CHAPTER 66

Exploring Agile Practices in Megaprojects: A Systematic Literature Review on Stakeholder Engagement, Innovation, and Sustainability

Suraj Nair[1], Sanjana M.[2], Amrithraj K.[2] and Gautham J. Raj[2]

ABSTRACT

Megaprojects play a key role in driving economic growth and long-term development, reflecting a nation's ambitions and progress. However, their successful execution often faces challenges such as complex processes, diverse stakeholders, regulatory hurdles, and limited resources. This study systematically examines the relationship between Agile techniques, stakeholder engagement, innovation, and sustainability in Indian megaprojects. It analyses the unique challenges posed by India's diverse socioeconomic structure, legal frameworks, and cultural variations in the context of Agile implementation, filling crucial gaps in the existing literature. This study assesses the methodological quality and thematic relevance of existing research through a rigorous systematic literature review approach guided by the PRISMA methodology and the TCCM framework. Key findings demonstrate strong theoretical connections between Agile techniques and better stakeholder engagement, yet considerable gaps exist in their operationalization that promote innovation and sustainable megaproject delivery. The incorporation of Agile principles like iterative feedback, cross-functional cooperation, and dynamic communication is particularly underexplored in India. To close this gap, a conceptual model is proposed that describes how Agile approaches can be adjusted to improve stakeholder participation, encourage innovation, and achieve long-term project success. The model emphasizes practical strategies for leveraging Agile to enhance engagement and performance across diverse project stakeholders. This review contributes valuable insights for academics and practitioners alike, providing a foundation for future empirical research and practical applications of Agile in Indian megaprojects.

Keywords: Agile methodologies; Stakeholder engagement; Megaproject innovation; Indian megaprojects; Sustainable project delivery.

1.0 Introduction

The Indian construction industry is widely acknowledged and recognized for its scale, aspiration, and inventive approach.

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The entity plays a crucial part in promoting economic expansion and sustainable development. Agile approaches enhance project delivery by encouraging by active participation of stakeholders and adapting to conditions as needed.

1.1 Overview of complex Indian projects

India's aspiration for a $5 trillion economy is reflected in its extensive infrastructure projects. Initiatives like the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC), Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train and Navi Mumbai International Airport demonstrates the nation's dedication and commitment to modernization and economic development. These projects enhance the infrastructure, stimulate employment and regional development.

1.2 Complexity and importance for economic growth

Complex projects are typically characterised by numerous stakeholders, significant regulatory hurdles and substantial resource allocation. They draw in foreign investment, stimulate job creation and promote technological progress. The Smart City Mission demonstrates India's commitment to urban development, improving and enhancing its global competitiveness and sustainable future goals.

1.3 Importance of stakeholder engagement

For a project to be successful, it is essential to engage stakeholders such as communities, investors and government organisations. Collaboration promotes and encourages innovation, aligns with objectives and ensures sustainability. Inclusive decision-making and transparency can significantly increase the lifespan of a project, as evidenced by adoption of microgrids in renewable energy initiatives.

1.4 Rationale for agile approach

Agile methodologies had originally derived and developed in software development industry, which are now gaining traction in construction for their wider range of adaptability. Scrum and Kanban provides to acquire continuous feedback, improved efficiency and lesser rework. Agile promotes innovation, sustainable processes, and quick response to challenges like site conditions and regulatory changes. By incorporating Agile, construction projects can optimize resources, minimize waste, and ensure timely completion, thereby driving industry transformation.

2.0 Literature Review

Agile approaches have gained significant attention in construction megaprojects for their iterative nature, stakeholder engagement potential and emphasis on innovation and sustainability. The literature suggests that Agile helps in stakeholder alignment by improving communication, collaboration and adaptability (Bahadorestani, Karlsen, and Farimani n.d.) thereby mitigating project uncertainties.

