COLLEGE LIBRARIES
Vol. 41 No. 1 March 2026 pp. 24-36

Received on 15-09-2025 Reviewed on 11-02-2026 Paper Accepted on 25-03-2026

Mapping Sustainable Fisheries Research in India in the Context of Sustainable Development Goal 14

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Abstract

Sustainable fisheries play a crucial role in conserving marine biodiversity and ensuring long-term food security. The purpose of this study is to systematically map and evaluate the research landscape of sustainable fisheries in India over the last 25 years (2000-2024). Bibliographic data comprising 5,575 publications were retrieved from the Scopus database and analysed using VOSviewer and R Studio to examine publication growth patterns, leading institutions, funding agencies, journal productivity, and thematic structures through keyword co-occurrence networks. The findings reveal a consistent growth in research output, with the highest number of publications recorded in 2024, indicating increasing scholarly attention to marine sustainability. The National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), India, emerged as the most prolific institution, while the Department of Science and Technology (DST) was the leading funding agency, followed by CSIR and the Ministry of Earth Sciences. Marine Pollution Bulletin was identified as the most influential journal in this domain. Thematic analysis highlighted dominant research areas such as marine pollution, ecosystem management, and sustainable resource utilisation. The originality and value of this study lie in its comprehensive scientometric assessment of India's sustainable fisheries research using advanced visualisation and analytical tools, offering quantitative evidence to support policy formulation and strengthening India's progress toward achieving SDG 14.

Keywords: Bibliometric analysis, Fisheries research, Fishery management, Indian fisheries research, Marine pollution, SDG 14, Sustainable fisheries,

1. Introduction

Fisheries research plays a pivotal role in conserving aquatic biodiversity, ensuring food security, and supporting livelihoods in developing nations such as India. (FAO, 2022). Indian fishery research has significantly advanced knowledge on stock assessment, aquaculture, habitat restoration, and ecosystem-based management, contributing to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable

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Kathkotia, P. & Sinha, M. K. (2026, March). Mapping sustainable Fisheries Research in India in the context of Sustainable Development Goal 14. *College Libraries, 41*(1), pp. 24-36

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Development Goals. The SDGs are a set of 17 global objectives adopted by the United Nations in 2015 under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Of particular relevance is Goal 14: "Life Below Water," which seeks to "conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development." SDG 14 encompasses ten targets, including the prevention of marine pollution, sustainable management of fisheries, conservation of coastal and marine areas, and support for small-scale fishers (United Nations, 2015). Within this framework, Indian fisheries research institutions such as the Indian Council of Agricultural Research Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (ICAR-CMFRI) and the Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute (ICAR-CIFRI) have generated valuable scientific knowledge that underpins policy formulation and adaptive management of aquatic ecosystems (Katiha et al., 2021).

Metric studies such as bibliometrics and Scientometrics provide robust, quantitative methods for evaluating the growth, impact, and structure of scientific research (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Hood & Wilson, 2001). They help to identify trends, assess collaboration networks, recognise leading contributors, and uncover underexplored themes, thereby supporting strategic planning for researchers, institutions, and funding agencies (Khan et al., 2025). This paper presents a systematic Scientometric assessment of sustainable fisheries research in India over the period 2000-2024. Drawing on 5,575 publications retrieved from the Scopus database, the study examines annual growth in research output, major institutions and authors, and the influence of funding bodies. It also analyses the contributions of core journals and visualises keyword co-occurrence and thematic clusters using VOSviewer and R Studio. Together, these analyses provide an integrated view of the research landscape, helping to understand India's progress toward SDG 14 and highlighting directions for future studies.

2. Review of the Literature

Numerous investigations, both in India and abroad, have explored the Sustainable Development Goal as well as Bibliometric and Scientometric perspectives on this field. A brief review of the most pertinent literature is outlined below.

