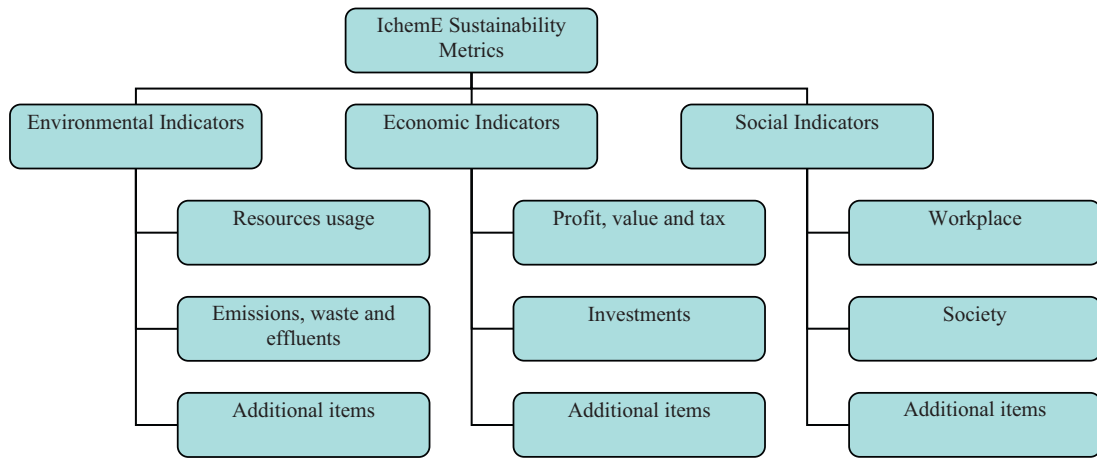


Fig. 6. The Institute of Chemical Engineers (IChemE) sustainability metrics.

Source: Labuschagne et al. (2005).

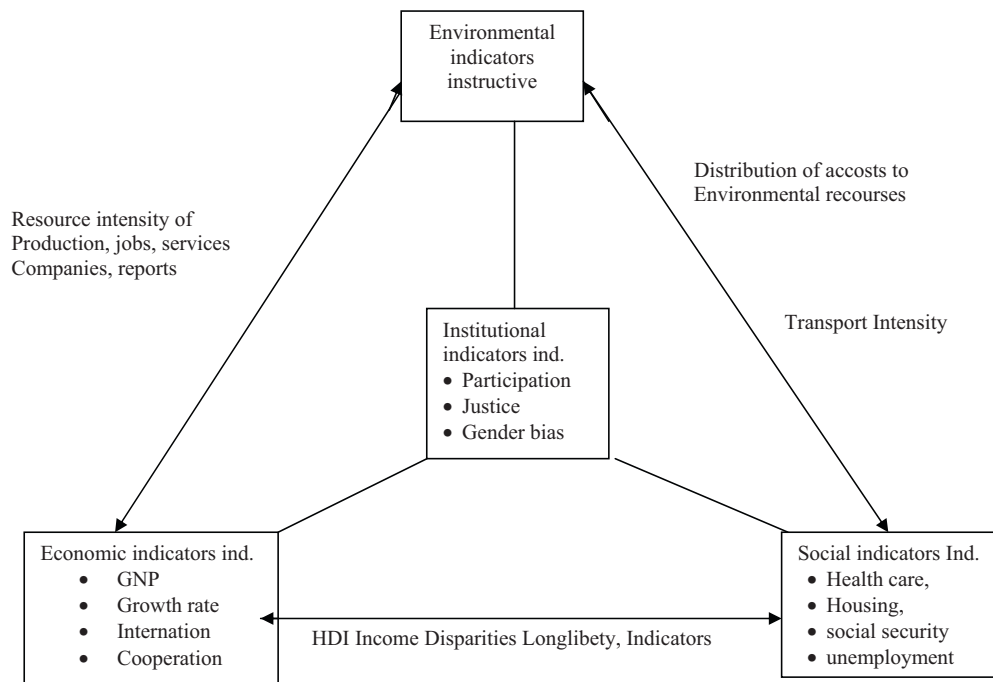


Fig. 7. The Wuppertal sustainable development indicator framework.

Source: Labuschagne et al. (2005).

The classification and evaluation of indicators can be done based on the following general dimensions of measurement which is well defined by Booyesen (2002).

- Aspects of the sustainability to be measured by indicators.
- Techniques/methods/tools used for development of index like quantitative/qualitative, subjective/objective, cardinal/ordinal, unidimensional/multidimensional.
- Whether the indicator compare the sustainability measure across 'cross-section' or 'time-series'), absolute or relative manner?
- Does the indicator measure sustainability in terms of input ('means') or output ('ends')?
- Clarity and simplicity in its content, purpose, method, comparative application and focus.
- Availability of data for the various indicators.
- Flexibility in the indicator for allowing change, purpose, method and comparative application.

### 3.1. Guidelines for construction of indices

For constructing a composite index, policy goal has to be clearly defined. The components and sub-components than need to be determined based on theory, empirical analysis, pragmatism or intuitive appeal, or some combination of these methods (Booyesen, 2002). When empirical analysis is used for selection than both bivariate and multivariate statistical techniques can be employed. Bivariate analysis measures the correlation of the association between all pairs of variables; multi-variate analysis assesses the overall strength of any set of variables to measure any other variable. Bivariate analyses normally uses correlation matrices while some of the multivariate techniques are discriminant, principal component and factor analyses. The objective of these techniques is to determine the number of key variables which really influence the composite index.

Booyesen (2002) defined four ways for performing the scaling for composite indexing purposes. Firstly, if the variables are already

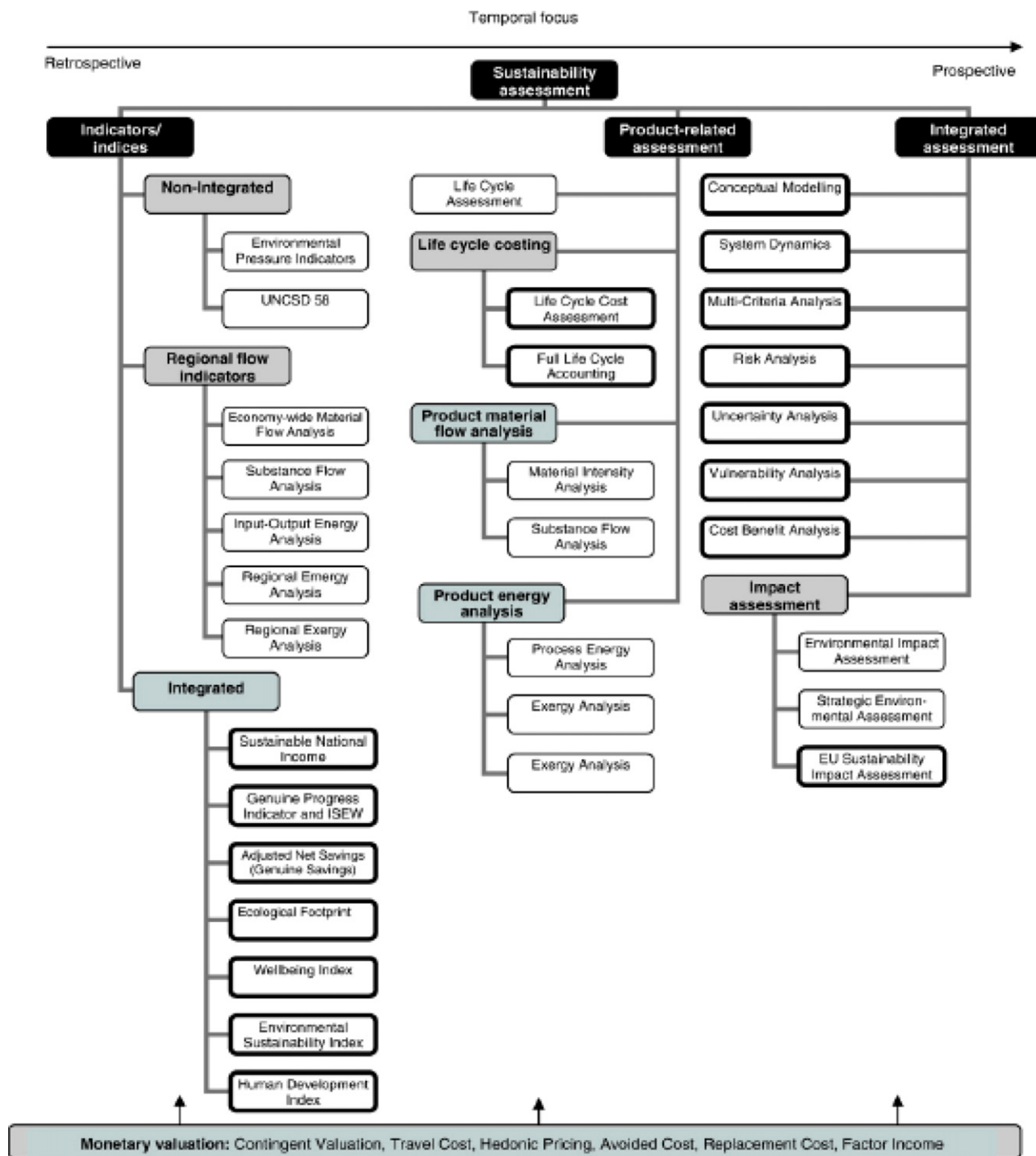


Fig. 8. Framework of sustainability assessment tools.