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Table 1: Shows the Relationship between Agile, Stakeholder Engagement, Innovation and Sustainability in Construction Projects

Relationship	Key Findings	References
Agile & Stakeholder Engagement	Agile improves collaboration, openness, and faith among stakeholders, thereby increasing stakeholder satisfaction.	(Bahadorestani *et al.,* n.d.), (Bryde & Schulmeister 2012), (Baxter & Turner 2023), (Babineau & Lessard 2015)
Agile & Innovation	Agile encourages continuous innovation through iterative feedback, open knowledge sharing and structured methodologies like Agile-QFD.	(Denning 2013), (Anes *et al.,* 2023), (Raj & Vinodh 2016)
Agile & Sustainability	Agile supports eco-friendly construction methods which reduce waste and promote knowledge retention for long-term sustainability.	(Levy *et al.*, 2021), (Al-Zabidi *et al.,* 2021), (Papademetriou *et al.,* 2023), (Venugopal & Saleeshya 2019)
Stakeholder Engagement & Innovation	Engaged stakeholders contribute to better designs and service-oriented innovations, enhancing project adaptability.	(Hollebeek *et al.*, 2022), Lievens & Blažević (2021)
Stakeholder Engagement & Sustainability	Stakeholder collaboration strengthens efforts, leading to better project outcomes through regulatory frameworks and digital engagement.	Lievens & Blažević (2021); Lehtinen & Aaltonen (2024); Goh *et al.*, (2023); Valdes-Vasquez & Klotz (2013); Tirumala & Upadhyay (2023)
Innovation & Sustainability	Innovative approaches improve efficiency and sustainability, leading to eco-friendly construction and innovative digital transformation.	Ozorhon & Oral, (2017), Mihardjo *et al.,* (2019)
Agile, Innovation & Sustainability	Agile promotes resource efficiency, economic growth, and sustainable project execution.	Andriyani *et al.,* (2024), Endres *et al.*, (2022), Chauhan *et al.*, (2023), Erbguth *et al.,* (2022), Kopytko *et al.,* (2023)
Agile, Stakeholder Engagement & Sustainability	Agile-driven collaboration enhances sustainable development, ensuring resilience in complex projects.	Burlereaux *et al.*, (2015), Silva *et al.,* (2022)

Research by (Flyvbjerg 2021) underlines the importance of scalability in Agile applications for megaprojects, emphasizing the need for continuous adaptation to meet the changing and evolving project demands. Studies also underscore Agile's role in promoting innovation (Denning, 2013) through iterative development and rapid adaptability, particularly in open innovation contexts (Anes *et al.,* 2023). Similarly, research based on sustainability has explored Agile's capacity to balance environmental issues in supply chains (Al-Zabidi *et al.*, 2021) and its role in green construction and workforce adaptability (Papademetriou *et al.,* 2023).

