



BE THE CHANGE: A STUDY OF THE GREEN INITIATIVES AND GREEN IDENTITY OF INDIAN CORPORATES

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ABSTRACT

Protection of the environment is an issue of key concern which has permeated into all spheres of life. Consumers are increasingly becoming concerned about the environment and various issues related to it at the global level. This makes it imperative for the businesses to review and revitalize their green initiatives. Amid the global ecological crisis around climate change, it is essential for the corporates to put themselves on a path toward sustainable growth. Green initiatives in corporate governance will help in the conservation of natural resources and help to minimize of natural resources. Green initiatives in-corporates a broad range of activities, green processes inthe workplace in orderto createa healthy environment for employees, reduces waste including product modifications, changes to the production processes, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising. This paper attempts to examine the various green initiatives of leading Indian corporates and how they are creating a green identity for themselves.

KEY WORDS:

Green Initiatives, green products, green advertising, green processes, sustainability

INTRODUCTION

Corporates are increasingly joining the fight against the global climate crisis. Companies all across the globe are recognizing that sustainable business is good business; that decarbonizing operations and supply chain is not just the right thing, but the smart thing to do. Consumers also expect it, employees' demand it and the fate of the planet depends on it. India's vow to turn net zero by 2070 is being wholeheartedly supported by brands, businesses, and consumers. The road to meeting climate goals lies in the adoption of a sustainable lifestyle. The conversations around clean air, climate change, and biodiversity have become shriller post pandemic and people are suddenly switching over to natural products and marketers are going one step ahead to see how they can be more sustainable.

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“Companies, as stated by Saxena & Khandelwal, (2012) must have green products and environmental health, and green philosophy in its practical ground. Environmental degradation has not been an integral part for many companies. Companies must adopt a model that integrates social, economic and environmental dimensions in their business. The community will resist a company when it does not deem paying attention to social, economic and environmental aspects. Regarding this, the companies consider in a very limited sustainable responsibility and prefer to rely on eco-friendly marketing. Smart companies are indicated by their ability to see create environmental problems as opportunities rather than threats in order they can create more benefits in satisfying consumer needs (Silveira et al., 2018). Adopting new strategies, adaptation to new development issues help companies create more benefits through meeting their customers’ satisfaction on green products and green environment (Yusuf et al., 2014). Consumer perception on environmentally friendly marketing activities is a crucial need in maintaining the company’s image and reputation (Haery et al., 2013). Additionally, companies that implement corporate social responsibility along with other products are increasingly favored by consumers and investors. They tend to have more interest in their companies (Susanto, 2007). The reputation of green companies impacts to increasing the company's positive image in conducting its business and meeting its social responsibility (Susilo, 2014).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Marketing Association (AMA) defined green marketing as a marketing process for products assumed to be environmentally safe. It offers environmentally friendly products, production process, change of packaging, and product modification of marketing communications (Murthy, 2010) and provides ethical decision in their business process. Seth & Khan (2015) stated that green marketing is a blend of ethics and corporate CSR which helps businesses become a socially responsible entity. There are five important factors in the Green Marketing Orientation/GMO dimensions; the greening process, the green supply chain management, the green policy strategic initiatives, proactive energy conservation and the green marketing innovation. The growing awareness of the community has affected the tendency of companies to become more concerned about the protection of the environment as part of their social responsibility, (Dwyer, 2009).

Kumar & Ghode (2015), found that consumer purchasing decisions can be easily identified from environmental responsibility incentives, green product experience, corporate environmental friendliness, and social attractiveness. Saxena & Khandelwal (2012) also found that generally, industries in India have a positive outlook in the practice of green philosophy. It enables them to have a competitive advantage and sustainable growth. The adoption of a green business strategy leads to a position of competitive advantage (Leonidou et al., 2017). Pivato et al. (2008) argued that consumer’s confidence in the CSR activities is one immediate consequences of a corporate social performance and significantly affects the attitudes and actions of CSR. Trust is a key element in relationships; therefore its role is very important in social exchange relationships. Liang & Wang (2008) explain that trust is seen as a dimension that describes the level at which each party in a business relationship sees it, depending on the promise of integrity offered.