Rahman et al. (2024) conducted a bibliometric assessment of 1,433 review articles on the Sustainable Development Goals and sustainability. Their analysis showed a 74% annual increase in publications and a 171% rise in citations between 2016 and 2022, highlighting growing scholarly attention. SDG 12 was the most studied, with leading journals including Sustainability and the Journal of Cleaner Production. Nath et al. (2024) examined global research on vitamin D deficiency over the period 2014-2023. Their study highlights the most influential journals, prominent researchers, and patterns of collaboration, offering important insights to guide future investigations, encourage partnerships, and help funding agencies make informed decisions in this field. Hossain et al. (2023)examined 195 research articles on education quality related to SDG 4, analysing publication trends, collaboration patterns, research themes, and gaps. Interdisciplinary journals, particularly Sustainability, and open-access publications had strong visibility. Most co-authorships were among researchers from the UK, Spain, and the US, with limited participation from the Global South. Okonta (2023) presents a scientometric analysis of 1,044 publications on sustainable procurement published between 1997 and July 2023, using data from the Scopus core collection. Co-authorship, co-word, and co-citation analyses were conducted with VOSviewer and Gephi to map research trends and collaborations. Yamaguchi et al. (2023) investigated SDG-related review articles (2015-2022) using the Web of Science Core Collection. They conducted descriptive bibliometric analyses and applied mapping and clustering techniques, including keyword co-occurrence, co-authorship, and

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bibliographic coupling, to assess research growth, domains, sources, citations, and geographic distribution. Alfirevi? et al. (2023) analysed global SDG-related publications indexed in Scopus, identifying leading researchers, journals, and collaboration networks, and their association with research output and impact. Virto (2018) focused on SDG 14, discussing its rationale, indicators, and the challenges and opportunities for conserving oceans, seas, and marine resources qualitatively, but quantitative bibliometric research on publications and trends is lacking.

While global bibliometric studies provide insights into overall SDG research trends, there is limited bibliometric research specifically on SDG 14 in India. Existing studies rarely examine publication trends, leading institutions, funding agencies, key journals, and thematic areas related to sustainable fisheries research within the Indian context. There is also a lack of analysis of collaboration patterns among Indian researchers and institutions. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive, country-specific bibliometric overview of sustainable fisheries research in India, helping identify research trends, major contributors, and potential areas for future investigation aligned with SDG 14.

3. Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of the study aims to:

- Examine the publication trend in sustainable fisheries research over the 2000-2024.
- To identify the most prolific institutions contributing to sustainable fisheries research.
- Determine the leading funding agencies supporting research on sustainable fisheries.
- Identify the top ten source titles for each publication year to understand where research on sustainable fisheries is most frequently disseminated.
- Analyse author keywords thematic trends to uncover the major research themes and emerging topics in sustainable fisheries.
- Explore the co-authorship patterns of international and country-level collaboration among publications on sustainable fisheries.

4. Research Methodology

This study uses a quantitative approach. Bibliographic data on sustainable fisheries research related to SDG 14: Life Below Water were retrieved from the Scopus database using relevant keywords. The data were then analysed using bibliometric techniques. A detailed description of the methodology is provided below.

Section	Details
Database	Scopus
Keywords for retrieving documents	Sustainable Fisheries; Sustainable Fishing; Marine Biodiversity; Marine Conservation; Marine Pollution; Overfishing; Life below Water; Fish Habitat Degradation; SDG 14
Time frame	2000-2024
Geographical limit	India
Search query	(((TITLE-ABS-KEY(Sustainable Fisheries) OR TITLE-ABS- KEY(Sustainable Fishing) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY(Marine Biodiversity) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY(Marine Conservation) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY(Marine Pollution) OR TITLE-ABS- KEY(Overfishing) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY(Life Below Water) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY(Fish Habitat Degradation) OR TITLE- ABS-KEY(SDG 14))) AND PUBYEAR > 1999 AND PUBYEAR < 2025 AND (LIMIT-TO(AFFILCOUNTRY,"India")))
File format downloaded	CSV and Bib text
Date & time of search	18 September 2025, 2:00 PM
Software	Purpose of Analysis
VOSviewer	Analyse co-authorship by country and create country-level network visualisations
Biblioshiny (RStudio)	Analyse keywords and prepare a thematic map

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5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The study is limited to fisheries research in India with specific reference to Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Life Below Water). The analysis is based exclusively on publications indexed in the Scopus database for the period 2000-2024, and the findings depend on the analytical parameters applied using VOSviewer and R Studio.

5.1. Demographic information of the present study

Table 1 presents demographic information on the documents retrieved from the Scopus database. Between 2000 and 2024, a total of 5,575 documents were published across 1,140 sources. The annual growth rate of publications was 16.08%, with an average of 7.51 documents per year. The average number of citations per document was 31.33. A total of 11,736 authors contributed to these publications, of which 291 were single-authored. The average number of co-authors per document was 4.35, and international co-authorship accounted for 24.93% of the publications.