Source: Ness et al. (2007).

scaled than there is no need of scaling variables. Secondly, the use of standard scores ( $z$  and  $t$  values) can be employed for composite indexing. *Thirdly*, by conducting survey results, variables can be transformed and represented in the form of ordinal response scales. Finally, variables can be scaled on conventional linear scaling transformation (LST) method. For e.g. variables are scaled from 0 to 10 or 0 to 100 with the aid of this technique. However, this requires target value or points of reference relative to which indicators can be scaled. A minimum and a maximum value are required to be identified for each of the variables.

Ebert and Welsch (2004) identified four generic classes of scales that can be applied to variables viz. interval-scale non-comparability (INC), interval-scale full comparability (IFC), ratio-scale non comparability (RNC), and ratio-scale full comparability (RFC). Table 1 provides an overview of aggregation rules for variables with respect to scale and comparability.

Table 1 provides the minimal methodological requirements to be satisfied for development of any SD index. However, in many cases, indices applied in practice typically violate these qualifying conditions: whereas the aggregation of variables measured in

**Table 1**  
Aggregation rules for variables by Ebert and Welsch.

	Non-comparability	Full comparability
Interval scale	Dictatorial ordering	Arithmetic mean
Ratio scale	Geometric mean	Any homothetic function

ratio-scale without being comparable would call for a geometric mean, indices are often based on a (misleading) arithmetic mean (Bohringer and Jochem, 2007).

Weighting system and method employed in aggregating component scores plays a predominant role for development of composite index. Normally implicit weights are introduced during scaling and explicit weights can be introduced during aggregation (Booyesen, 2002). In case of explicit weights being not employed, the component and index scores are simply averages of the corresponding variable and component scores. Multivariate techniques provide relatively better option for weight selection. Principal component analysis is one of the widely used multivariate analysis tool for weighting of components based on the proportion of variance in the original set of variables explained by the first principal component of that particular component. Once the weights have been assigned to each indicator and the each indicator transformed into component score, these scores are aggregated into a composite score. The various choices of method employed in weighting and aggregation is finally dependent on the goal, nature, scope, type of indicators etc. (Booyesen, 2002).

Sensitivity analysis along with proper validation should be done on composite indices (Nardo et al., 2005). Based on the validation results, indices need to be improved and adjusted. The validation adjustments are normally carried out at different stages viz. selection, scaling, weighting and aggregation in order to improve the quality of the final results. Validation is normally performed by using either item analysis or external validation (Booyesen, 2002).

There is always a requirement of demonstrating proper evidence through the reliable results while using composite index. If the user simply does not know, or is not sure about the testing and certification of the composite, then composite's quality is low (Moldan et al., 2004). A notational system called NUSAP (an acronym for five categories: Numeral, Unit, Spread, Assessment, Pedigree) can be used to characterize the quality of quantitative information based in large part on the experience of research work in the matured natural sciences (Funtowicz and Ravetz, 1990). One category of NUSAP, the pedigree, is an evaluative description of the procedure used to build the composite indicator.

**4. Composite indicators for sustainability**

The construction of composite indicators involves selection of various methods/tools/techniques at different stages of development process. However, this may result in various issues of uncertainty due the selection of data, erroneous data, data imputation methods, data normalization, standardization, weighting methods, weights' values and aggregation methods.

Development of composite indicators is considered to be a unique approach for evaluating sustainable development. Computing aggregate values is one of the common methods for constructing indices. Composites indices can be constructed with or without weights depending on its application. Indices are very useful in focusing attention and, often simplify the problem (Atkinson et al., 1997).

Use of uncertainty and sensitivity analysis can assist in identifying the gaps and check the robustness of the composite indicator, which further enhances the transparency and credibility of the indices. Tools for sensitivity analysis should evaluate the output variation in models and also be able to apportion composite

**Table 2**  
Methods for calculating composite indicators (CIs). Source: OECD (2002).

Method	Equation
1. Sum of country rankings	$CI_c^t = \sum_{i=1}^N Rank_k^t$
2. Number of indicators above the mean minus the number below the mean	$CI_c^t = \sum_{i=1}^N \text{sgn} \left[ \frac{x_k^t}{x_{EU_i}^t} - (1 + p) \right]$
3. Ratio or percentage differences from the mean	$CI_c^t = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^N w_i y_k^t}{\sum_{i=1}^N w_i}$ , where $y_k^t = \frac{x_k^t}{x_{EU_i}^t}$
4. Percentage of annual differences over consecutive years	$CI_c^t = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^N w_i y_k^t}{\sum_{i=1}^N w_i}$ , where $y_k^t = \frac{x_k^t - x_k^{t-1}}{x_k^t}$
5. Standardized values	$CI_c^t = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^N w_i y_k^t}{\sum_{i=1}^N w_i}$ , where $y_k^t = \frac{x_k^t - x_k^{t-1}}{\sigma_{EU_i}^t}$
6. Re-scaled values	$CI_c^t = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^N w_i y_k^t}{\sum_{i=1}^N w_i}$ , where $y_k^t = \frac{x_k^t - \min(x_k^t)}{\text{range}(x_k^t)}$

Notes:  $x_k^t$  is the value of indicator  $i$  for country  $c$  at time  $t$ .  $w_i$  is the weight given to indicator  $i$  in the composite index. In Method 2,  $p$  = an arbitrarily chosen threshold above and below the mean.

indicator quantitatively or qualitatively, to different types of variation in the study.

The steps suggested by Saisana and Tarantola (2002) for establishing the framework of Composite indicators are described below.

Once the policy goal has been defined, it is very important to decide whether the phenomenon to be measured would fetch in benefit from the use of composite indicators. Secondly, there should be better understanding of influencing parameters and themes. A clear cut approach is needed for selecting the individual sub-indicators. The data related to sub-indicators should be of high quality. Proper imputation techniques should be employed for achieving better data quality. In case of data gaps, methods like mean substitution, correlation results, time series, etc. can be applied. However, it is necessary to assess the suitable method which can have reliable result. Thirdly, suitable normalizing and weighting techniques are to be used for the sub-indicators. The selection of the appropriate methods depends on the data and the scope of the study. Finally, after aggregation of sub-indicators, it is required to be checked for robustness and sensitivity.

Some of the key methods of aggregation employed are principal components analysis, factor analysis, distance to targets, expert's opinion (budget allocation) and analytic hierarchy process.

The various methods for calculating the composite indicators are shown in Table 2.

Dewan (2006) presents the milestones in the development of various indices in the field of economic, environmental and social aspects, which are enumerated below:

Measure of Economic Welfare (MEW)	Nordhaus and Tobin (1973), IMSA (1995), Jackson and Marks (1994)
Index of Social Progress (ISP)	Estes (1974)
Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI)	Morris (1979)
Economic Aspects of Welfare (EAW)	Zolotas (1981)
Sustainability Performance Index (SPI)	Krotscheck and Narodoslawsy (1994)
Ecological Footprint	Wackernagel and Rees (1996)
Material Input Per Service Unit (MIPS)	Schmidt-Bleek (1994)
Barometer of Sustainability	IUCN/IDRC (1995)
Environmental Pressure Indicators (EPI)	EU (1999)
Human Development Index (HDI)	United Nations (1990)
Index for Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW)	Daly and Cobb (1989), Guenno and Tizzi (1998)
Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI)	Cobb et al. (1995)

Genuine Savings Indicator (GSI)	Hamilton (1999)
Total Material Requirement	EEA (2001)
Eco-efficiency Indices	WBCSD (1999)
Compass of Sustainability	Atkinson et al. (1997)
Environmental Sustainability Index (ESI)	WEF (2002a,b)

## 5. Overview of sustainability indices

The brief description of various indices and ratings are described below.