Companies generally enhance their green trust based on three determinants: green perceived quality, perceived risk, and green satisfaction, so trust is a prerequisite and a key to successful marketing relations (Wu et al., 2010). Harrison (2005) provides information about company

image that includes four elements: personality, overall characteristics of the company's ability to understand public targets, their reputation, activities carried out by the company and public beliefs based on personal experience or from other parties about the values of the company. Hassan, (2013) argues that companies' ability to understand the importance of social problems will create opportunities for them to improve their reputation. The creation of a corporate image is not only the result of real forms but also as a result of company actions and behavior. In the era of public awareness formation on the environmental sustainability, the company pays more attention to green marketing in some industries (Chen, 2010).

Green Corporate Image The creation of corporate image as a result of the actions and behavior of the company (Francisco and Jaime, 2016). Customers give more importance to social quality brand compared with the values of the technical and functional product. Corporate identity is important for a company's brand as it has played an important role in consumer product evaluation (Subrat and Suvendu, 2015). Most of the buyers are influenced by the advertisement that reflects the company's commitment to the environment (Polonsky and Ottman, 1998). When a company communicates this through their advertisement, promotion, publication and social responsibility of the company, they are sure to get many loyal customers. Isabel et al. (2016) required organizations to give special attention to the company's brand identity, considering its influence on employees' commitment to their organizations, as well as brand performance and satisfaction. Consumers are ready to rely on their purchase decision on buying a product that is not harmful to the environment. In fact, there is a green segment consumer in the different sample that significantly influences in several aspects of other market segments (Do Paço and Raposo, 2009). Consumers want to identify themselves with the company that has green compliance and are willing to pay the fee for greener lifestyle. Because of that, green marketing was not only a tool in environment protection but also a marketing strategy (Yazdanifard and Erdoo, 2011). Chen (2008) explored for his study that the positive affect of green intellectual capital on the competitive advantage of the firms.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH PAPER

- To study the Green initiatives of leading Indian Corporates and analyze how they are creating a green identity for themselves.
- To identify and study the various issues and activities taken up by these corporates for the conservation of the environment.
- To provide a conceptual framework for a future study in this field.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is an exploratory study based on content analysis and data was collected by conducting a comprehensive literature survey of text books, national and international referred journals, magazines, newspapers, government publications, websites etc. 8 leading Indian corporates have been chosen as sample for content analysis and have been studied qualitatively to examine their various green initiatives and how they are creating a green identity for themselves.

Analysis of the Green Initiatives of leading Indian Corporates

Dabur

Dabur has adopted sustainability as a way of life. Ayurveda and nature forms the core of its product range, conservation of nature and natural resources is key to its existence. It has initiated a project for providing high quality; affordable solar solution in households for their daily uses and provides solar lamps to the households. It has identified 5 villages for installation of street lights. Dabur is working to establish a new boiler technology at its manufacturing facility in Pantnagar (in Uttaranchal). This new project - a first of its kind in India - will use wet herbal waste from the facility as fuel directly in the boiler and incinerate the same to generate steam, and generate attractive savings in energy costs thereby reducing the discharge of solid waste to the environment. The company has also substituted furnace oil with petcoke – a byproduct of crude refining - as fuel, a move that has led to considerable energy savings.

The company has also invested in elaborate scrubbing and particle separation technology to ensure that exhaust from the boilers does not carry any unburnt particulate matter. Dabur is in the process of setting up facilities inside the factory to use herbal waste from the manufacturing process and convert them into bio-briquettes that can be used as fuel in boilers. The efforts include implementation of rainwater harvesting and water recycling which has delivered encouraging results. Providing farmers with easy access to real-time, relevant information and raising agriculture competencies through knowledge and technology transfer.

ITC

The e-choupal initiative by ITC has been globally acknowledged and has raised rural incomes considerably. In this, the company provides small and marginal farmers access to information about market prices, weather and other relevant information, which can help them improve their produce and incomes. Afforestation Program assists farmers to turn their unproductive land assets into profitable pulpwood plantations, using clonal saplings specially developed by ITC R&D to grow in harsh conditions. Social Forestry is for impoverished farmers who are motivated to form Forestry Groups through which they get loans, subsidized clonal stock as well as technical support and training. There is a particular focus on Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste households - who are generally among India's most Further, the social and farm forestry initiatives by this company allowed many farmers to use their wastelands for pulpwood plantation, thereby giving both the ITC Paperboards business and themselves a boost. This initiative received an award at the Rio+20 UN summit. Apart from these, ITC also has watershed projects, animal husbandry services, women empowerment programs and community development programs.