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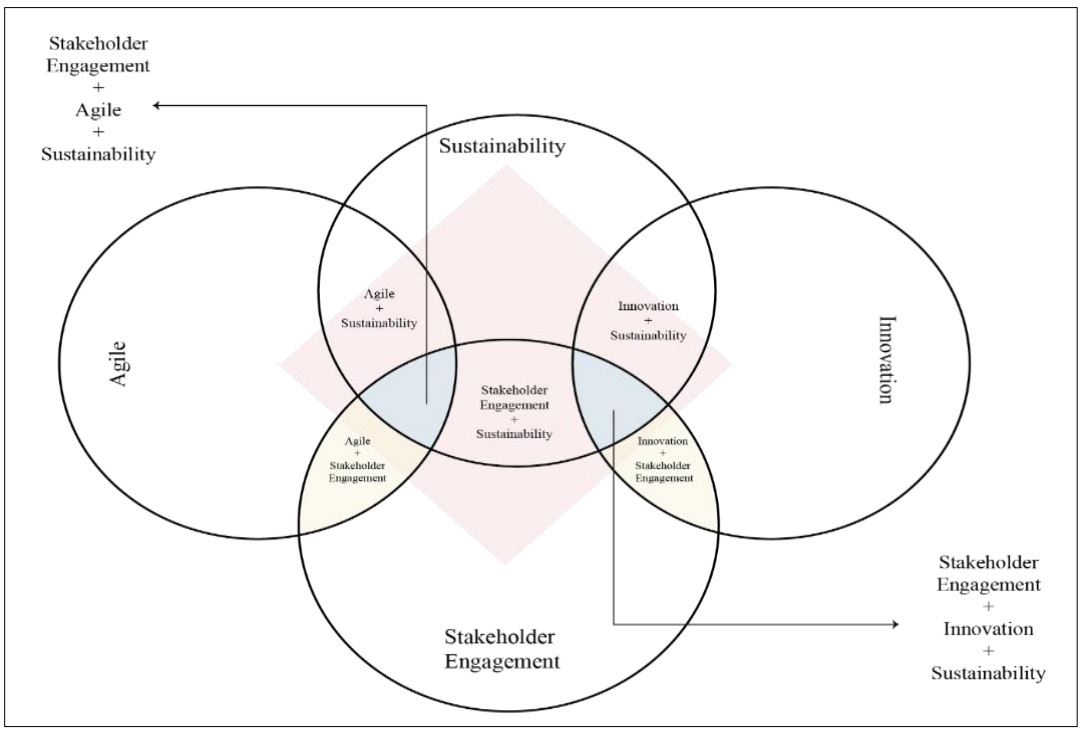
The interplay between Agile, innovation and sustainability are evident in frameworks that integrate Lean-Agile principles to improve efficiency while reducing waste (Venugopal & Saleeshya 2019). Additionally, stakeholder engagement has been shown to directly influence sustainability outcomes by promoting collaborative frameworks and co-creation models (Mihardjo *et al.,* 2019). The convergence of these elements Agile, stakeholder engagement, innovation and sustainability has led to the development of integrative methodologies such as digital ecosystems (Mihardjo *et al.,* 2019) and Lean-Agile combinations (Bryde & Schulmeister 2012) that support sustainable project execution. Table 1 provides a structured view of the relationships between Agile, stakeholder engagement, innovation, and sustainability in construction projects with key findings from each research paper.

Figure 1: Different Variables and Relationships



3.0 PRISMA

To identify relevant research papers, PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) approach was followed for this study. For the selection of high-impact papers, Scopus was used for the screening process. The initial search used keywords related to Agile, stakeholder engagement, innovation, and sustainability in

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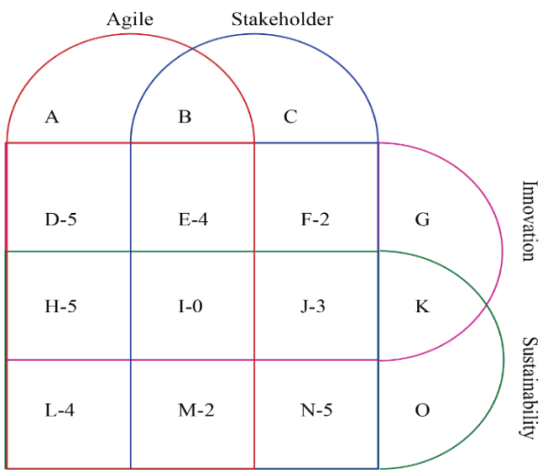
megaprojects, focusing on conference papers and peer-reviewed journal articles. To align our criteria, the identification phase involved retrieving a wide set of articles. Irrelevant papers were removed during the screening phase, based on title and abstract review. The selected studies should contribute meaningful insights into the relationships, for that a full-text assessment was included in eligibility phase. Finally, in the inclusion phase, only those papers which address precise interaction between Agile, stakeholder engagement, innovation, and sustainability were incorporated. The entire process that was carried out for the literature review This process ensured that our literature review was supported by strong and thoroughly examined collection of studies, providing a solid foundation for analysing the relationships among Agile, stakeholder engagement, innovation, and sustainability.