### 5.1. Innovation, knowledge and technology indices

#### 5.1.1. Summary Innovation Index

The Summary Innovation Index (SII) is an innovation scoreboard developed for European member states, which shows achievements and trends, highlights strengths and weaknesses of Member States' performances, and examines the European convergence in innovation (DG Enterprise, 2001). The innovation scoreboard comprises of 17 indicators broken down in four segments human resources, knowledge creation, transmission and application of new knowledge and innovation finance, output and markets. The study was carried out between 1995/1997 and 1999/2000. The SII is evaluated for a given country based on value equal to the number of indicators that are more than 20% above the EU overall mean, minus the number of indicators that are more than 20% below. Adjustment has also been done in SII for differences in the number of available indicators for each country. The index can vary between +10 (all indicators are above average) to -10 (all indicators are below average).

#### 5.1.2. Investment in the knowledge based economy

Investment in the knowledge based economy is built by DG RTD, which aims to summarize various indicators of national investment in highly qualified human resources in science, technology, research and education, so as to measure a country's capacity to create knowledge (Muldur, 2001). The composite indicator aggregates seven indicators with respect to the number of researchers, the number of new doctors in science and technology (annual influx), domestic expenditure on R&D, expenditure on information technologies and imports of high-tech products. For normalization purpose and also to neutralize the effect of the size of the countries, all sub-indicators are measured on per capita basis.

#### 5.1.3. Performance in the knowledge based economy

The second index related to the knowledge-based economy aims to measure a country's performance in converting the new knowledge into economic and technological progress to increase both a country's competitiveness and the well being of its citizens. The index combines six indicators: the number of EPO and USPTO patents, the number of publications, production of high-tech exports, the employment in the high-tech production and GDP per capita.

#### 5.1.4. Innovation Index

The Innovation Index comprises of three key areas that combine between 3 and 5 variables, which are mostly collected from OECD databases. The first key area i.e. *generation of new knowledge* combines variables such as basic research as a percentage of GDP and non-business researchers as a share of the labour force. The second key area is *industry/science linkages* demonstrated by public/private links through data relating to R&D, the scientific evidence of patents, and publications. In the third key area *industrial innovation* is represented by data on business research,

patents and the introduction of new products and processes which are also used to measure the progress in innovation in private sector.

#### 5.1.5. National innovation capacity

National innovation capacity index has been developed to define the quantitative benchmark of national innovative capacity. There are eight sub-indicators identified viz. expenditures on R&D, personnel employed in R&D, openness to International Trade & Investment, strength of protection for intellectual property, share of GDP spent on secondary and tertiary education, GDP Per Capita, percentage of R&D Funded by private Industry and percentage of R&D performed by Universities. This index depicts the national highlights in terms of resource commitments and policy options which has got significant impact on innovative output in the long run (Porter and Stern, 1999).

#### 5.1.6. Information and communication technologies

The index aims at providing an overall state of a country's situation regarding development and application of information and communication technologies (Fagerberg, 2001). Five indicators like number of mobile telephones, number of Internet users, etc. are used for the aggregation of the composite indicator.

#### 5.1.7. Technology Achievement Index

The Technology Achievement Index (TAI) is formulated to assess the performance of countries in promoting and diffusing technology and in capacity building with a focus on developing a human skills base (United Nations, 2001). The index comprises of four dimensions which uses data from 8 indicators. The four dimensions are technology creation in terms of number of patents granted to residents per capita and by receipts of royalties and license fees from abroad per capita, diffusion of recent innovations in terms of the number of Internet hosts per capita and the share of high- and medium-technology exports in total goods exports, diffusion of old innovations, as measured by telephones (mainline and cellular) per capita and electricity consumption per capita and Human skills, in terms of mean years of schooling in the population aged 15 and above and the gross tertiary science enrolment ratio.

#### 5.1.8. General Indicator of Science and Technology

General Indicator of Science and Technology (GIST) developed by the National Institute of Science and Technology Policy of Japan (NISTEP) to highlight the trends in Japan's Science and Technology activities and conduct international benchmarking and time-series analysis (NISTEP, 1995). GIST comprises of 13 indicators classified in two categories. Five indicators grouped as "input" and eight as "output". The input indicators include: "R&D expenditure", "R&D scientists/engineers", "Bachelor's of Science degrees conferred", "Bachelor's of Engineering degrees conferred", and "technology imports". The output indicators identified as: "scientific papers", "scientific paper citations", "domestic patents", "external patents", "patent citations", "product output", "high tech product output" and "technology exports".

#### 5.1.9. Success of software process improvement

The Index comprises of 14 variables which have significant impact on the software process improvement. The prime objective of development of this index is to understand the software process improvement mechanism and also identify reasons that can explain the successes and failures of software process improvement efforts (Emam et al., 1998).

## 5.2. Development indices

### 5.2.1. Human Development Index

The Human Development Index (HDI) developed by United Nations comprises of three basic components viz. a long and healthy life, knowledge and GDP per capita (United Nations, 2001). Long and healthy life is measured based on life expectancy at birth, knowledge is evaluated on adult literacy rate (with two-thirds weight) and the combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio (with one-third weight) and GDP per capita in terms of PPP US\$. All the indices are evaluated based on minimum and maximum values for each indicator and performance in each component is expressed as a value between 0 and 1.

### 5.2.2. Index of sustainable and economic welfare

Centre for Environmental Strategy (CES) and the New Economics Foundation (NEF) developed the Index of sustainable and economic welfare (ISEW). The major goal of this index is to measure the component of economic activity that leads to welfare to the society. It further aims to replace GDP as an indicator of progress, because of its ability to demonstrate the relationship between economic activities and their direct impacts on the quality of life (CES, 2000). The index comprises of seven economic activities divided into set of twenty sub-indicators. The main seven components related to economic activities include: adjusted consumer expenditure, services from domestic labour, from consumer durables, from streets and highways, public expenditure on health and education, net capital growth and net change in international position. The thirteen indicators that related to the reduction in welfare are: consumer durables (difference between expenditure and value of services), private expenditures on health and education, commuting costs, personal pollution control, automobile accidents, water pollution, air pollution, noise pollution, loss of natural habitats, loss of farmlands, depletion of non-renewable resources, costs of climate change and costs of ozone depletion.

### 5.2.3. Relative intensity of regional problems in the Community (by the EC)

The European Commission (EC) developed an index for measuring the regional problems in the community which is known as “relative intensity of regional problems in the Community” (Commission of the European Communities, 1984). The prime objective of the Index is to help assist communities to formulate concrete regional policy for strengthening the economic performance of regions having slower pace of development. The European Commission constructed this uniform and global methodology to synthesize three sub-indicators: GDP per employed in ECU, GDP per head in PPS, and unemployment rate.

## 5.3. Market and economy based indices

### 5.3.1. Internal Market Index

The Internal Market Index aims to measure whether the benefits which are likely to be derived from the Internal Market Strategy for the betterment of the citizens and companies, are effectively delivered (DG MARKT, 2001). There are 19 set of variables aggregated in the Index. Some of the key indicators are growth in per-capita income, long-term unemployment, price dispersion, growth in intra-EU trade, prices of utilities services, and availability of venture capital, energy intensity and greenhouse gas emissions.

### 5.3.2. Business climate indicator

DG ECFIN has constructed a composite indicator based on results of business surveys. This is designed to deliver an indication and early warning of the cyclical situation of the business within the area and to improve the understanding of the business cycle in the

European area as a whole (DG ECFIN, 2000). The five sub-indicators are selected based on the responses of national business surveys: production trends in recent past, order books, export order books, stocks and production expectations. Each series of information transformed between –100 (indicating that all firms have reported a deterioration) and +100 (all firms have noted an improvement).

### 5.3.3. European Labour Market Performance

The European Labour Market Performance Index aims to measure the labour market performance using Basic Performance Indicators that are used in the benchmarking process of the Amsterdam Treaty (Storrie and Bjurek, 1999). For demonstration purposes, three indicators of unemployment from the Basic Performance Indicators are benchmarked. These three indicators are: the unemployment rate, the long-term unemployment rate and the youth unemployment ratio.

