

Transitioning to Conscious Choices in Sustainable Green Practices in Businesses

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Abstract:

Businesses have been around for centuries and many have undauntingly stepped on to a phenomenal zenith in varied conglomerates and meaningful ventures. However, the notion of sustainability and adapting to sustainable green practices was not given a serious thought until the realization dawned upon the businesses. As a resultant, this concept was consciously stirred within the core of the business models, as time and tide presented their evidence coded in logbook, of underlying repercussions for the practices in vogue. The untamed population growth, sparsely spread resources and inefficient methodologies that tap into allocating the resources in hand, have time and again created the chaotic situations in the living society & imbalance of nature.

Keyword: Sustainable Green Practices, Sustainability, Future, Green Practices, Business Environment, Businesses

Introduction:

Sustainable practices were brought forth by the UN Commission on Environment and Development in 1983¹ under an avid influence of the Brundtland Commission. The commission seemed to play a significant role in designing the definition of “*sustainability and sustainable practices*” in today’s context. Simply put, “a drive towards attaining the vision and mission of the business in the present tense, without compromising the vision and mission of the future aspirants to meet their needs”.² The natural resources available across the geographical domain are ideally signed up for developing fair-trade relationships across the boundaries to meet the requirements of the end users. But many businesses wish to keep adhering to their monopolistic rituals in hindering these processes. Hence, the governing bodies intervened and initiated the norms and standards for businesses that secures added advantage to the businesses, that understand the value of nature and choose to change in order to meet sustainability and predictive period. In fact, adapting for sustainability and future-progressive thoughtful practices bear a scale that defines bountiful financial returns, provided speed & regulations have been adequately met³. Businesses were found to revamp or redesign their product and process portfolios, be proactive, commit to engage in environmentally friendly practices and utilizing technological innovations to sustain themselves as a true priority (Seuring & Gold, 2013). The technological innovations were a boon during the pandemic as it held the pathways to deal with the pandemic, optimize the use of resources and help in meeting the sustainability goals (Klewitz & Hansen, 2014). In a way, the pandemic worked as a primary causal factor

¹ Sustainability - Wikipedia

² Sustainability - Wikipedia

³ Sustainability engagement: importance and best practices - AWorld

coercing organizations & businesses to adopt new environmentally friendly technologies driven towards sustainable processes and outcomes (Gallego-Álvarez et al., 2011).⁴

Criteria Used:

This paper discusses about how businesses have voluntarily detoured from their customary practices in order to adapt smart sustainable practices that supports in achieving the desired outcomes, as envisioned by their well-drafted vision and mission statements. The main criteria for opting into sustainability and adapting sustainable green practices can be detailed as follows;

1. Being Aware:

Changing climatic conditions have been a keen eye-opener to masses in general. Businesses have realized the need to conserve the available resources, work on reducing waste management and recycle wherever possible.

2. Individualistic Perceptions:

This criterion is truly dependent on each individual's perspective as well as perceptions on the concept that dictates "*sustainability and using green practices*". Businesses can invoke change formally at every level in their set-up, but it's completely up to the individual/s to implement the same in their own lives-practically. Should the individual/s believe in making that positive change, serious efforts need to be made to reduce the environmental footprint.

3. Wholesome Participation:

Many a times, we tend to fall short of achieving a collective goal which is weaved in the favor of the living society, conserving the natural surroundings and all other living entities, due to lack of unity. Promoting an inclusive environment, encouraging the community members to participate, involving them in decision-making so as to understand the essence of achieving sustainability and adapt practices to meet the sustainable goals, that guide to preserve the needs of present and future generations.