Table 1- Demographic information of the present study

Description	Results
Timespan	2000-2024
Total Documents	5575
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	1140
Annual Growth Rate%	16.08
Document Average Rate	7.51
Average Citation Per doc	31.33
Authors	11736
Single-authored docs	291
Co- Authors per doc	4.35
International co authorship %	24.93

5.2. Trends in Annual Research Productivity

Table 2 and Figure 1 show the year-wise publication trend in sustainable fisheries research linked to SDG 14, covering 2000-2024. A total of 5,575 papers were published in this period, and the trend is clearly upward. Research output was slow in the early 2000s, with 28-44 papers per year and began to grow steadily after 2006, reaching 178 publications in 2015. By 2013, cumulative publications exceeded 1,000. Growth accelerated between 2016 and 2020, from 179 to 379 papers annually, totalling 2,619, reflecting the influence of the 2015 UN SDGs. The highest increase occurred after 2020, with 528 papers in 2021, 601 in 2022, 720 in 2023, and a peak of 1,107 in 2024; over half of all publications were produced in these four years.

Table 2: Year-wise Research Output

Sl No	Year	Publication	Cumulative Publication	Percentage
1	2000	29	29	0.52
2	2001	28	57	0.50
3	2002	36	93	0.65
4	2003	39	132	0.70
5	2004	43	175	0.77

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6	2005	44	219	0.79
7	2006	79	298	1.4
8	2007	54	352	0.97
9	2008	81	433	1.45
10	2009	94	527	1.69
11	2010	109	636	1.96
12	2011	117	753	2.09
13	2012	121	874	2.17
14	2013	158	1032	2.83
15	2014	155	1187	2.78
16	2015	178	1365	3.19
17	2016	179	1544	3.21
18	2017	210	1754	3.77
19	2018	234	1988	4.20
20	2019	252	2240	4.52
21	2020	379	2619	6.80
22	2021	528	3147	9.47
23	2022	601	3748	10.78
24	2023	720	4468	12.91
25	2024	1107	5575	19.86
	Total	**5575**		

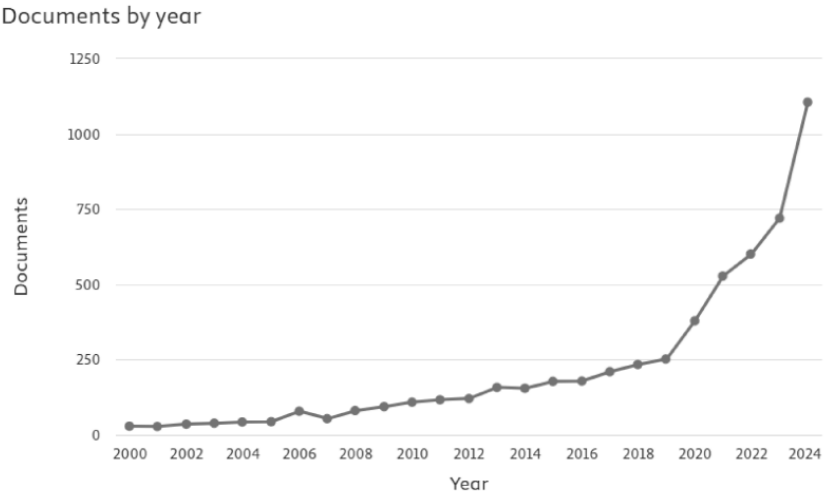

Figure 1: Year-wise Research Output

5.3. Institute-wise Publication of the Documents

Table 3 and Figure 2 present the top ten institutions contributing to sustainable fisheries research aligned with SDG 14. These organisations account for a major share of total publications, indicating

concentration within a few leading centres. The National Institute of Oceanography leads with 339 papers, followed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research with 310. Key ICAR institutes include the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Kochi (226) and the Central Institute of Fisheries Education, Mumbai (143). Other major contributors are the Ministry of Earth Sciences (140), Annamalai University (124), Anna University (116), Cochin University of Science and Technology (111), Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute, Barrackpore (109), and Bharathidasan University (103), reflecting active research across marine, inland, and educational institutions.