### 5.3.4. Composite Leading Indicators

The OECD Composite Leading Indicators (CLI) comprises of individually elected leading indicators developed for 22 member states (Nilsson, 2000). Composite Leading Indicators aims to provide better forecasting and tracking of business cycle. The OECD CLI's are based on individually selected leading indicators for each country (OECD, 2002).

### 5.3.5. Genuine savings (GS)

Pearce and Atkinson (1993) developed this index. This index is based on Hicksian income concept (Bohringer and Jochem, 2007). This indicator assesses the economy's sustainability and redefines the wealth in broader perspective and calculates the net change in the whole range of assets that are important for development: produced assets, natural resources, environment quality, human resources and foreign assets.

### 5.3.6. Economic Sentiment Indicator

The Economic Sentiment Indicator of the European Commission (EC ESI) aggregates business surveys into a single cyclical indicator. This indicator also reduces the risk of false signals and provides a better forecasting and tracking tool to assess individual components (Nilsson, 2000). The Economic Sentiment Indicator comprises of four components viz. industrial confidence indicator, construction confidence indicator, consumer confidence indicator and share price index.

### 5.3.7. Green Net National Product (GNNP) or (EDP) and SEEA

Green Net National Product (GNNP) takes care of both aspects environmental degradation as well as flow of earnings and makes adjustments. This eliminates the flaws in GDP. The Environmental Adjusted Net Domestic Product (EDP) has been developed within the purview of SEEA (System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting – UNEP, 2000). Bohringer and Jochem (2007) explains three different versions of the EDP: “(i) the EDP-I is evaluated by subtracting the depreciations of natural resources from the Net National Income (NNI), (ii) the EDP-II is ascertained by subtracting from the NNI the costs necessary to reach the same state of the environment at the end of the period as existed at the beginning of the period, and (iii) the EDP-III is calculated by subtracting the costs of environmental pressure and destruction using willingness-to-pay methods.”

## 5.4. Eco-system based Indices

### 5.4.1. Sustainability Performance Index (SPI)

The SPI is developed by Narodoslawsky and Krotscheck in 1994 for process industry to measure the sustainability. It uses only

process data during the early stage of planning and data of natural concentrations of substances (not on their presumable impact which is usually not known). The SPI evaluation comprises of calculation of the area needed to embed a process completely into the biosphere. The SPI for the unit process is equivalent to the total area required for production of raw material, process energy and provision of installations for process as well as the area required for the staff and for the accommodation of products and by-products (Lundin, 2003).

#### 5.4.2. Eco-Index Methodology

For performing the Ecological Footprint (EF) analysis, the Eco-Index Methodology was developed by Best Foot Forward (Chambers et al., 2000) which is primarily utilizes 'component' or 'bottom-up approach' methodology. This is also compatible with the 'compound' top-down approach which collects information from international trade statistics. Eco-Index Methodology takes care of entire life cycle data for assessing the EF conversion factors for most of the key component. The ecological footprint (as measured using global average yields) is normalized by the application of equivalence factors.

#### 5.4.3. Living Planet Index (LPI)

Living Planet Index was developed by WWF (1998) which is used as the global biodiversity indicator. LPI measures trends in over 2000 populations of more than 1100 species of vertebrates in terrestrial, freshwater, and seawater ecosystems. The LPI calculates the sub-index for the three spheres. According to Bohringer and Jochem (2007), LPI is the ratio between its populations for each sphere for each consecutive year. The geometric mean of all ratios of different species multiplied with the index value of the former year provides the biodiversity index for the respective sphere. The base year is considered as 1970 and index value is scale for 1970 is unity.

#### 5.4.4. Ecological Footprint (EF)

The Ecological Footprint (EF) (Wackernagel and Rees, 1997) "quantifies for any given population the mutually exclusive, biotically productive area that must be continuous use to provide its resource supplies and to assimilate its wastes". EF uses bio-productive area as unit of measurement. The footprint accounts the resource supply chains and disposal management options. This analysis calculates whether the land and sea area required per year to sustain the current consumption by the help prevailing technology are within the available resources. Land and sea are divided into five components viz. bio-productive land, bio-productive sea, energy land, built land and biodiversity land for non-human species. Footprints are calculated based on either compound or component or combination of these methods. EF is used to estimate environmental sustainability at national and global level. The Ecoindex™ (Chambers and Lewis, 2001) gained lot of popularity which measures the impact of different products, services, lifestyles.

#### 5.4.5. Fossil Fuel Sustainability Index (FFSI)

Fossil Fuel sustainability index has been developed for fossil fuels which aims to determine the most efficient management of fossil fuel resources for the energy system (Ediger et al., 2007). This study is conducted for 62 countries considering the independence, lifetime and environmental constraints. The effect of these indicators are then integrated into a single index for oil, natural gas, and coal. Two approaches viz. equal weights and principal component analysis have been taken for development of index.

### 5.5. Composite sustainability performance indices for industries

#### 5.5.1. Composite sustainable development index

Krajnc and Glavic (2005) identified key indicators for three dimensions of sustainability. A composite sustainable development index ( $I_{CSD}$ ) has been developed in order to track integrated information on economic, environmental, and social performance of the company with real-time information. All the indicators are normalized based on minimum and maximum value and aggregated to three sustainability sub-indices and finally these are composed into an overall indicator of a company performance. Weights of the indicators have been evaluated using the concept of analytic hierarchy process.

#### 5.5.2. Compass Index of Sustainability (CIS)

The Compass Index of Sustainability developed by AtKisson Inc. for Orlando, Florida. CIS comprises of four dimensions of sustainability viz. Nature (N), Economy (E), Society (S) and Well Being (W) corresponding to the four points on a compass. Indicators were scaled on a 0–100 performance scale. Scales were set by normative judgments. Each indicator has equal weight. Simple averaging technique was employed for aggregation (Atkinson et al., 1997).

#### 5.5.3. Composite Sustainability Performance Index

The Composite Sustainability Performance Index (CSPI) is an attempt to develop a measure of sustainability and to evaluate how well a company demonstrates its policies and commitments regarding sustainable development. This model enables industry to identify the key sustainability performance indicators and provides framework for aggregating the various indicators into the Composite Sustainability Performance Index (Singh et al., 2007). The calculation of CSPI is a step-by-step procedure of grouping various basic indicators into the sustainability sub-index for each group of sustainability indicators. Sub-indices then subsequently derived in the form of aggregated index. Weights are derived using analytic hierarchy process. Liberatore scoring and Z score method were employed for aggregation of indicators. The model has been evaluated based on the real-time application for a steel industry. Composite sustainability performance index (CSPI) with its sub-indices for each dimensions of sustainability was evaluated for the time period of four years.

#### 5.5.4. ITT Flygt Sustainability Index

This index is constructed by Pohl (2006) and calculated for ITT Flygt AB over a three years period (2002–2004). ITT Flygt Sustainability Index provides a framework for measuring the sustainability at corporate level. It shows that how well a company stands up to its policies and commitments regarding sustainable development. The index structure was constructed based on information collected from scientific literature and stakeholder engagement process with ITT Flygt and four other engineering companies. The index is calculated by aggregating some forty sustainability-indicators. The identified indicators are specific to each company and are designed to measure the significant sustainability aspects of the company.

#### 5.5.5. G Score method

G Score is a measurement tool to assess the corporate environmental performance based on the information obtained from voluntary environment, health, and safety (EHS) report and is calculated by aggregating the points of five categories namely general environmental management (GEM), input, process, output, and outcome (Jung et al., 2001).

### 5.5.6. Sustainable Asset management (SAM) Zurich, Switzerland ([www.sam-group.com](http://www.sam-group.com))

Sustainable Asset Management founded by Swiss Re, Volkart Brothers Group and SAM which serves as an in-house department for the investment company Sustainable Performance Group and also assesses companies for external clients. They give input to investment agencies on leading worldwide companies which have strongly committed for sustainability and successfully integrated their economic, ecological and social aspects to their overall management system. They also focus on the companies which are able to recognize opportunities and risks proactively and thus create for themselves long-term, sustainable competitive advantages, and further for the achieve above-average profitability.' The assessment involves going into details of company's 'sustainability opportunities' (its strategic opportunities; product; corporate sustainability), and its 'sustainability risks' (stakeholder engagement; environmental management; resource efficiency; strategic risks; sustainability costs). There are more than 100 criteria are used for the rating. SAM with the Dow Jones indices recently launched a series of sustainability indices (DJSI, 2003). The global index contains 225 components, selected from the Dow Jones global index of 2000 blue chip companies ([www.sam-group.com](http://www.sam-group.com)).

