

THE ENVIRONMENT CRISIS AND SUSTAINABILTY: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FMCG COMPANIES

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ABSTRACT

Environmental degradation or crisis is the major concern of the hour. Over utilisation of the resources and damaging the whole ecosystem thereby is the cause for so many disasters. We as a society need to be concerned and aware of the mitigation steps of the crisis. Sustainability has been a major practice for many FMCG companies nowadays. This research paper will study the sustainability measures taken by FMCG giants like Hindustan Unilever limited and ITC limited. The secondary data has been collected through the companies' sustainable reports and various research papers.

Keywords: sustainability, FMCG, Hindustan Unilever limited, ITC limited, environmental crisis

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the consequences of the environmental destruction.
2. To study the sustainable measures taken by Hindustan Unilever Limited and ITC limited.

INTRODUCTION

Environmental problems are multidisciplinary in nature. Environmental degradation mostly occurs due to the excess extraction of natural resources which are basically known as the so-called means for development. (Barun Kumar Thakur, 2014).

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The sustainable administration of the earth and natural resources is essential for financial development and human prosperity. At the point when overseen well, inexhaustible characteristic assets, watersheds, profitable scenes and seascapes can give the establishment to supported comprehensive development, sustenance security and poverty reduction. natural resources give vocations to a huge number of individuals and create sizeable assessment income. (Chopra, 2016)

CONSEQUENCES OF ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

1. IMPACT ON HUMAN HEALTH

There are various effects of environmental crisis and human health is one of them on the receiving ends. The over utilization of resources by human beings affects them too in the end. The nature gives it back in various ways (Chopra, 2016). Polluted air creates respiratory problems of asthma and pneumonia and there is a new virus called COVID-19 which causes lack of breathing due to low oxygen level and damages the lungs. Man has seen the disastrous impacts of the destruction caused by him to this planet. It is an alarming time where we should focus on more ways to protect the environment through environment friendly ways. According to the WHO, the air has been disinfected and not fit to breathe especially in metropolitan cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, etc.

2. LOSS OF BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity loss means a decrease in species, ecosystem or earth as a whole. Biodiversity helps in balancing the ecosystem by combating pollution, stabilizing climate and protecting resources. Deforestation, global warming and pollution causes loss of biodiversity. Human beings have badly changed the environment and degraded the ecosystem. (Chopra, 2016)

3. OZONE LAYER DEPLETION

The role of ozone layer is to protect the earth from harmful ultraviolet rays. The emission of CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons) causes ozone layer depletion. There are many other substances that lead to ozone layer depletion such as hydro chlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) (Chopra, 2016). Such substances are found in vehicular emissions, by-products of industrial processes, aerosols and refrigerants. All these ozone depleting substances remain stable in the lower atmospheric region, but as they reach the stratosphere, they get exposed to the ultra violet rays.