Table 3: Most Prolific Institutions in Sustainable Fisheries Research

Sl No	Name of the Institute	Documents
1	National Institute of Oceanography India	339
2	Indian Council of Agricultural Research	310
3	ICAR - Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Kochi	226
4	ICAR - Central Institute of Fisheries Education, Mumbai	143
5	Ministry of Earth Sciences	140
6	Annamalai University	124
7	Anna University	116
8	Cochin University of Science and Technology	111
9	ICAR - Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute, Barrackpore	109
10	Bharathidasan University	103

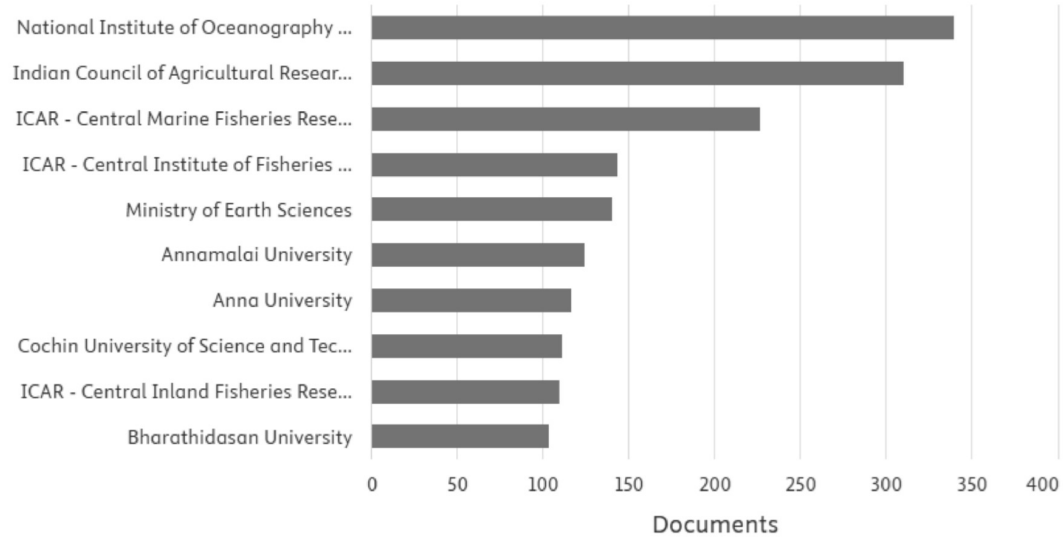

Figure 2: Leading Indian Institutes in Sustainable Fisheries Research

5.4. Funding Agencies Supporting Sustainable Fisheries Research in India

Table 4 and Figure 3 highlight the top ten funding agencies supporting research on sustainable fisheries in India. The Department of Science and Technology (DST) leads with 242 documents, followed

by CSIR (181) and the Ministry of Earth Sciences (174). Mid-level contributors include UGC (150), ICAR (148), SERB (109), and DBT (84). Regional and sectoral bodies such as the DST, Kerala (52), CMFRI (51), and MoEFCC (46) provide additional support. Overall, central government agencies dominate funding, with specialised and regional organisations complementing efforts to promote sustainable fisheries and SDG 14 goals.

Table 4: Leading Funding Agencies Supporting Sustainable Fisheries Research in India

Sl No	Funding Agency	Documents
1	Department of Science and Technology, Ministry of Science and Technology, India	242
2	Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, India	181
3	Ministry of Earth Sciences	174
4	University Grants Commission	150
5	Indian Council of Agricultural Research	148
6	Science and Engineering Research Board	109
7	Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, India	84
8	Department of Science and Technology, Government of Kerala	52
9	Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute	51
10	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change	46

