

Corporate Social Responsibility and Environment Sustainability

Jahnvi Nitin Shivate and Dr. Sharad Kadam

MIT Arts, Commerce, and Science College, Alandi (D), Pune, Maharashtra, India
janhavishivate@gmail.comsskadam@mitacsc.ac.in

Abstract: *This paper aims at investigating the relationship that exists between the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the broader environmental agenda: corporate environmental measures that are used in CSR initiatives that firms undertake and the impact it has to the environment, the society, and the organization. Therefore, big-picture environmental CSR trends are examined in relation to the case studies presented in the literature, the overall effectiveness rate of these programs is assessed, and the challenges experienced by the companies that have adopted sustainability programs are discussed according to the literature. The findings therefore indicate that CSR has some potency in promoting better standards in environmental quality; however the fields of compliance/conformity offer marvelous prospects. At the end of the document, some recommendations are made as to how to increase the impact of the CSR on environmental issues and how it is necessary to work on the reporting regimen and legal responsibility on the CSR move.*

Keywords: CSR

I. INTRODUCTION

Background and Context:

Sustainability aspect of environment have become the heart of various strategies and the focus of immense change in the twenty-first century. These are among the challenges of environmental conservation such as the impacts of climate change, destruction of natural resources and pollution. It is also worthy noting that Industries are part of free markets hence this role. One of the areas of corporate social responsibility that is pertinent environmental sustainability has become very popular because of the international problems that are related to the ecological challenges which result from global warming, resource use, and environmental degradation. The more companies contribute to these environmental issues, the more pressure is being put on them to embrace sustainable practices as part of their CSR activities.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of Relevant Research and Studies:

The literature surrounding corporate social responsibility (CSR) and environmental sustainability is most rich, covering many theories, frameworks, and case studies. One of the main issues studied has been the diachronic change of CSR from its initial philanthropic nature towards social sustainability and social impact. Also, the studies have looked into the association between CSR practices and environmental performance, mostly, stressing the point that strong CSR policies are linked to better environmental results

Analysis and Synthesis of Existing Knowledge:

A synthesis of the current literature indicates that the CSR programs which are effective are those that usually incorporate sustainability as the main agenda and those companies usually practice carbon emission reduction, energy efficiency promotion, and renewable resources investment. Nonetheless, the success of these initiatives ranges from industries to regions. In this regard, the relationship of Corporate Social Responsibility and environmental sustainability has drawn the attention of academics and the business community considerably over the last couple of decades. This review synthesizes the core themes, findings, and implications of CSR research related to environmental sustainability.

Porter and Kramer (2006): In their influential 2006 paper entitled "Strategy & Society: The Link Between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility", Michael E. Porter and Mark R. Kramer presented the concept of Creating Shared Value – a shifting framework that reconstituted the relationship of business to society. While CSR generally adopts a defensive approach towards the negative impacts of business, emphasis within CSV is to integrate social and environmental considerations into core business strategy and to provide economic value which is answering to societal needs. This literature review discusses the theory of CSV by Porter and Kramer, its reception, critiques, and applications across different industries

Shrivastava (1995): "The Role of Corporations in Achieving Ecological Sustainability", is a seminal exploration of how corporate strategy can be aligned with the dictates of environmental sustainability. According to Arie Shrivastava, many corporate strategies fail because they have traditional corporate objectives narrowly aimed at short-term profitability rather than focused on the long-term ecological consequences. The research underlines the necessity for embedding environmental sustainability into the core of corporate strategy if a balance between business and ecology is to be achieved. The contribution of Shrivastava, critical responses to his ideas, and further influence in the field of corporate strategy and sustainability will be discussed in this literature review.

Limitations and gaps:

Limitation: The research can be constrained by the number of companies analyzed due to the small sample size, or it may be unrepresentative.

This is a limitation as the results cannot be generalized. While the results are significant for the companies studied, they may not be applicable to other industries or regions and perhaps not even to different regulatory or cultural contexts.

Gap: The literature on CSR and environmental sustainability is immense and many-faceted. There is an emerging consensus on their importance; however, their implementation and measurement challenges remain. Future research should seek to explore innovative means of overcoming these challenges and extend the current theoretical and empirical knowledge about the linkage between CSR and environmental sustainability.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

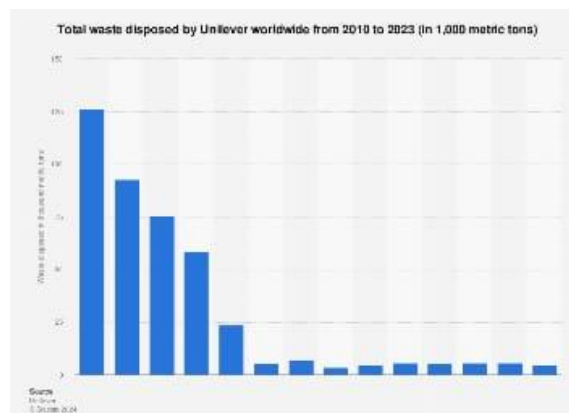
Research design and approach:

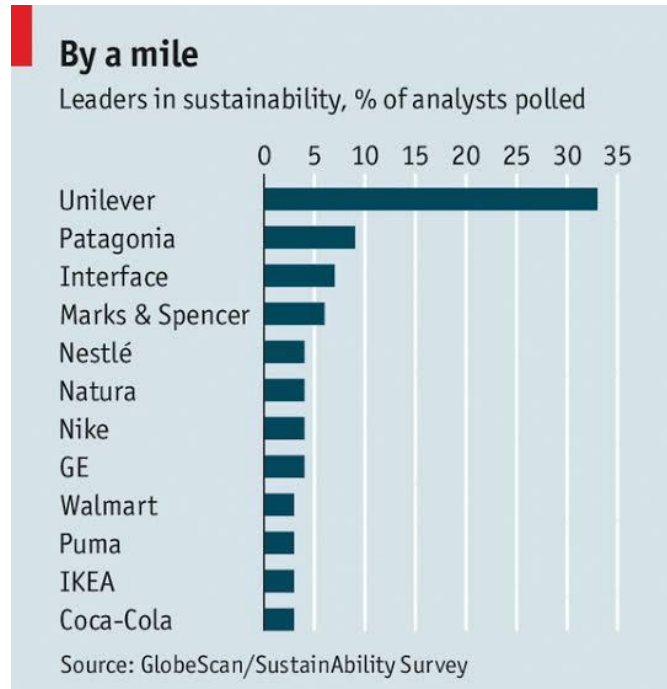
This research is a mixed-method range. One part of qualitative research is the case study of some companies that have a remarkable CSR initiative directed to environmental sustainability. The second part of the project is to analyze CSR indicators and their relations to environmental results.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Unilever Industry: consumer goods

Sustainable Living Plan: Unilever's Sustainable Living Plan aspires to sever the link between the company's growth rate and its environmental footprint growth, while, at the same time, actually turning the company into a net positive contributor to the society. The plan prioritizes the healthcare of people, environmental issues, and the improvement of incomes.





Carbon Reduction: Unilever has ambitious targets to reduce the whole carbon gas emissions across its whole value chain. The company is targeting net-zero emissions by 2039 and has already recorded substantial declines in its operational emissions.

Waste Management: Unilever has 2025 as the target to ensure that all of its plastic packaging is in a reusable, recyclable, or compostable way. Besides, the company has pioneered initiatives to reduce food waste and improve water efficiency. Unilever's sustainable tactics have reduced the environmental footprint of the company by a large margin, especially in the areas of carbon emissions, water use, and waste management. Moreover, the company's initiatives have brought about greater customer credence and brand loyalty.

Unilever's Sustainable Living Plan: A Blueprint

Unilever's USLP, which started in 2010, has been the cornerstone of the company's respective CSR and environmental sustainability efforts. The plan sets ambitious targets in two aspects: to decouple Unilever's growth from environmental impact while improving health and well-being for people everywhere. It focuses on those materials related to key sustainability challenges: climate change, deforestation, water usage, and raw material sourcing in a sustainable way.

USLP has been the driver for the rise of significant developments in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, improvement in the use of energy efficiently, and increased renewable sources of energy across all operations undertaken by Unilever globally.

Unilever's future goals:-

“While we have succeeded in reducing emissions in our operations by 74% in absolute terms (vs 2015) and reducing the emissions intensity of our products across our value chain by 21% (vs 2010), achieving significant absolute reductions in our Scope 3 emissions has proven more challenging. This has prompted us to look again at where and how we believe we can seek absolute emissions reductions in our value chain, resulting in this updated CTAP which sets out new, near-term Scope 3 GHG reduction targets using the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) criteria and recommendations for near-term targets,1 and time-bound emissions reduction actions that are integrated into our five Business Groups' financial growth plans. These targets have been submitted to the SBTi for validation.”

V. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Interpretation of results

It has been shown that CSR initiatives are a strong factor in the promotion of environmental sustainability, but their effectiveness differs significantly. Organizations that place sustainability at the center of their activities, instead of treating it as a fringe affair, are more likely to achieve greater and longer-lasting environmental results.

Implications of findings

The results show that if CSR initiatives are to be really successful in the promotion of environmental sustainability, they need a great commitment from the leadership, sufficient resources, and a culture of accountability. Besides, external factors such as regulatory support and stakeholder engagement are also very important for the success of these initiatives.

VI. CONCLUSION

Unilever's attitude and behavior on CSR and environmental sustainability have provided an exemplary case of how a global corporation may integrate sustainability into the business model while continuing to ensure its profitability. In turn, the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan has become an industry reference point in proving that environmental stewardship and business success can go together. There are, however, remaining challenges especially with regard to supply chain sustainability and plastic reduction.

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