Figure 2: Thematic Relationship Matrix



A	Agile
B	Agile - Stakeholder
C	Stakeholder
D	Aggile - Innovation
E	Agile - Stakeholder - Innovation
F	Stakeholder - Innovation
G	Innovation
H	Agile - Sustainability
I	Agile - Stakeholder - Innovation -Sustainability
J	Stakeholder - Innovation -Sustainability
K	Innovation - Sustainability
L	Agile -Sustainability
M	Agile - Stakeholder - Sustainability
N	Stakeholder - Sustainability
O	Sustainability

3.1 PRISMA process

For the systematic filtration and analysis of relevant research articles related to Agile, stakeholder engagement, innovation, and sustainability in megaprojects the PRISMA approach was utilized. During the Identification phase a total of 73,466 papers were retrieved from Scopus using keyword-based searches across multiple topics. In the Screening phase, the first level of screening, which applied keyword limitations, reduced this to 16,626 papers. The selection was narrowed down to 3,678 papers during second-level title screening, helpful to remove irrelevant papers. In the Eligibility phase, in-depth abstract reviews were conducted on these papers, and 2,008 papers were considered relevant. However, 704 papers did not align with the study's focus and were eliminated. The final inclusion phase involved a full-text review, resulting in 315 studies which were initially considered for qualitative analysis, of which 46

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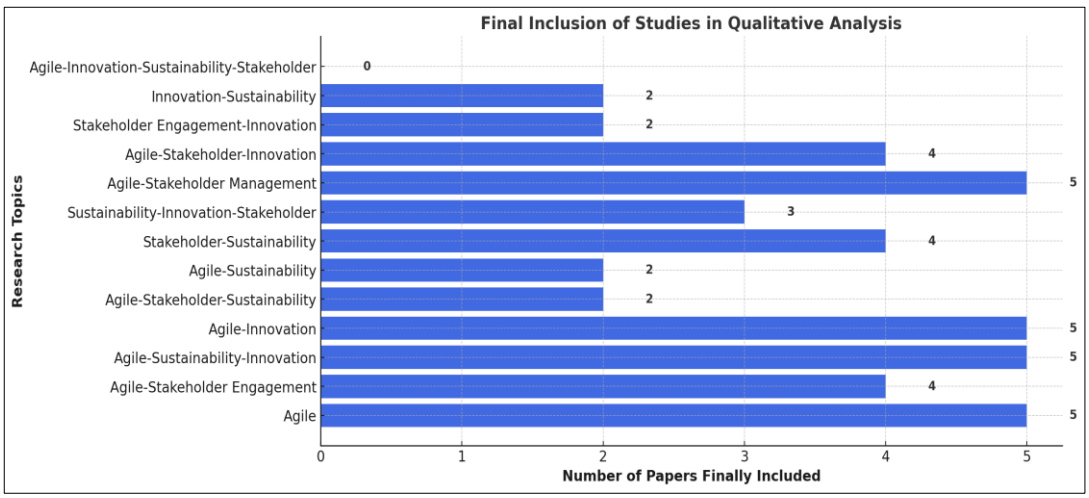
were ultimately included after thorough and precise analysis. Figure 2 categorizes the research based on different thematic relationships.

Figure 3: Final Inclusion of Research Papers in Qualitative Analysis



Topics like Agile (5 papers), Agile-Stakeholder Engagement (4), Agile-Innovation (5), Stakeholder-Sustainability (4), and Stakeholder Engagement-Innovation (2) shows the number of final papers included. Some of the categories had high initial screening numbers but lower final inclusion, emphasizing the robust and highly validated filtering process and the final inclusion of papers has been shown in Fig 3. This structured methodology ensures the selection of good-quality, relevant studies, ensuring a strong foundation for investigating Agile methodologies impact on stakeholder engagement, innovation, and sustainability in large-scale projects. The results highlight potential research gaps due to the lack comprehensive studies linking all four aspects.