ITC has been conferred the Forest Management certification from the Forest Stewardship Council, which confirms compliance with the highest international benchmarks of plantation management in terms of being environmentally responsible, socially beneficial and economically viable.

All of its premium luxury hotels have been given the leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) platinum certification, making it the greenest luxury hotel chain in the world.

WIPRO

As a founding member of Transform to Net Zero, Wipro is committed to contribute to the planetary zero carbon emissions journey by making sustainability the core of its business model. The ecological dimensions of operations are focused on energy efficiency, water efficiency, waste/pollution management and biodiversity. It is integrating sustainability into business practices through employee engagement, customer stewardship, procurement, supply chain, industry bodies and external stakeholders. The scope of Wipro's green initiatives includes its internal infrastructure and operations; environment-friendly products, green computing solutions, and take-back services for its customers; as well as advocacy for e-waste legislation.

Wipro Infotech has taken significant strides and strong leadership in Green Computing, providing responsible and environment sensitive computing solutions to its customers. Wipro is committing to contribute to planetary Net-Zero Greenhouse Gas emissions targets by reducing its emissions to zero by 2040 and a 55% reduction by 2030. The company has earned 'India's Number 1 Green Brand' recognition from Greenpeace.

MOTHER DAIRY

Mother Dairy Fruit & Vegetable Pvt. Ltd. (MDFVPL) is the first company amongst the Indian dairy co-operatives to acquire registration under Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) as well as implementing EPR. The company's efforts have always been aligned towards a holistic approach of collecting and recycling/co-processing of post-consumer used SLP and MLP waste. It has collected & recycled 7,284 MT of post-consumer used plastic waste in the country till March 2021. The overall volume includes both Multi-Layered Plastic (MLP) and Single Layered Plastic (SLP) waste. The Company is engaging and encouraging its consumers to opt for Token Milk (Automated Milk Vending system) at the company's booths in Delhi NCR and this effort has eliminated the generation of around 700 MT plastic wastes every year. MDFVPL has initiated a research program on eco-friendly packaging and has introduced paper trays for curd cups as a replacement of plastic trays which will eliminate usage of approx. 100 MT of plastic.

Mother Dairy has replaced all plastic spoons with wooden spoons and eliminated plastic straws provided along with a few dairy products and enhanced consumption for 1 liter milk packs instead of 500 ml has helped the Company to eliminate use of plastic bag/pouch by approx. 240 MT annually. The Company has implemented 100% EPR for MLP, such as laminates and Tetra Packs across 26 states of the country where the company operates in, including Delhi NCR and Maharashtra.

GODREJ

Godrej Consumer Products is among the top 12 Indian companies to be featured on the Dow Jones Sustainability Emerging Markets Index 2019. The key thrust of Godrej's sustainability initiatives includes five goals: carbon neutrality, reduction in specific energy consumption and

increase in renewable energy use by 30 per cent each, water conservation and zero waste to landfill. The company generates a third of its portfolio revenues from 'good' and/or 'green' products. Godrej Interio is India's largest furniture brand in the home and institutional space with a strong commitment to sustainability.

Godrej's pioneering efforts include designing less environment burdening products, usage of eco-friendly materials and setting up less polluting and consuming processes, ensuring eco-friendly packaging and transportation and finally the extended responsibility of recycling/reuse of used furniture and scrap, thus ensuring a lifecycle approach to green. It aims for 25 per cent reduction in energy consumption, zero waste; carbon neutrality has also undertaken an initiative to ensure a green supply chain.

One of the largest players in the home appliances segment, Godrej group has consistently manufactured products that are green. It launched the country's first 100 per cent green refrigerator series in 2002, (CFC, HFC and HCFC free). For reduction in energy consumption, Godrej plans to bring down the energy required to manufacture each unit of their products by 30 per cent, through a mix of energy conservation and process reengineering and adopting clean technology like solar, wind and biomass in their manufacturing plants.

HINDUSTAN UNILEVER LIMITED

HUL under the USPL wants sustainable operations as the backbone of the company's growth in the future. The company has operations all over the country and hence has a huge impact on the environment through its logistics and last-mile delivery to the stores. They reduced their CO2 emissions from their logistics network by a whopping 14% in 2019.

They have also rolled out environment-friendly freezer cabinets that use hydrocarbon (HC) refrigerants instead of Hydrofluorocarbons refrigerants and have successfully reduced CO2 emissions per ton of their production by 85% compared to 2008. As part of USLP, Unilever has also made a global commitment to eliminate coal from the energy mix by 2020.