### 5.5.7. Dow Jones sustainability group indices (DJSGI), US ([www.sustainability-index.com](http://www.sustainability-index.com))

The DJSGI in association with SAM Sustainability Group developed the first set of global sustainability indices in September 1999. The DJSGI provides a platform for corporate to benchmark their sustainability performance. It tracks the performance of the top 10% of the companies in the Dow Jones global index which has taken lead in the field of sustainability. There are five criteria's of sustainability principles on which the ranking of companies are done (Dow Jones/SAM 1999):

**Technology:** Assess adoption of innovative technology, efficient, effective and economic use of financial, natural and social resources.

**Governance:** Corporate governance, management responsibility, organizational capability, corporate culture and stakeholder relations.

**Shareholders:** Sound financial return, long-term economic growth, long-term productivity, enhanced global competitiveness and contributions to intellectual capital.

**Industry:** Focus of industry towards sustainable value creation and demonstrating commitment and publishing superior performance with respect to sustainability.

**Society:** Stakeholder engagement, promote social well-being by understanding the needs and expectations of stakeholders, evolving demographics, migratory flows, shifting cultural patterns and the need for continuing education.

The criteria help in financial quantification of sustainability performance by addressing the company's sustainability opportunities and risks. Based on the final score each company's sustainability performance is given ranking.

### 5.5.8. Bovespa Corporate Sustainability Index

The Bovespa Corporate Sustainability Index (Indices de Sustentabilidade Empresarial – ISE) is the index used for tracking the economic, financial, corporate governance, environmental and social performance of leading companies listed in the São Paulo Stock Exchange. It is primarily based on the triple bottom line (TBL) concept, which evaluates the economic financial, social, and environmental elements in an integrated manner. The economic-financial, social, and environmental dimensions were divided into four groups of criteria: Policies (commitment indicators);

Management (indicating plans, programs, goals, and monitoring); Performance; and Legal Compliance (with environmental and consumer regulation, among others).

## 5.6. Product Based Sustainability Index

### 5.6.1. Life Cycle Index

Life Cycle Index (LInX) is a composite index developed for decision making of process and products considering its entire life cycle attributes. The objective of this tool is to help companies to provide decision support system in assessing the various design and technological considerations of processes and products. LInX is comprised of four components namely environment, cost, technology, and socio-political factors. It takes care of both aspects wherein targets have to be met separately (fixed) and trade-offs between different impacts are allowed (flexible). This model provides more flexibility in reaching the target by considering the cost of increased need for preference information collection and modeling. Typically, fixed and flexible models both can be incorporated in the index while giving separate targets for selected impact categories. For remaining impact categories, it is combined together and target can be given in term of aggregated impact (Khan et al., 2004).

### 5.6.2. Ford of Europe's Product Sustainability Index

Ford of Europe's Product Sustainability Index (PSI) is a sustainability management tool is being used by car manufacturer's which is developed based on life cycle assessment approach... PSI is looking at eight indicators reflecting environmental (Life Cycle Global Warming Potential, Life Cycle Air Quality Potential, Sustainable Materials, Restricted Substances, Drive-by-Exterior-Noise), social (Mobility Capability, Safety) and economic (Life Cycle Cost of Ownership) vehicle attributes.

## 5.7. Sustainability Indices for Cities

### 5.7.1. Urban sustainability index

The urban sustainability index (USI) developed by Zhang (2002) based on 22 individual indicators in the context of urban China. These indicators were selected from a sustainability indicator database (with 387 indicators) through three rounds of extensive consultation of experts using the pre-coded questionnaires. Total urban sustainability score is having three components of the urban sustainability scores and each of the three components is based on a number of individual indicators. All the indicators have given weights using analytical hierarchy process (AHP) method and expert's consultation. The three dimensions are namely urban status, urban coordination and the urban potential. These dimensions capture the three key points of urban sustainability: the urban development capacity, urban coordination capacity and urban development potential. The score of USI is the weighted sum of scores of the three components of the urban sustainability index. The score of each of the three components of the urban sustainability index is the weighted sum of scores of the relevant subcomponents of the urban sustainability. The score on the urban sustainability index has been scaled from 0 to 1.

### 5.7.2. Sustainability Index for Taipei

This study was carried out for Taipei city. This study is performed based on the views of experts, scholars, government departments and collecting information from scientific literature. It also takes care of specific aspects of Taipei city. A total number of 51 sustainability indicators selected with respect to the socio-economic characteristic of Taipei City. Indicators are classified into economic, social, environmental and institutional dimensions. Subsequently, statistical data is collated to understand the trend of sustainable

development from 1994 to 2004. Moreover, the sustainability index is calculated for the four dimensions and for Taipei as a whole. This study applies standard deviation as the basic method for calculating the sustainability index. It standardizes indicator values so that each standardized value falls between 0 and 1. Study applies the equal weight method for initial integration and analyzing overall sustainability trend.

#### 5.7.3. City Development Index

The City Development Index (CDI) developed by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT) comprises of five sub-indices: (i) an infrastructure index, which is sub-divided into four (equally weighted) indicators namely percentages of households connected to clean water, canalization, electricity and availability of phone network (without mobiles); (ii) waste index sub-classified into twofold (equally weighted) indicators as the percentage of untreated sewage in total wastewater and the percentage of disposal of solid waste in total solid wastes.

#### 5.7.4. The Sustainability Cities Index

Forum for the Future has identified three dimensions of indicators for providing ranking to the cities of Britain. The three dimensions are namely, Environmental Impact of the city which describes the impact of the city on the environment with respect to resource use and pollution, Quality of Life for residents shows the state of city to live in for all its citizens and the third dimension is "Future Proofing" which indicates how well the city is preparing itself for a sustainable future. These index categories were identified to evaluate the sustainability of each city in a transparent and balanced way considering 13 indicators.

#### 5.7.5. Ecosistema Urbano Performance Index

Ecosistema Urbano is a project initiated in Italy in 1994 for 103 main Italian metropolitans. Over the years it has been well established to evaluate the environmental index of the city. This index comprises of 20 environmental indicators and has been tested for last 10 years. The project focuses on the resources quality and its management and environmental protection. Indicators are designed in such a way that it facilitates in evaluating the sustainability of the cities in terms of the impact posed on environmental resources due to economic activities and modern lifestyles. It also evaluates the outcome of the actions carried out to mitigate the pressure. It allows organizing cities environmental data in order to identify a sustainability evaluation criteria and an environmental performance benchmarking.

#### 5.7.6. Sustainable Seattle: developing Indicators of Sustainable Community

Sustainable Seattle has been developed as part of community engagement process to measure the community well being in order to address the health problems of the city in 1998. The development process involved series of consultation meetings which resulted in identification of 40 indicators covering various issues like environment, population and resources, economy, youth and education, health and community.

#### 5.7.7. ISSI Index, Italy

Institute of Sustainable Development, Italy developed a sustainability index for measuring the sustainable performance of Italy. The ISSI index comprises of three components namely socio-economic, environment and resources categories. Each category consists of 10 indicators. This is a multi dimension vector presentation tool which allows comparisons between the Italian regions as well as between countries. Indicators are normalized based on the target value, considering the time series data. Simplified

dashboard has also been realized by color representation of various components (Ronchi et al., 2002).

### 5.8. Environmental Indices for Policies, Nations and Regions

#### 5.8.1. Environment Sustainability Index

The 2002 Environmental Sustainability Index (ESI) is developed for 142 countries to measure the overall progress towards environmental sustainability. The ESI comprises of sixty-eight basic indicators. These indicators are then aggregated to construct twenty one core indicators. The Environmental Sustainability Index value for each country is aggregated based on the average value for the 21 factors. Every variable in the data set is normalized and scaled between 0 (low sustainability) and 100 (high sustainability) (WEF, 2002a,b).

#### 5.8.2. Environment Quality Index

Environment Quality Index (EQI) was developed for assessing the environmental impacts of various alternatives. The key environmental indicators are defined and selected on the basis of the multiattribute-utility theory and weights are ascertained by using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) methodology (Saaty, 1980). EQI is evaluated by weighted sum of all environmental indicators, which provides the overall environmental impact of each alternative (Bisset, 1988). Each environmental indicator is scaled in the range 0–10 and evaluated using linear utility function, the utility functions are given the weights according to the importance of each environmental factor, and the weighted sum gives the environmental quality index.