4.0 TCCM Framework

The TCCM (Theory, Context, Characteristics, and Methodology) framework helps in analysing research in complex fields like construction, sustainability, and stakeholder management. It combines various theories such as Complex Adaptive Systems Theory, Grounded Theory, Stakeholder Theory, Value Creation Theory, Expectation Disconfirmation Theory, Fuzzy Set Theory, and Agile Methodology, which explain how large projects adapt, innovate, and manage different stakeholder needs ((Nyarirangwe & Babatunde 2019); (Levy *et al.,* 2021);(Lehtinen *et al.*, 2019); (Mihardjo *et al.,* 2019);(Bahadorestani *et al.,* n.d.);(Sakahelmhout *et al.,* 2024);(Mohammed & Karri 2020)). This framework is useful in different sectors, including public buildings, construction, the ICT industry, and healthcare ((Papademetriou *et al.,* 2023);(Simon *et al.,* 2018);(Lee *et al.*, 2011)).

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Table 2: TCCM Framework

Theory	Context	Characteristics	Methodologies
Complex Adaptive Systems Theory	Public buildings	Quick responsiveness	Qualitative Data Analysis
Grounded theory	Construction Industry	Green Competencies	Focus Groups.
Quadruple Helix theory	ICT industry	Green motivation	Experiments.
Stakeholder theory	Health care sector	Competency	Secondary Data Analysis.
Value creation theory	Pharmaceutical industry	Flexibility	Semi-Structured interviews
Expectation disconfirmation theory	Manufacturing Industry	Green organizational citizenship behaviour	Agile KM RE methodology (AKM-REM)
Fuzzy set theory	Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)	Decision-making	six-step bibliometric analysis
Agile Methodology		Pull-driven scheduling	Multiple case studies
Toyota Production System (TPS)	Complex Projects	Strategic management	Quantitative data analysis
Scrum framework	IT industry	Incremental and Iterative Development	Exploratory approach

Each industry has its own challenges, such as managing risks, improving communication, and implementing sustainable solutions. For example, in construction, Agile methods help improve flexibility and collaboration among stakeholders ((Mohammed & Karri 2020);(Anes *et al.,* 2023);(Sultan *et al.,* 2024)). The main characteristics of the TCCM framework include quick responsiveness, green competencies, motivation, and competency development. These factors help improve project outcomes by encouraging sustainability and innovation. Companies that focus on environmental practices and skills development are more successful in delivering sustainable projects ((Zhang *et al.*, 2018);(Papademetriou *et al.,* 2023)). Different research methods support the framework, such as qualitative data analysis, focus groups, experiments, and secondary data analysis ((Mihardjo *et al.,* 2019);(Simon *et al.,* 2018);(Papademetriou *et al.,* 2023)). These approaches help researchers study project performance, stakeholder involvement, and innovation in a structured way. By bringing together these elements, the TCCM framework provides a clear way to understand the challenges in megaprojects. It offers useful insights for making projects more sustainable, improving teamwork, and adapting to changes in different industries.

5.0 Research Gap

India's massive infrastructure projects are gradually looking at Agile methodologies to improve stakeholder involvement, drive innovation and ensure sustainable practices. But there is a big gap in research on how well Agile works in this unique environment. Existing studies