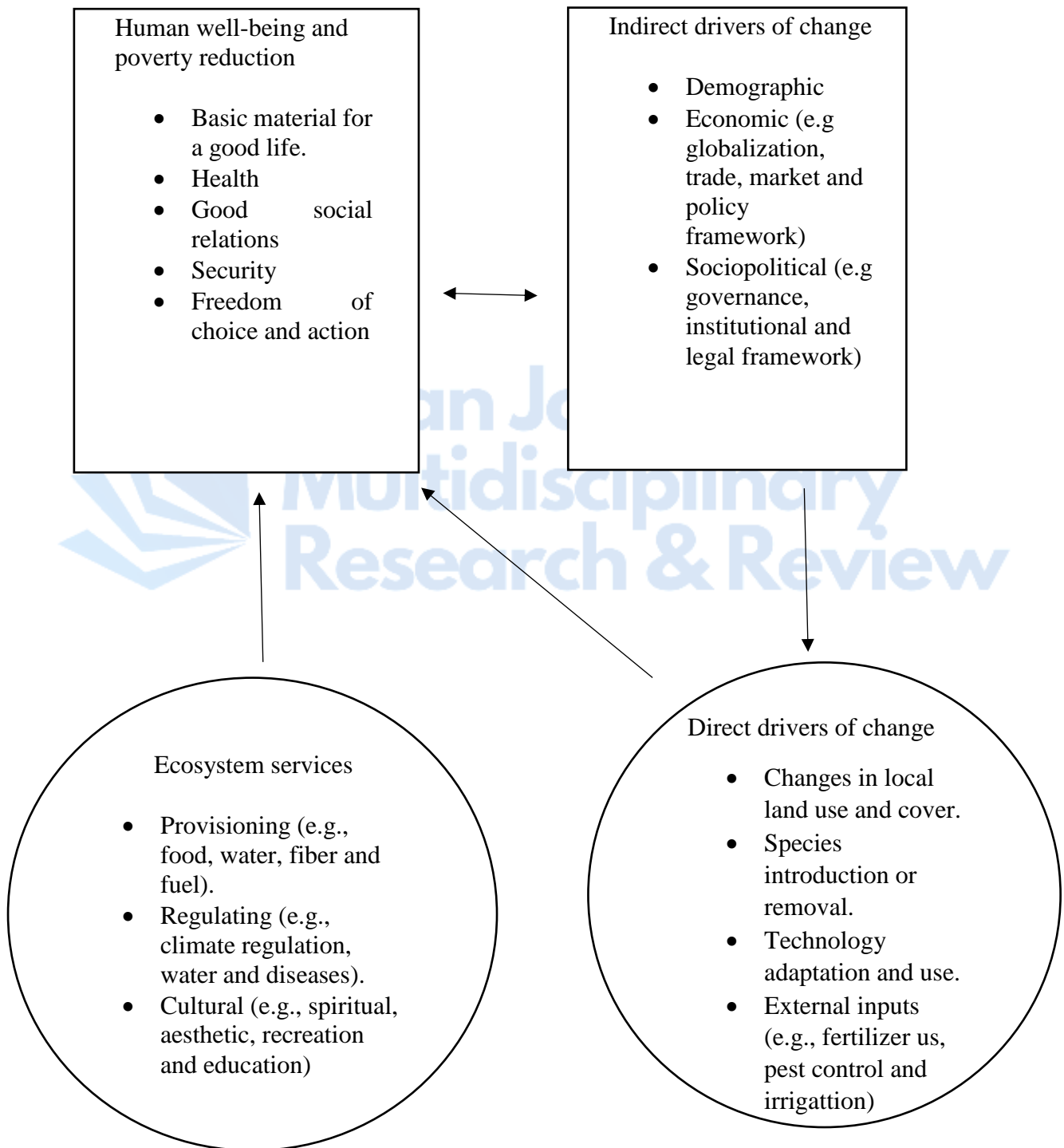
4. WATER DEGRADATION

Environmental destruction causes depletion of fresh water resources on earth. Water is one of the major components and plays a vital part in the working of the ecosystem. Approximately only 2.5% of all of the water on Earth is fresh water, with the rest being salt water. 69% of the fresh water is frozen in ice caps located on Antarctica and Greenland, so only 30% of the 2.5% of fresh water is available for consumption. (Rani, 2016).

5. CLIMATE CHANGE

Increase in the level of CO₂ in the atmosphere, which is leading to increase the global warming is the major impact seen. The increase in temperature decreases the length of the snow season in the winter and thereby increases the concentration of snowmelt in hotter seasons, which results to peak runoff of snowmelt earlier in the season, disturbing soil moisture, flood and drought risks, and storage capacities depending on the area Warmer winter temperatures cause a decline in snowpack, which results in decreased water resources during summer season. (Rani, 2016)

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES, HUMAN WELL-BEING AND DRIVERS OF CHANGE



Sources: (Barun Kumar Thakur, 2014)

The years 2020 and 2021 have been the eye-opening for the whole world. Humans have destructed the planet enough and now it's alarming situation and time to come in action to save the mother earth. Still people ask why we need sustainability? Because that's the only way left to save the planet earth in which we are living and our coming generation will.

The covid-19 has shaken the whole world completely.

ITC'S SUSTAINABILTY AIM 2030

ITC is globally the top amongst the peers and holds 3rd position globally Nimwash on ESG performance in the food products industry by sustainalytics – global ESG ratings company.

ITC launched first-of-its-kind products to cater to emerging well-being & hygiene needs of consumers such as Savlon Disinfectant Spray, Savlon Wipes, vegetable and fruit wash, B Natural juices with immunity offerings among others. To help people confined to their homes, ITC also initiated direct-to-home and collaborative distribution solutions like ITC Store on Wheels, and so on. In line with its credo of putting Nation First, ITC also undertook several initiatives to support the needy and distressed. (sustainabilty report 2020 itc , 2020)

Even as the pandemic exposed the fragility of human existence, it reinforced the need for Sustainability to take centre stage. Today, there is discernible consensus that it has become even more important to chart a new tomorrow - one that is more sustainable, inclusive and secure. Whilst the creation of large-scale livelihoods will be of paramount importance, the other critical area for a sustainable future will certainly be the progress in environment replenishment and addressing climate change through the adoption of a low carbon growth path. (sustainabilty report 2020 itc , 2020)

Reimagining Sustainability therefore necessitates a rethink of strategies and an agenda for action that not only addresses the core challenges of livelihood creation, environmental

replenishment and societal equity, but also the need to build adaptability and resilience through innovation, technology and compassion. Organisations will have to play to their strengths and leverage emerging opportunities including digital technologies (sustainability report 2020 itc , 2020)

Estimates suggest that the global economy is set to plunge into its worst recession since World War II, shrinking by over 5.2% this year. The Indian economy is also expected to contract substantially. ILO says that the COVID-19 impact could cause equivalent of 195 million job losses worldwide.