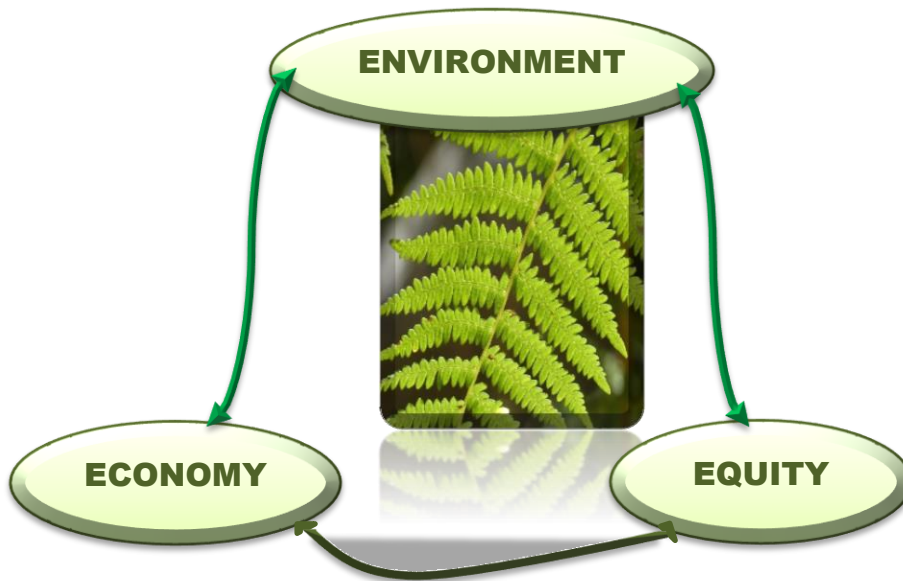
4. Leading the Change:

Every business venture needs to evaluate their processes and procedures that can be molded to create a positive change. Reducing carbon footprint, recycling harmful products, collaborating with others for utilizing renewable energies, implementing waste management protocol and fostering a sustainable business culture in practice. The employees and family members can be wholesomely included to carry forward the baton of change in their daily practices, that is geared towards implementation and advocating the change.⁵

⁴ Technological Innovation, Sustainable Green Practices and SMEs Sustainable Performance in Times of Crisis (COVID-19 pandemic) | Information Systems Frontiers (springer.com)

⁵ Sustainability engagement: importance and best practices - AWorld

Businesses that Took “Sustainability and Sustainable Green Practices” with a Grain of Salt:



1) The National Action Plan on Climate Change
2) The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Campaign)
3) Green Practices Initiative by Tata Group
4) Green Practices Initiative by UPS ORION
5) Green Practices Initiative by ITC Limited Industries
6) Green Practices Initiative by Mahindra & Mahindra
7) Green Practices Initiative by IKEA IWAY
8) Green Practices Initiative by Godrej Industries
9) Green Practices Initiative by GE Industries

I. The National Action Plan on Climate Change

The inspiration that led for the establishment of NAPCC was devised in 1987, wherein a publication of “Our Common Future” was proposed highlighting the need of sustainable development as a critical feature for international development. This initiative was launched in **2008** by the **Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change**. A lot of discrepancies were noticed within the working nations that held a strong belief in building their domain and lives around it. Increasing poverty in the developing nations, depleting ozone layer, aftermath of changing temperatures around the globe, extinction of certain animal and plant species and increasing pollution noticed in water and air levels, instigated the 8 missions with pre-determined goals⁶.

- **National Solar Mission**
- **National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency**
- **National Mission on Sustainable Habitat**

⁶ National Action Plan on Climate Change (drishtiias.com)

- **National Water Mission**
- **National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem**
- **National Mission for A Green India**
- **National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture**
- **National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change**

II. The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Campaign):

This campaign was launched by PM Narendra Modi on Oct 2, 2019, celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The idea of SWBA is to promote Mahatma Gandhi's dream of a clean and hygienic India. The initiative was to broom out the dirt from every nook and corner from streets and other vicinities in India. A slogan undertaken was 'Na gandagi karenge, Na karne denge.' (We will not litter, nor will we let anyone litter).⁷