#### 5.8.3. Environmental Sustainability Index

The Environmental Sustainability Index (ESI) was developed for 122 countries under the aegis of World Economic Forum in 2001 which is a measure of overall progress towards environmental sustainability (WEF, 2001). The ESI scores comprises of a set of 22 sub-indicators, each of which combines two to six variables. In total 67 variables are considered.

#### 5.8.4. Concern about environmental problems

The index developed by Parker primarily aims to measure the public concern emerging out of environmental problems (Parker, 1991). This index has eleven indicators and classified in three categories namely air problems, water problems and landscape-related problems. The air problems comprises of four parameters namely nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, carbon dioxide and particulates, two indicators associated with water problems are bathing and fertilizers and five landscape-related indicators are population change, new dwellings, tourism, traffic and waste.

#### 5.8.5. Index of Environmental Friendliness

The Index of Environmental Friendliness has been developed based on aggregation of direct and indirect data related to global and local environmental problems. The scope of the model is designed to cover the key environmental problems of greenhouse effect, ozone depletion, acidification, eutrophication, ecotoxicological effect, resource depletion, photo-oxidation, biodiversity, radiation and noise (Puolamaa et al., 1996).

#### 5.8.6. Environmental Policy Performance Indicator (by Adriaanse A., The Netherlands)

The Environment Policy Performance Indicator has been developed to monitor the trend in the total environmental pressure and also ascertain the adequacy of the environmental policy in the Netherlands (Adriaanse, 1993). This index comprises of six theme indicators namely: (a) change of climate, (b) acidification,

(c) eutrophication, (d) dispersion of toxic substances, (e) disposal of solid waste, and (f) odour and noise disturbance.

#### 5.8.7. Environmental Performance Index

The Environment Performance Index (EPI) has been developed to measure the impact of policy which results in reduction of environmental stresses on human health and promoting ecosystem vitality and sound natural resource management (Bohringer and Jochem, 2007). The EPI aims to evaluate a set of environmental issues monitored through six policy categories for which all governments are liable to undertake" (Esty et al., 2005). All the indicators are scaled from 0 to 100. Weights of indicators are evaluated using principal component analysis and finally it is aggregated in the form of weighted sum.

#### 5.8.8. Environmental Vulnerability Index

The Environmental Vulnerability Index (EVI) has been developed to assess the likelihood of potential damages caused by environmental problems. This index comprises of 32 indicators of hazards, 8 indicators of resistance, and 10 indicators that measure damage (SOPAC, 2005). All 50 indicators are given equal weights and aggregated by an arithmetic mean. The scale is normalized between the range of 1 (indicating high resilience/low vulnerability) and 7 (indicating low resilience/high vulnerability).

#### 5.8.9. Two "Synthetic environmental indices"

In the review paper of Isla M., two composite indicators (one structural and one functional) are developed aiming to assist the local municipalities of Barcelona to monitor and evaluate their environmental performance (Isla, 1997). Twenty-two sub-indicators for environment are combined into 2 synthetic indices, a structural and a functional one.

### 5.9. Environment Indices for Industries

#### 5.9.1. Eco-points

There are number of eco-points schemes have been developed. Eco-points scores constructed under Eco-Scan are primarily based on a 'distance to target' methodology (Pre Consultants, 2004). Effects are evaluated based on the current level and the target level to achieve sustainability. Eco-points is used to evaluate the processes and products to cover all life cycle stages namely raw material extraction, production, transport, distribution, use and end-of-life. For each stage, once can identify the materials, energy, processes, usage, and transportation details from the options and software calculates an "eco-score" for each of these elements, based on a number of points for a given quantity or usage. Three separate databases viz. Eco-indicator 95, Idemat 96, Eco-indicator 97 of eco-points is provided with the Eco-Scan package.

#### 5.9.2. Eco-compass

Dow Chemical developed the simplified visual tool for representing the summary of Life Cycle Assessment data (Fussler and James, 1996). It is based on the indicators of eco-efficiency developed by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), with some minor amendments (DeSimone and Popoff, 1997). The eco-compass has six 'poles' or dimensions namely energy intensity, mass intensity, health and environmental potential risk, resource conservation, extent of re-valorization (re-use, re-manufacturing and re-cycling) and service extension.

#### 5.9.3. Eco-indicator 99

The Eco-indicator 99 has been developed by a team of experts from 1997 to 1999 for evaluating the life cycle impacts of materials and processes (Pre Consultants, 2000). This is based on damage

oriented impact assessment method. This tool aims to assist designers and product managers to improve products and processes in life cycle perspective. The Eco-indicator 99 addresses three damage categories based on end-points namely human health, ecosystem quality and resources, minerals and fossil fuels. Specific models have been designed to evaluate the respiratory and carcinogenic effects, global warming potential, ozone layer depletion and ionising radiation. Impact on human are calculated as DALY (Disability Adjusted Life Years). Impact on eco-systems is evaluated as the percentage of species that have disappeared in a certain area due to the environmental load. Resource extraction is calculated based on the quantity of the remaining mineral and fossil resources.

#### 5.9.4. Environment assessment for cleaner production technologies

Fizal (2007) developed an environmental assessment method for cleaner production technologies enabling quantitative analysis of environmental impact. The method is based on study of profiles related to material and energy flows, waste, product and packaging profiles related to the technology under evaluation. This index is used as a basis for determining an integrated index for overall environmental assessment of cleaner production technologies. The presented method can be employed to evaluate environmental impact of implemented, modernized and modified technological processes and products as well to perform comparative analyses of alternative technologies.

#### 5.9.5. COMPLIMENT – environment performance index for industries

Hermann et al. (2007) developed a tool known as COMPLIMENT for providing comprehensive detailed information on the overall environmental impact of an industry. COMPLIMENT combines various tools such as life cycle assessment, multi-criteria analysis and environmental performance indicators. The methodology is based on identification environmental performance indicators considering life cycle approach, providing weights to indicators and aggregation of indicators. EPIs are calculated while considering the goal and scope definition of an LCA, followed by inventory analysis and conversion and subsequently the classification, characterization and normalization activities. The various impact categories are global warming, acidification potential, eutrophication potential, ozone precursors and human health. Three types of weights were evaluated based on AHP techniques for local, regional and national perspectives. Weights are multiplied to each impact category and it is evaluated in terms of normalized potential impacts per category. The resulting weighted impacts per category can then be added up to form an index of the normalized total potential environmental impact for each perspective.

### 5.10. Social and quality of life based indices

#### 5.10.1. Gender Empowerment Measure

The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) is a tool developed for capturing the issues related to gender inequality. It focuses on women's opportunities rather than their capabilities on the following three areas:

- Share of parliament seats in percentage of women and men indicating participation of women in political decision making.
- Women's and men's percentage shares of positions as legislators, senior officials and managers and women's and men's percentage shares of professional and technical positions depict economic participation and decision-making.
- Power over economic resources, as measured by women's and men's estimated earned income (PPP US\$).

Both indices Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) and Gender-related Development Index (GMI) are evaluated as arithmetic means of three components. The components of each Index are scaled between 0 and 1 before computation (UNDP, 1996).

#### 5.10.2. Physical Quality of Life Index

The Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI) developed by Morris (1979) which comprises of three indices- life expectancy index, infant mortality index and adult literacy rate to compute the PQLI. Ram (1982) applied principal component analysis and recomputed the PQLI.

#### 5.10.3. Well-Being Assessment (Well-Being Index – WI)

The Well-Being Assessment developed by Prescott-Allen (2001) comprises of arithmetic mean of Human Well-being Index (HWI) and an Ecosystem Well-Being Index (EWI). HWI has 5 sub-components while EWI comprises of six sub-components. The various sub-components of HWI are namely Health and Population, Welfare, Knowledge, Culture and Society and Equity Index. The EWI consists of sub-components for land, water, air, species and genes as well as for resources deployment. There are total 87 indicators divided into 36 indicators for HWI and 51 indicators for EWI (Bohringer and Jochem, 2007). Indicators are judged based on subjective assessment, normalized by a proximity-to-target approach and aggregation is carried out by a weighted arithmetic mean.