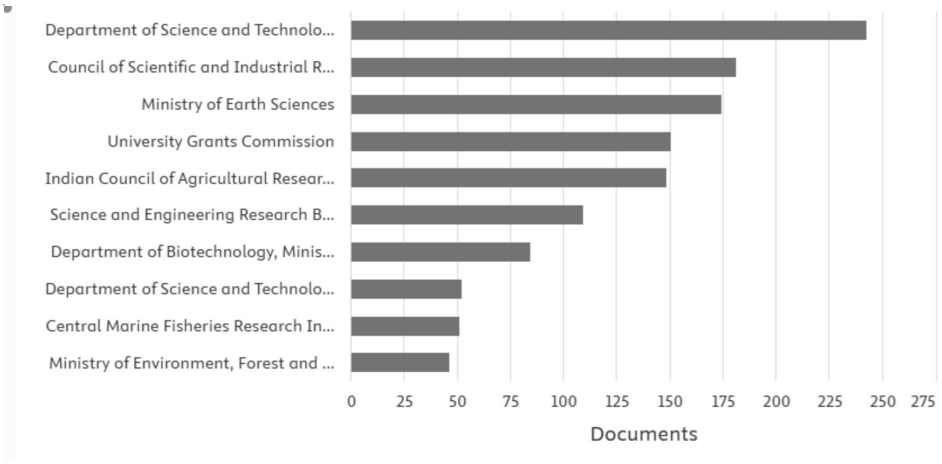

Figure 3: Leading Funding Agencies Supporting Sustainable Fisheries Research in India

5.5. Source-wise Distribution of the Documents

Table 5 and Figure 4 show the ten most productive journals publishing research on sustainable fisheries in India, while the accompanying graph illustrates the number of documents from each source per year, highlighting annual growth. Marine Pollution Bulletin stands out with 344 publications, confirming its central role in studies on marine pollution and sustainability. Other important environmental journals include Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (141), Science of the Total Environment (118), and Environmental Science and Pollution Research (95), reflecting their focus on ecological monitoring and pollution control. Indian titles such as the Indian Journal of Geo-Marine Sciences (87) and the Indian Journal of Fisheries (73) provide strong national platforms for marine and fishery research. Meanwhile, sources like Chemosphere and Regional Studies in Marine Science (70 each), Environmental Pollution

(45), and the Indian Journal of Marine Sciences (40) contribute valuable niche studies on pollution and aquatic ecosystem health.

Table 5: Top Ten source titles for Sustainable Fisheries Research

Sl No	Source Title	Documents
1	Marine Pollution Bulletin	344
2	Environmental Monitoring and Assessment	141
3	Science of the Total Environment	118
4	Environmental Science and Pollution Research	95
5	Indian Journal of Geo Marine Sciences	87
6	Indian Journal of Fisheries	73
7	Chemosphere	70
8	Regional Studies in Marine Science	70
9	Environmental Pollution	45
10	Indian Journal of Marine Sciences	40