III. Green Practices Initiative by Tata Group:

As businesses became aware of the dire need to switch their redundant practices in effect, Tata Group of companies that has a diversified portfolio and interest in various sectors-signed up. Adapting sustainable green practices in automotive, steel, energy, hospitality & consumer goods to a mention a few. It has introduced EV's with the view to support the environment for clean air and promoting sustainable transportation in India. Renewable energies, solar power, wind power and aiming to reduce the carbon emissions in order to support clean energy and secure healthy environment for future generations. The company strives to highlight the essence of how environment can be safeguarded, stir in the awareness, discuss the features of products that are aligned to conserve the environment and at the same time boost consumer demand for choosing wisely on greener alternatives.⁸

IV. Green Practices Initiative by UPS ORION:

UPS is concentrated in transportation activities for US and is responsible for almost 30% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. (Fig 1). UPS distributes goods across regions, & transportation activities make up the bulk of GHG emissions. This data led on to the next well-thought out plan to reduce emissions and the transition to better practices was duly supported by technological advancements felt. UPS has adopted an AI system called "ORION" which efficiently maneuvers the route plan for making deliveries, the number of turns, avoiding heavy traffic congestion and delivering in the expected timeframe. Since the inception of this practice by UPS in 2012, the company has managed to reduce the carbon footprint by 100,000 metric tonnes per year, approximately more than 20,000 cars on the roads.⁹

⁷ Swachh Bharat Abhiyan | Prime Minister of India (pmindia.gov.in)

⁸ JETIR2307919.pdf

⁹ Top 10 Sustainability Case Studies & Success Stories in 2024 (aimultiple.com)