#### 5.10.4. National Health Care Systems Performance

The National Health Care Systems Performance Index has been developed to measure the performance of all 120 Health Authorities in England, Scotland and Wales. The aim of the index is to evaluate the trend in health care standards across the country, gulf in the health of town and city dwellers, and impact of poverty on the health service (King's Fund, 2001). There are six sub-indicators were selected which cover various aspects of the performance of the National Health Care System namely deaths from cancer, deaths from heart disease, total number of people on hospital waiting lists, percentage of people on waiting lists waiting over 12 months, number of hip operations and deaths from 'avoidable' diseases (e.g. TB, asthma, etc.).

#### 5.10.5. Overall Health System Attainment

The World Health Organization has developed an index that evaluates the performance of health systems in 191 countries, in terms of overall level of goal achievement and the distribution of that achievement (WHO, 2000). Goal achievement and its distribution have been given equal weights. The index comprises of five components namely overall good health, distribution of good health, overall responsiveness, distribution of responsiveness and fairness in financial contributions. Good health is measured by DALY and the distribution of good health by an equality of child survival index.

#### 5.10.6. Index for sustainable society

This index has been developed recently for a sustainable society called as the SSI which combines both aspects of sustainability and quality of life. The SSI allows policy makers to visualize the level of sustainability of a country, measure the progress and identify the areas where improvements are urgently required.

The framework of the Index for a Sustainable Society consists of five categories, each built up from several indicators.

- **Personal Development** (Healthy Life, Sufficient Food, Sufficient to Drink, Safe Sanitation, Education Opportunities and Gender Equality).
- **Clean Environment** (Air Quality, Surface Water Quality and Land Quality).

- **Well-balanced Society** (Good Governance, Unemployment, Population Growth, Income Distribution and Public Debt).
- **Sustainable Use of Resources** (Waste Recycling, Use of Renewable Water Resources and Consumption of Renewable Energy).
- **Sustainable World** (Forest Area, Preservation of Biodiversity, Emission of Greenhouse Gases, Ecological Footprint and International Cooperation).

#### 5.11. Energy based indices

##### 5.11.1. Sustainability assessment tool for energy system

Begic and Afghan (2007) performed multi-criteria sustainability assessment of various options of the energy power system. A 110MW Thermal Power Unit is compared with other technologies of power generation viz. thermal power unit with a coal-fueled boiler with combustion in fluidized bed; combined cycle gas turbine plants; hydropower plant, power plants based on solar energy (photovoltaic [PV] systems); wind turbines; and biomass power plants. The assessment methodology focuses on stochastic models of uncertainty to assess the various systems. Non-numeric (ordinal), non-exact (interval) and non-complete information (NNNinformation) were used to obtain normalization indexes. This tool enables decision maker to select the most optimal options of power plant.

##### 5.11.2. Energy indicators for tracking sustainability in developed countries

The sustainability discussion is focused on environmental topics for developed countries and issues of poverty and equity for developing countries. Consequently, for measuring sustainable development in a developing country, the inclusion of a poverty indicator in a set of lead indicators is essential. Moreover, human activities and most sustainability issues are closely related to energy use. The energy system is a sound framework for providing lead indicators for sustainable development (Fajik and Naim, 2007). Kemmler and Spreng (2007) developed energy-based indicators of poverty which is quite relevant for social issues. The three energy measures that are used for the comparison are primary, useful, and an access-adjusted useful energy (all per capita). The indicators for poverty are measured through various parameters namely total household expenditure, education level of the head of the household, calorie intake, source of drinking water, sanitation, house condition, dwelling area size, dwelling construction type and land possession.

#### 5.12. Ratings

##### 5.12.1. Benchmarking US petroleum refineries, the Environmental Defence Fund (EDF), US NGO

This benchmarking study on environmental performance carried out for ranking of 166 oil refineries based on publicly available data on toxic waste generation and pollutant release. Data were normalized based on the refinery capacity to adjust for its size (Ditz and Ranganathan, 1997).

##### 5.12.2. ECCO-CHECK Index, Environmental Risk Rating Ltd, Surrey, UK

Ecco-Check Index has been used as a fully commercial index of corporate environmental performance in Europe. This index aims to provide information about the company's liabilities evaluated based on the various elements of UK legislation.

##### 5.12.3. Investor Responsibility Research Centre (IRRC), Washington DC, US ([www.irrc.org](http://www.irrc.org))

Investor Responsibility Research Centre compiles corporate environmental profile which comprises of 60 indicators of

emissions (total weight of corporate toxic release inventory emissions), volume of oil spill, volume of chemical spill, hazardous waste (number of Superfund national priority list sites), compliance (punitive fines for environmental non-compliance), environmental litigation (number of disclosed environmental litigation incidents). Indicators are normalized by considering 'environmental risk per unit revenue', facilitates easy comparisons of companies of different sizes and capacities.

#### 5.12.4. Council on Economic Priorities (CEP), New York, US ([www.cepnyc.org](http://www.cepnyc.org))

CEP compiles information of corporate environment performance of the companies and provides rating based on their performance. There are thirteen indicators evaluated for environmental performance namely releases, policy, packaging, office recycling, raw materials/waste, toxic reduction, community impact, energy conservation, natural resources, accidents, Superfund sites, compliance and environmental technologies. Some of the social factors such as ethics, charitable giving, community outreach, family benefits and workplace issues are also assessed.

#### 5.12.5. Oeko Sar Fund, Bank Sarasin & Cie, Basel, Switzerland ([www.sarasin.ch](http://www.sarasin.ch))

This bank assesses environmental performance for its own environmental fund. The assessment system was developed by environmental consultant Ellipson Ltd in Basel which is in line with the same system used by Norwegian UNI Storebrand designed by Ellipson Ltd. The various components used for environmental and social ratings are: policy/strategy, production/provision of service, products/services, environmental management systems, customers/suppliers, employee relations, public relations and shareholders/investors.

The various companies are grouped into three categories based on their potential environmental impact: high (e.g. steel industry), medium and low (service sector companies). For inclusion in the fund, the company should achieve a desired level of rating depending on the impact categories. Moreover, negative criteria are used, avoiding any company that drives more than 5% from the defence industry, nuclear power and nuclear power plant construction, gene technology, chlorine industry, agrochemical and automobile industries. All the data and information are collected from the company annual reports, environment reports and other publications from the companies, management interviews, newspaper clippings, articles, information from environmental pressure groups such as Greenpeace, and through filled in questionnaire.

#### 5.12.6. Storebrand Scudder Environmental Value Fund, Oslo, Norway ([www.storebrand.no](http://www.storebrand.no))

The Storebrand Scudder environmental investment fund was set up in 1996 by the Norwegian insurers, UNI Storebrand. This index is primarily used to evaluate the environmental performance of the companies. The index is calculated from environmental indicators of: global warming, ozone depletion, material efficiency, toxic release, energy intensity, water use, environmental liabilities, and environmental management quality. Storebrand also uses the index to measure the 'environmental dividend' which is calculated by the difference between the fund's environmental performance and the market on average. Although this is termed as sustainability index but it only focuses on environmental performance, and does not include social issues.

5.12.6.1. *Innovest strategic value advisors* ([www.innovestgroup.com](http://www.innovestgroup.com)). Innovest strategic value advisors developed a proprietary investment model 'Eco Value 21' in US to evaluate both the environmental risk and opportunity profiles of companies and determine the related impacts for investors. This model also provides a fund

rating as well as a customized portfolio analysis on both US and Canadian stocks.

#### 5.12.7. OEKOM Environment Rating

Oekom research AG, an international supplier of environmental research studies based in Munich has established an Environmental-Rating in 1993. This rating methodology has since been continuously improved. This method is being used to analyze and assess over 400 companies quoted on various stock markets worldwide. The research process of an Environmental-Rating is divided into three steps. First, the relevant ecological and industry-specific assessment criteria are defined. The following are the three typical criteria's and their sub-components identified for an automobile industry:

##### Environmental management

- Environmental goals/environmental managers.
- Environmental management systems/environmental audits/environmental programmes/ecological balance sheet.
- Environmental standards used in overseas operations.
- Partnerships/training and personnel/environmental office management.
- Suppliers/transport and logistics.

##### Products and services

- Reduction of emissions and resource use.
- Development of efficient engines and alternative drive systems.
- Durability.
- Re-usability/suitability for recycling.
- Take-back of products and recycling capacities.
- Avoidance of toxic substances.
- Use of environmentally compatible materials.

##### Environmental benchmarks

Analysis of the following information in relation to turnover, output or number of employees:

- Energy and water consumption.
- Air pollution, e.g. CO<sub>2</sub>, NOX, SOX, dust.
- Water pollution.
- Quantity of waste and its composition, e.g. proportion of recyclable raw.
- materials, proportion of hazardous waste.