HUL has reduced the usage of water by almost 60% since 2008 by using advanced initiatives like reduction in freshwater abstraction, implementation of captive rainwater harvesting. Hindustan Unilever Foundation (HUF) operates the 'Water for Public Good' program, with specific focus to empower local community institutions to govern water resources and enhance farm-based livelihoods through the adoption of judicious water management practices.

PROCTER & GAMBLE

P&G has set a new ambition to achieve net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions across its operations and supply chain, from raw material to retailer. P&G also shared a Climate Transition Action Plan which outlines a comprehensive approach to accelerating climate action and the key challenges ahead

P&G has executed its plans to reduce the amount of energy and CO2 as well as they have worked to reduce packaging. Their work is remarkable in conservation of water and its sustainable management. It has envisioned powering their all-existing ventures into 100% renewable energy consuming sites. They have focused and planned to replace 25% of their

petroleum-drive raw materials with sustainably sourced renewable materials and has pledged to achieve zero net deforestation by 2020.

The Global Asset Recovery & Purchase Team of Procter & Gamble has worked a lot to reduce and recycle the manufacturing wastes. They could reduce manufacturing waste to 0.65% of input materials which directly adds to a 99.35% of beneficial use of all input materials via recycling, reuse or other energy conversion methods. Almost 50 sites of P&G have achieved 0% manufacturing waste to landfill. P&G is embracing the vision and leveraging innovation to drive environmental sustainability through its operation and products.

HCL

In its continued endeavor to promote eco-friendly practices and Ecosystem Restoration, HCL Foundation, the CSR arm of HCL Technologies, launched HCL Harit – The Green Initiative (earlier incubated under HCL Uday – A holistic urban CSR initiative addressing all forms of urban poverty).

HCL Harit is a distinct flagship program for environment action, with the vision ‘to conserve, restore and enhance indigenous environmental systems and respond to climate change in a sustainable manner through community engagement’ focusing on increasing green cover, carbon sequestration, native biodiversity through afforestation and habitat improvement . It has also taken steps for the conservation and rejuvenation of water bodies through community engagement, reduction in CO₂ emissions , improvement of Coastal and Marine Habitats for native biodiversity and improving lives of stray animals and addressing human animal conflict inside community areas

During its incubation period, Harit planted & nurtured 250,000+ saplings spanning an area of almost 115 acres, reduced emissions/sequestered 285 tons of CO₂e, removed 7,000+ waste from coastal areas, and rejuvenated 50+ water bodies, resulting in 5,000+ million liters increase in water holding capacity.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Implementing the green marketing process into its marketing strategy, these corporate giants are trying to build a good green corporate image among the community. The green marketing implementation into their marketing strategy and corporate social responsibility program has brought benefit, high imperative to the community, and positive value to the company's green image.

LIST OF CORPORATES AND THEIR GREEN INITIATIVES.

CORPORATES	INITIATIVES/ISSUES
Dabur	Rainwater harvesting, Solid waste management Solar energy
ITC	Afforestation Program , Social and farm forestry drive , Watershed projects, Animal husbandry services, Waste/pollution management

Wipro	Green Computing , Carbon neutrality, e-waste legislation, Green supply chain, Biodiversity
Mother Dairy	Recycling/co-processing of plastic, Eco-friendly packaging
Godrej	Green products , Eco-friendly materials, Green supply chain, Process reengineering and adopting clean technology
Hindustan Unilever Limited	Water for Public Good and Carbon neutrality program, Water conservation, Zero waste to landfill
Procter and Gamble	100% Renewable energy consuming sites ,Zero net deforestation
HCL	Increasing green cover, Carbon sequestration, Native biodiversity

Corporates are addressing almost all the issues that are posing a threat to our environment but that is not enough as they also need to provide information to the consumers to make them exactly understand the benefits of their green marketing programs and its impact on the environment. They should also take steps to educate the society members, especially, the consumers who use their products to increase their intimacy with the green products and environmental issues.

Corporates have started using sustainability as a product differentiator and a platform to showcase innovation. When companies provide a sustainability narrative about their product or service, the consumer feels immensely valued, thus leading to increased desirability and loyalty. The consumers do not just buy a company's product; they also build a connect with the company and connect with who they believe they are thus helping them reinforce their perception about themselves. When the company as an entity produces green products it not only contributes to the creation of green products but also in creating a healthy, safe and green environment and become a catalyst for a positive change.

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