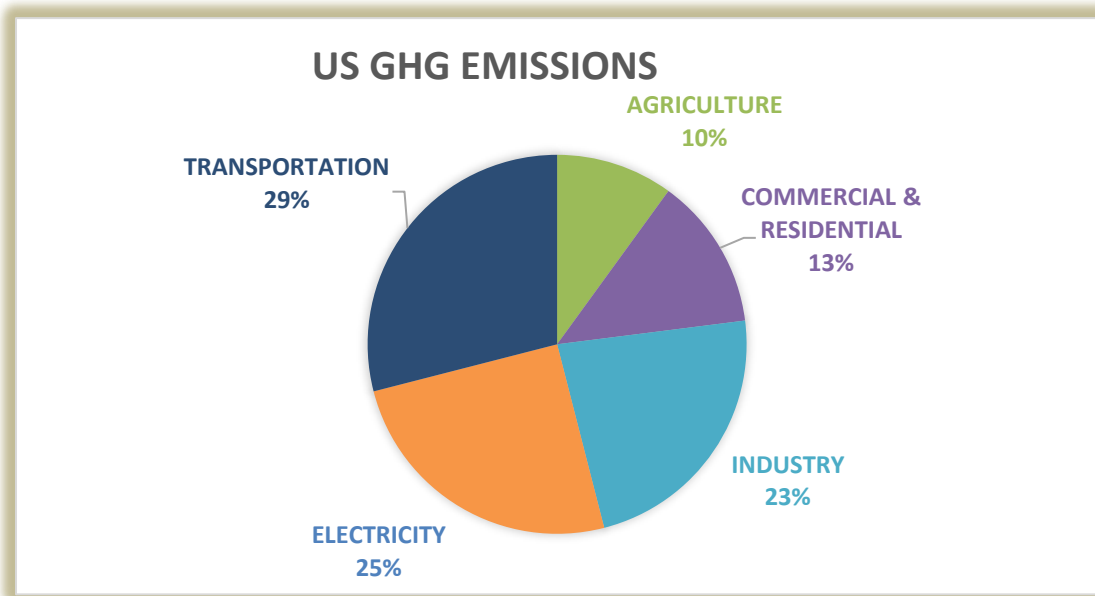


Fig 1

V. Green Practices Initiative by ITC Limited:

ITC Limited has vowed to focus on their daily operations and revamp their practices to safeguard the environment and render their responsibility in a planned manner. The company is actively involved in setting sustainable goals yet, more focused in promoting sustainable practices in agriculture. They are defining ways in which water can be conserved, minimizing waste, utilizing eco-friendly farming methodologies, support organic farming, safe pest control and aligning better irrigation techniques. This initiative has created a promising segment that emphasizes on the adhering into maintaining the health and quality of the soil and embracing biodiverse ecosystem. Saving forests, reducing utilization of paper, recycling waste paper, devising afforestation programs to ensure wood fiber is in healthy supply, are some other transitions made by the industry. The social and community development initiatives are noteworthy as well. They have been persistent in reaching out to the community as a whole at grassroots level, guiding the folks to live by sustainable methods, empowering women, instilling awareness about green products, know-how of organic food, solar projects, educating them on healthcare and how clean energy can work as an integral way in everyday life.

VI. Green Practices Initiative by Mahindra & Mahindra:

Mahindra & Mahindra is a renowned automobile manufacturer in and outside India. As the environmental concerns grew to raise concerns, Mahindra & Mahindra took on the challenge to pursue strict goals to reduce the harm being done by vehicles and seek better alternatives. EVs were introduced to eliminate tailpipe emissions, curbing carbon footprint and uplifting the quality of air index. The company has taken initiatives to help in conserving the available resources, creating energy efficient methodologies, putting up solar power plants in manufacturing units and relying less on fossil fuels. Renewable energies, recycling water, checking into waste management, creating platforms for collaborative approach to raise awareness and share guided practices. Consumers have been made aware of the many possibilities that can help improving the AQI, reducing the carbon footprint and how they can use the eco-friendly transportation options in hand.

VII. Green Practices Initiative by IKEA IWAY

IKEA Group announced a total investment of EUR 2.8 billion in warehouses, distribution networks, customer satisfaction, shopping malls, renewable energy, and forestry during the year. (Schneider and Bermudez, 2018).¹⁰ IKEA has a strong belief system for the community, and with respect to its principles and sustainable thinking, it has managed to devise a long-term survival goal in a proactive manner. The wave of sustainable movement caught up with IKEA much earlier than most, under its benevolent cloud of principles and values. The initiative to build on sustainability and attain sustainable green practices, encourages organizations to secure their credibility and reputation for “*Environmental, Social and Governance*” (ESG) within a social setting.

Environmental and Social Governance metrics – ESG Metrics measures;

GHG Green House Gas Emissions	Emissions Intensity	Energy Mix	Total Water Consumption
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for all the Nasdaq companies.

Social ESG Metrics comprises of;

CEO Pay Ratio	Gender Ratio	Pay	Gender Diversity	Injury rate	Child/Forced Labor and Human rights.
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Governance ESG Metrics comprises of;

ESG and other reports	Incentives Pay	Supplier Code of Conduct	External Audit
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for all the Nasdaq companies.¹¹

Now, IKEA was asked to submit the ESG Metrics for supplier code of conducts and could also look forward to certain rewards if positive governance was established. IWAY is the supplier code of conduct code of IKEA ensuring the suppliers meet the essential environmental and humanitarian qualities of working. IKEA has taken this initiative for over 20 years, and has managed to improve the processes based on their prior experiences. IWAY six is the most recent version of IKEA’s supplier code of conduct, which evaluates:¹²

- Core Worker Rights.
- Safety at Work Place
- WLB – Work-Life Balance of employees.
- Water & Waste Management of potential suppliers.
- Curbing Child Labor Practices.

VIII. Green Practices Initiative by Godrej Industries:

Godrej Industries Limited has been a promising participant in implementing the green practices initiative in its varied businesses. It has successfully developed portfolios for products to be eco-friendly,

¹⁰ <https://ieomsociety.org/proceedings/2023manila/593.pdf>

¹¹ Top 14 ESG Metrics CEOs Must Disclose in ESG Reports (2024) (aimultiple.com)

¹² Top 10 Sustainability Case Studies & Success Stories in 2024 (aimultiple.com)

biodegradable tendencies, detergents that reduce the harm to the environment and water pollution. Although, these may not be too cost effective, the consumers are given an upper-hand to choose sustainable products, packaging, recyclable options, reducing plastic or single-use plastics for day-2-day chores. Waste management has been a top priority in minimizing and controlling the waste and promoting more greener surroundings. Reviving burnt forests, planting trees, initiating outreach programs, using digital marketing for campaigns that support building sustainable lifestyle and motivate the end users to surrender their redundant practices.