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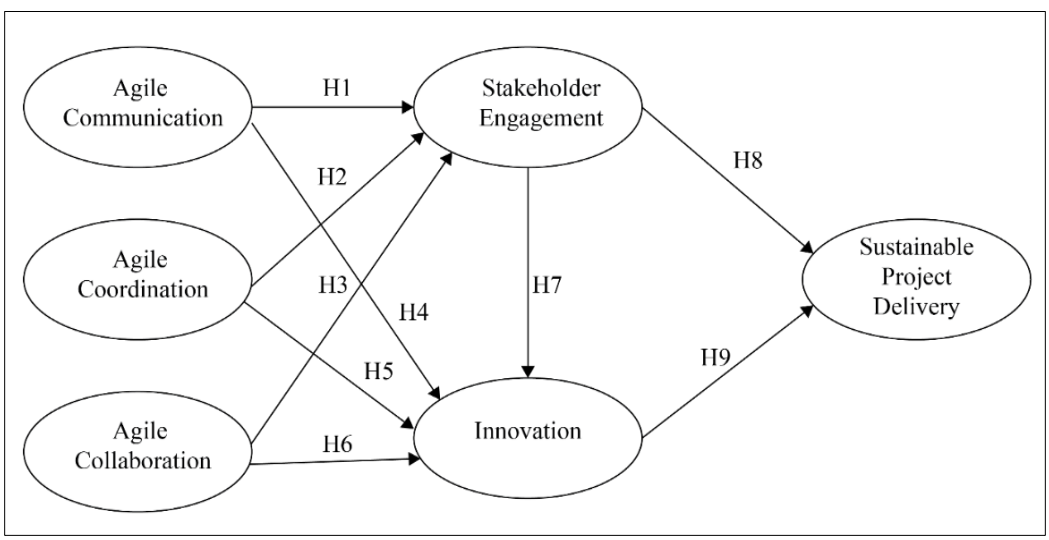
focus on Agile in software development or in Western contexts, which do not consider the complexities of large-scale construction in India. There is a need to explore deeper into how Indian factors like social and economic diversity, specific regulations and cultural dynamics impact agile implementation in these mega projects.

There is a need to explore the cultural, organizational and government-related aspects that influence the use of Agile in Complex Indian Projects. While some studies acknowledge the potential benefits of Agile in Complex Projects and a lot of emphasis is given in the literature on stakeholder engagement, innovation and sustainability in Complex Projects, but not enough on how these factors work together within the Agile framework. The research should focus on developing frameworks, methodologies and best practices specifically designed for implementing Agile in Indian infrastructure projects, considering the unique challenges and opportunities this landscape presents. Hence, we propose a new research model that explores how Agile practices can create a collaboration between stakeholder engagement, innovation and by achieving sustainability goals.

5.1 Proposed model of agile-stakeholder engagement-innovation-sustainability

For overcoming the above-mentioned research gap, we are proposing a model for further studies as shown in Fig 3. which will enable us to understand the interrelation between Stakeholder engagement, Innovation and sustainability within the Agile coordination, Agile communication and Agile collaboration framework for attainment of long-term beneficial project outcomes and goals.

Figure 4: Proposed Conceptual Model



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6.0 Conclusion and Future Research Direction

The literature review highlights that Agile methodologies have been widely studied in different fields like software development, construction, and manufacturing. Research shows that Agile improves stakeholder engagement, fosters innovation, and enhances sustainability. However, these aspects have mostly been studied separately or in limited combinations. The PRISMA analysis further confirms this gap—there is no research that brings together Agile, stakeholder engagement, innovation, and sustainable project delivery in a single framework. While many studies discuss Agile's benefits in megaprojects, none provide a holistic approach that links these four aspects.

To systematically analyse existing research, the TCCM framework was used, helping us categorize theories, contexts, characteristics, and methodologies relevant to our study. Despite several studies on Agile and stakeholder engagement, innovation, and sustainability, none combine all four elements in a way that is suitable for Indian megaprojects, which face unique challenges such as regulatory barriers, diverse stakeholders, and resource constraints. This research gap highlights the need for a structured approach that integrates Agile practices to drive both innovation and sustainability while improving collaboration among stakeholders. To bridge this gap, we propose a new conceptual model where Agile coordination, Agile communication, and Agile collaboration act as key drivers that help megaprojects adapt to challenges, improve stakeholder relationships, and promote long-term sustainability. This model provides a practical approach for project managers, policymakers, and industry leaders to implement Agile in megaprojects more effectively. For future research, the proposed model should be tested and validated using real-world case studies and quantitative techniques like PLS-SEM. Further studies can explore how emerging technologies like AI, digital twins, and blockchain can enhance Agile-driven project management. This research lays a strong foundation for transforming Indian megaprojects into more adaptive, stakeholder-focused, and sustainability-driven developments.

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