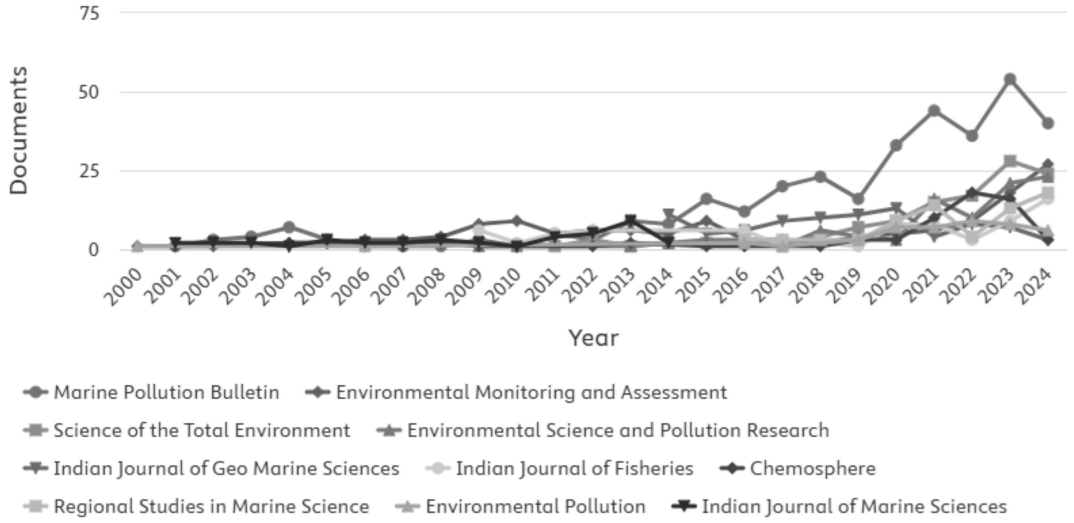

Figure 4: Leading Source titles and their Annual Publications

5.6. Keyword Analysis

Table 6 and Figure 5 show the ten most frequent keywords identified in the dataset, reflecting the thematic priorities of the research field. "India" appears most often (1,259 occurrences), indicating that a substantial proportion of the studies focus on the Indian context or are authored by Indian researchers. The prominence of "Article" (1,045) suggests that journal articles dominate the publication format, pointing to the scholarly nature of the work examined. Environmental concerns feature strongly, with "Environmental Monitoring" (1,032) and "Marine Pollution" (991) ranking high, emphasising ongoing interest in assessing and mitigating environmental degradation, particularly in marine systems. Keywords such as "Nonhuman" (748) and "Ecosystem" (610) reflect attention to biological components and holistic system-level analyses.

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The terms "Marine Environment" (564) and "Biodiversity" (532) highlight research on oceanic habitats and the conservation of species diversity. Finally, "Water Pollutants" (477) and "Chemical" (458) underscore the focus on contaminant identification and chemical impacts, suggesting a strong orientation toward pollution studies and their ecological implications.

Table 6: Most Frequently Occurring Keywords

Sl No	Keyword	Frequency
1	India	1259
2	Article	1045
3	Environmental Monitoring	1032
4	Marine Pollution	991
5	Nonhuman	748
6	Ecosystem	610
7	Marine Environment	564
8	Biodiversity	532
9	Water Pollutants	477
10	Chemical	458



Figure 5: Word Clouds of the most frequent Keywords

5.6.1. Thematic Map

The thematic map (Figure 6) shows the conceptual structure of the dataset, plotting themes by relevance (centrality) and development (density) across four quadrants: motor, niche, basic, and emerging/declining. A large cluster in the upper-right motor quadrant-labelled India, article, and marine pollution-demonstrates high centrality and density, indicating mature and central research driving the field. In contrast, small themes (nonhuman, marine environment, and biodiversity) in the lower-left quadrant are emerging or marginal, highlighting potential areas for further study. No themes appeared in the niche or basic quadrants, showing concentration around a dominant research front.

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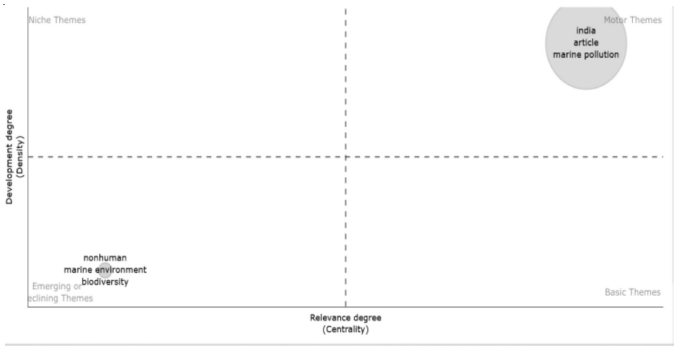

Figure 6- Thematic map of research themes on marine pollution in India

5.7. Co-authorship Patterns of Countries Based on Documents and Citations

Table 7 shows that India leads with the highest number of documents and citations, reflecting its dominant productivity and research impact. The United States and the United Kingdom follow with substantial outputs and strong citation performance. China and Australia present balanced contributions in terms of publications and citations. Malaysia records a comparatively high citation impact despite fewer publications, while Saudi Arabia shows more publications than citations. Japan, South Korea, and Canada maintain moderate contributions, with Canada displaying relatively higher citation influence compared to its publication volume.

Table 7: Country-wise Co-authorship: Number of Documents and Citations

Based on the document				Based on Citations	
Sl No	**Country**	**Documents**	**Total link Strength**	**Country**	**Citations**
1	India	4411	1083	India	136520
2	United States	258	485	United States	21717
3	United Kingdom	182	375	United Kingdom	13759
4	China	111	248	China	11611
5	Australia	109	261	Australia	9406
6	Saudi Arabia	105	180	Malaysia	7922
7	Japan	85	174	Canada	7051
8	South Korea	84	138	Japan	6635
9	Malaysia	82	169	South Korea	4548
10	Canada	81	209	Saudi Arabia	3776