IX. Green Practices Initiative by GE Industries:

Historians have traced the practice of using the wind to power machines all the way back to first-century Alexandria. Since then, windmills have been helping people all over the world to get work done—from grinding corn and flour to pumping water. The wind turbines have been used for generating electricity for over 130 years. GE Wind turbines have been generating electricity and keeping the globe electrified via 49,000 units installed. The company also manufactures Haliade-X, the most powerful and efficient offshore wind turbine on the planet. (A single Haliade-X turbine can light an entire city of 12,000 homes).¹³ However, the productivity of a wind turbine varies greatly depending on the design, weather conditions, and geography of the location it is deployed. Using IoT (Internet of Things) and digital twins to collect data on each wind turbine and simulate possible modifications such as adjusting the direction of the wind turbine can assist corporations in locating their wind turbines in a wind farm more effectively.¹⁴ Consistent measures are undertaken to keep the quality performance levels at par of the wind turbines by employing sensors and digital twins that serve as indicators for timely repairs. As time progresses, the output of the wind farms is likely to go up to 10% or more green energy on a global platform.

Conclusions:

It is imperative that all the key industrial players around the globe need to put an effective plan of action that dictates continuous improvement from the previous level, so as to keep up with the ultimate race to embrace sustainable green practices and move towards sustainability. This can be achieved via sincere cooperation between energy and construction companies that will outlast the redundancies, instead boost to aspire & enhance the use of idle places in buildings in a more effective way.

But every change comes with transformational obligations that are held back due to institutional, systemic and process barriers—including financial constraints, inter-ministerial coordination, lack of technical expertise and project clearance delays—that choose to decide, if at all the preceding step should be permitted for transition towards better practices. Internal conflict, politics without any inherent grit and the adamant attitudes, have also been a major hindrance in bringing about the change at a global level, including India.

Going Forward:

We have realized the need to adapt sustainable practices but the Plan of Action is yet to see the light in some scenarios. This could be due to lack of funds, a proper protocol or guidelines in hand to adhere into.

- Climate change is invariably taking a toll globally on all living lives. Creating networks that can promise healthy bilateral relationships, engagement in the UN Framework Convention on Climate

¹³ AWS is How: GE Renewable Energy Increases Wind Energy Production | AWS for Industries ([amazon.com](https://aws.amazon.com/industries))

¹⁴ Top 10 Sustainability Case Studies & Success Stories in 2024 (aimultiple.com)

Change for developing countries like India, is a positively driven phenomena that is supportive for the transition to sustainable practices.

- Initiatives for working into slowing or reversing the adverse changes noticed in the climatic conditions, deforestation, less water resources and loss of life, has been the ultimate goal. Nevertheless, a consistent approach to buy into the guidelines on a continuous basis to reach the sustainable objectives is to be implemented.
- NAPCC shows interest for making the change in India, but the action plan in unison has not been felt yet. Although, we have had industries that have taken on the sustainable green practices concept by the horns, yet, the guidelines in print is far from practicality and sadly falls short in implementation. This requires an infallible commitment and dedication by every entity to voluntarily invoke the sustainable goals, till it becomes a second nature of each individual, industry and business. There are many more issues that have been missed their share of spotlight , yet addressing the dire need to drive towards achieving sustainability and sustainable goals ,bring about the awareness with respect to global warming, ESG Metrics, recycling products, reducing waste, conserve energy, environment friendly products, reducing environmental footprint, composting, delegating Corporate Social Responsibility, the ethical consumerism of goods and services, water harvesting and collaborating a better balance between business and the environment – is a must.

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