In India, an unexpected view of the dazzling Himalayas from places as far as Punjab and Saharanpur, toxic rivers suddenly becoming fit for drinking, new flora and fauna emerging are experiences that Millennials and Gen Z were largely bereft of, pointing to the promise of what the future can be. (sustainability report 2020 itc , 2020)

INITIATIVES

Focus on livelihood creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural and rural livelihoods 	ITC's globally celebrated e-Choupal, by providing a 360-degree intervention in empowering 4 million farmers, has pioneered
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice of business model. 	transformation in the Agri sector.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Investments in national assets and distribution.Social investments programme.	<p>By investing in an afforestation programme based on intensive R&D to develop and plant fast growing clonal saplings that has today greened over 8,00,000 acres, the Company was able to create over 147 million person-days of employment to date.</p> <p>State-of-the-art Integrated Consumer Goods Manufacturing facilities as well as iconic premium Luxury Hotels also drive value chains that enable significant generation of livelihoods.</p> <p>Its wide distribution network that reaches over 6 million retail outlets across the length and breadth of the country also helps in supporting sustainable employment.</p> <p>The programme has been scaled up to cover 1,467</p>
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		villages in 63 districts across 14 States.
Focus on environmental stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towards a circular economy. • Green building movement. 	<p>it reduces the environmental impact arising out of post-consumer packaging waste without affecting the integrity of the product.</p> <p>To date, 30 ITC buildings have achieved Platinum certification by USGBC/IGBC.</p>

Source: (sustainability report 2020 etc , 2020)

HINDUSTAN UNILEVER LIMITED

The Unilever Sustainable Living Plan (USLP) sets out to dissociate the growth from eco-friendly trail while increasing the positive societal influence. Introduced in 2010, it is generating sustainable development through the purpose-led brands, reducing business costs, decreasing risk and building trust. (unilver sustainable living plan, 2019)

The “unilever sustainable plan” has 3 global goals to achieve, reinforced by nine commitments and targets straddling social, environmental and economic performances across the value chain.

The 3 big goals are:

1. Improving health and well-being for more than one billion people.
2. Reducing environmental impact by half.
3. Enhancing livelihoods for millions.

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Improving health and well-being	Reducing environmental impact	Enhancing livelihoods
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Over 72 million people reached through lifebuoy handwashing programme. 2. 94.8 billion litres of safe drinking water provided by pureit. 3. Over 1 million people impacted through Domex Toilet Academy. 4. 50% of our total food and refreshment portfolio met the highest nutritional standards. 	<p>In manufacturing,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CO2 emissions reduced by 85%. 2. Water usage reduced by 63%. 3. Over 59,000 tonnes of plastic waste disposal in an environment friendly since 2018. 4. Maintained the status of “zero non-hazardous waste to landfill” in all HUL factories and offices. 5. 100% non-hazardous waste generated at our factories recycled in environment friendly ways. 6. Share of renewable energy at our sites increased to 71% in 2019. 7. Over 90 billion litre of water conservation potential created by Hindustan Unilever 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project Shakti network grew to nearly 12,000 shakti entrepreneurs. 2. Over 4.5 million people benefitted from prabhat’s USLP linked programme in areas of enhancing livelihoods, water conservation and health and hygiene. 3. Over 5,57,000 people benefitted from Rim Shine Academy that provides career readiness skills to youth. 4. Over 7,30,000 women registered on the fair & lovely online platform for career guidance and skill-based courses.

	Foundation partnerships.	
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Sources: (unilver sustainable living plan, 2019)

CONCLUSION

The environmental crisis has disturbed the balance of ecosystem completely which needs to be addressed soon. The climate change and other after effects need to be addressed. We can see major FMCG giants contributing their bit to improve the disturbed environment by various sustainable means from reduction in GHG emission to increasing more environment friendly packaging and production by decreasing waste and switching to chemical free products. This issue needs to be raised as much as possible.

SUGGESTIONS

The government needs to address this issue more by introducing guidelines like planting more trees on individual level and on companies' level more rules need to be introduced which motivates practices which leads to less waste and emission of harmful gases. The locals need to be aware more to buy green products and make environment friendly lifestyle more common. The world needs to work together in this as a whole for bringing a change, to make available the resources for the coming generation as much as possible and for making this world a better place to live in.

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