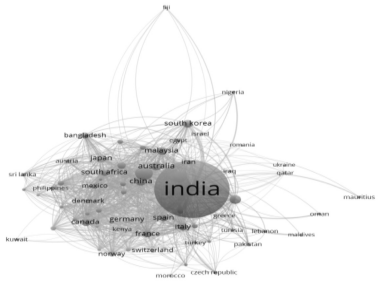

Figure 7- Visualization of International Co-authorship Networks Based on Documents

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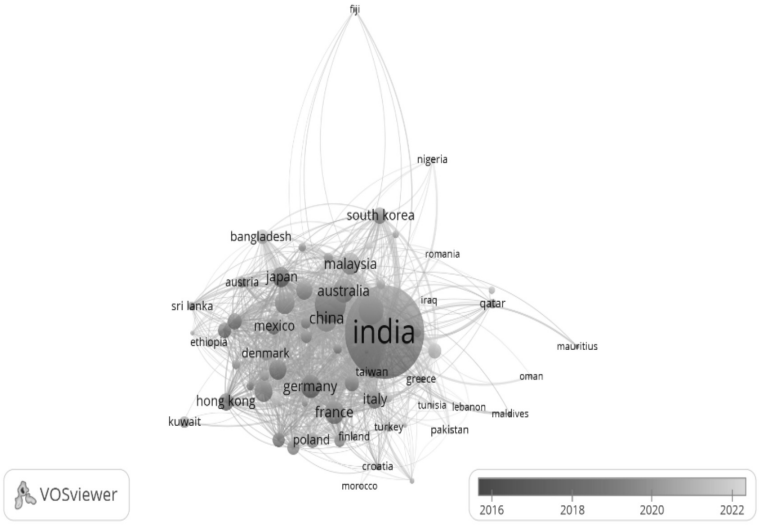

Figure 8: Visualisation of International Co-authorship Networks Based on Citations

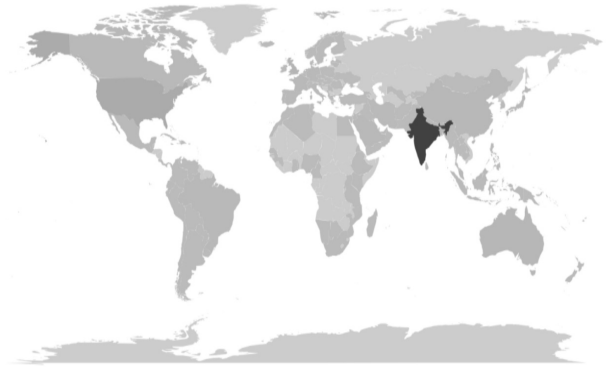

Figure 9: Countries' Scientific Production

6. Discussion

The steady growth in sustainable fisheries publications from 2000 to 2024 aligns with earlier bibliometric studies reporting increased scholarly attention to sustainability following the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (Rahman et al., 2024; Yamaguchi et al., 2023). While previous research identified SDG 12 and SDG 4 as dominant areas of SDG-related scholarship (Rahman et al., 2024; Hossain et al., 2023), the present study highlights a domain-specific focus on SDG 14, indicating a growing emphasis on marine and fisheries sustainability.

The concentration of publications within a limited number of journals and institutions is consistent with earlier scientometric findings that emphasise the role of established research hubs in shaping sustainability research (Nath et al., 2024; Alfirevi? et al., 2023). In contrast to qualitative

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discussions of SDG 14 (Virto, 2018), this study provides quantitative evidence of publication trends, thematic evolution, and collaboration patterns. International collaboration trends mirror those reported in previous SDG-related studies, with strong participation from developed countries and comparatively limited contributions from the Global South (Hossain et al., 2023).

7. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive scientometric evaluation of sustainable fisheries research indexed in the Scopus database, highlighting its alignment with global priorities such as Sustainable Development Goal 14. The analysis reveals a steady growth in publications, the prominence of leading journals and institutions, and expanding international collaboration, indicating the maturity and interdisciplinary nature of the field.

The novelty of this work lies in its systematic mapping of research trends, knowledge clusters, and gaps, demonstrating the usefulness of bibliometric methods for informing policy and resource management. The findings emphasise the need for greater attention to underrepresented regions, improved data-sharing, and stronger cross-sectoral collaboration. The applied framework can be extended to related disciplines such as marine conservation, aquaculture, and environmental policy, providing a quantitative basis for future research and sustainability-driven decision-making.

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