Secondly, each rating area is given a grade on a scale from A+ to D– based on the ecological activities within the area:

**A+**: The Company's environmental activities are especially progressive within the industry.

**D–**: The company focuses on complying with environmental regulation but shows little or no further environmental commitment.

Thirdly, the three rating areas are weighted according to the specific industry after which the separate grades are brought together to form the overall rating.

#### 5.12.8. Jupiter Income Trust Funds (subsidiary of Jupiter Tyndall Group PLC), UK ([www.jupiteronline.co.uk](http://www.jupiteronline.co.uk))

Jupiter Income Trust Funds developed by eight UK unit trusts and 11 investment trusts especially created to achieve environmental and financial objectives. They use very substantial investment criteria to assess companies and avoid companies that derive more than 1% from oppressive regimes, or armaments, nuclear or tobacco industries.

**Table 3**  
Summary table of the sustainability indices.

	Name	Number of sub-indicators	Scaling/normalization	Weighting	Aggregation
1	Summary Innovation Index	17	[+10, –10] Mean subtraction	Equal weights	Number of indicators that are more than 20% above the European average minus the number of indicators which are more than 20% below and division by the total number of available indicators for each country.
2	Internal Market Index	19	Percentage annual differences	PCA	Synthesis of variables using PCA
3	Business climate indicator	5	–100 to 100	PCA & FA	PCA applied to define weights. One principal component adopted as the composite indicator
4	Investment in the knowledge based economy	7	Mean subtraction and division by the standard deviation	Choice of weights is up to the user	Weighted average
5	Performance in the knowledge based economy	7	Mean subtraction and division by the standard deviation	Choice of weights is up to the user	Weighted average
6	Relative intensity of regional problems in the Community	3	Mean subtraction and division by the standard deviation	Empirical weights are determined considering the degree of correlation between two sub-indicators	Neutralising the effect of correlation
7	Economic Sentiment Indicator	4	Dividing the month-to-month changes with the average month to month change	Equal weights	Summation
8	Composite Leading Indicators	Number varies across member states	Mean subtraction and division by the mean of the absolute differences from the mean	Smoothing via “Months for cyclical dominance moving average”	Arithmetic average of the normalised indicators
9	Information and communication technologies	5	Country rankings for each indicator		Sum of rankings
10	Environmental Sustainability Index	68	Mean subtraction and division by the standard deviation	Equal weights	Arithmetic average of the normalised indicators
11	Human Development Index	3	[0, 1], using minimum and maximum value for each indicator as goal post	Equal	Arithmetic average of the scaled indicators
12	Technology Achievement Index	8 (grouped in 4 sub-indices)	[0, 1] using minimum and maximum value for each indicator as goal post	Equal	Arithmetic average of the 4 sub-indices
13	Overall Health System Attainment	5	[0, 100]	Weights based on survey of preferences of informed individuals	Summation
14	Two “Synthetic environmental indices”	22	Indicators are combined into 2 synthetic indices a structural and a functional one	Equal	Arithmetic average of the indicators
15	National innovation capacity	8	The logarithmic values of the sub-indicators are considered	Multiple regression model	Regression analysis employed
16	General Indicator of Science & Technology	13	FA/PCA was applied to define weights.	PCA	PCA (primary principal component of each set)
17	Success of software process improvement	14	Subjective scale	PCA	–
18	European Labour Market Performance	3	[0, 100] Efficiency frontier (objective method)	Weight based on value judgment	–
19	Eco-indicator 99	3	Division by a reference value for each indicator	Weighting scheme is selected by a panel of experts	–
20	Concern about environmental problems	11	Dividing the value in each year by the value for the year for which each indicator is first available	Weights derived from public opinion polls	Sum of normalized weights multiplied by the corresponding normalized indicators
21	National Health Care systems performance	6	No standardisation	‘Budget allocation’ survey of 1000 people across the UK defined the weights for the indicators	Weighted average

Table 3 (Continued)

	Name	Number of sub-indicators	Scaling/normalization	Weighting	Aggregation
22	Index of sustainable and economic welfare	20	Sub-indicators are expressed in monetary terms	Equal. Allow the user to change the weightings and assumptions used in the index	Arithmetic average of the indicators
23	Index of Environmental Friendliness	11	Normalization of problem indices by dividing the sectoral problem index by the value of the national problem index	Subjective weights for the normalised problem indices are determined from experts by means of the Analytic Hierarchy Process	Weighted sum
24	Environmental Policy Performance Indicator	6 theme indicators (composed of several simple indicators)	Division by the corresponding a) sustainability levels, and b) policy targets	Equal	Sum of the six theme indicators
25	Living Planet Index	2000 populations of more than 11,000 species	Ratio to current and previous year	Equal weights	Geometric mean
26	Ecological footprint	6	Area	Equal	Summation
27	City Development Index	5	Distance from mean	PCA/experts	Weighted average
28	Environment Performance Index	Six policy categories	[0, 100]	PCA/experts	Weighted average
29	Environment Vulnerability Index	50	Aim = 1, worst = 7	Equal	Average
30	Well Being Index	87	[0, 100]	Subjective	Weighted average
31	Composite Sustainability Performance Index	Five categories; 59 indicators	Distance from mean divided by standard deviation	AHP	Weighted average
32	Composite sustainable development index	Three categories; 38 indicators	Distance from maximum and minimum	AHP	Weighted average
33	Ford of Europe's Product Sustainability Index	8	Life cycle impact assessment	–	–
34	Genuine Savings Index	3 capitals	Monetized	Equal	Summation
35	Sustainability Performance Index	5	Area	Equal	Total area per unit product divided by area per capita
36	Compass Index of Sustainability	Four categories of indicators	[0, 100]	Equal	Average
37	ITT Flygt Sustainability Index	40	Normative judgment [+10, –100]	Company opinion	Summation
38	Environment Quality Index	Based on multi-attribute utility theory	[0, 10], linear utility function	AHP	Weighted sum
39	Life Cycle Index	4 categories; 21 indicators	Linear and non linear functions	AHP	Geometric mean
40	G Score	5 categories	Subjective	Equal	Summation
41	Index of Sustainable Society	5 categories; 22 indicators	Mathematical formula for each indicator	Equal	Summation

5.12.8.1. *FTSE Good Index*. The FTSE4 Good Index Series aims to evaluate the performance of companies that meet globally accepted corporate responsibility standards and also facilitates investment in those companies. The FTSE4Good selection criteria are based on measures which ideally represent good corporate responsibility practice globally. It involves detailed stakeholder engagement and market consultation process. The criteria are revised on regular basis to ensure that they continue to reflect standards of responsible business practice, and developments in socially responsible investment as they evolve.

The details of various indexes viz. scaling, normalization, weighting and aggregation are summarized in Table 3.

## 6. Conclusion

This paper covers an overview of various sustainability indices which are practically implemented to measure sustainable development. Attempts have been made to compile the information about how the index were formulated using the three central steps viz. – normalization, weighting, aggregation.

Indices and rating systems are subject to subjectivity despite lot of objectivity used in assessing the sustainability. The major advantages associated with indices are because of its multidimensionality, use of normalization and aggregation based on scientific rules and robust statistical methods.

Although there are various international efforts on measuring sustainability, only few of them have an integral approach taking into account environmental, economic and social aspects. In most cases the focus is on one of the three aspects. Although, it could be argued that they could serve supplementary to each other, sustainability is more than an aggregation of the important issues, it is also about their interlinkages and the dynamics developed in a system. This point will be missing if tried to use them supplementary and it is one of the most difficult parts to capture and reflect in measurements.

If the indices are poorly constructed, this will provide misleading results. It will be interpreted altogether differently. Thus, sensitivity analysis and uncertainty analysis can help in testing the efficacy and robustness of the index. Sub-indicators should be selected meticulously. Choice of model, weighting mechanism and treatment of missing value also play a predominant role while construction of framework. Since the need of data collection enhanced due to large number of indicators for indices, it is always worthwhile to conduct statistically significant analysis on the data. There are two critical issues viz. correlation among indicators and compensability between indicators must be taken into consideration.

Indicators of sustainable development should be selected, revisited and refined based on the appropriate communities of interest. Thus, indices should be constructed within a coherent framework. This would help in selection of suitable parameters which really

influence the policy goal and also ensures that the evaluation process involved could change through time according to the interests of the particular stakeholders involved in the construction of the indicator.

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