

# CSR TIMES

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INDIA'S NO. 1 CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY MAGAZINE



CORPORATE  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
STEWARDSHIP  
IN INDIA: **A CSR  
PERSPECTIVE**



A MEANINGFUL CONFLUENCE  
OF CORPORATE  
RESPONSIBILITY AND  
COLLECTIVE ACTION –  
**WORLD DAY AGAINST  
CHILD LABOUR**

GREEN STATES OF INDIA  
**A PANORAMA OF  
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**PRASHANT DAS**  
EDITOR

**In India, NGOs like the Pratham Education Foundation are rewriting the literacy story for millions of children, while others like the Youngistaan Foundation are mobilizing youth to address hunger and inequality head-on. Women’s empowerment has found a powerful ally in programs like Nand Ghar, where nutrition, healthcare, and skill training come together to rewrite futures.**

FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK

## Sustainable Planet: The Corporate Mandate for a Greener Tomorrow

**I**n an age where climate change headlines are no longer distant warnings but daily realities—from record-breaking heatwaves to floods in urban centers—the call for corporate responsibility has never been louder. The planet is not just warming; it’s warning us. And businesses, once seen as part of the problem, are now being called to be part of the solution.

This issue of *CSR TIMES* is dedicated to the growing movement of corporate environmental stewardship. The theme, “Sustainable Planet,” is not a slogan—it’s a survival strategy. Companies today are expected to go beyond profit margins and quarterly earnings. They are being judged by their carbon footprints, their water usage, their waste management practices, and their ability to innovate sustainably.

The good news? Many are rising to the occasion. From solar-powered factories in Tamil Nadu to zero-waste campuses in Bengaluru, Indian enterprises are proving that green is not just ethical—it’s economical. Globally, giants like Microsoft, Unilever, and Tata Steel are setting ambitious net-zero targets, investing in renewable energy, and rethinking supply chains to reduce emissions.

But let’s be honest—this isn’t just about corporate altruism. It’s about risk management, brand value, and long-term viability. Consumers are voting with their wallets, investors are prioritizing ESG metrics, and regulators are tightening the screws. In short, sustainability is no longer a “nice to have”—it’s a business imperative.

Yet, challenges remain. Greenwashing is rampant. Many CSR reports are long on promises and short on proof. That’s why transparency, third-party audits, and measurable impact are the new gold standards.

As we spotlight state-level innovations and corporate climate action in this issue, one thing is clear: the path to a sustainable planet runs through boardrooms as much as it does through forests and factories. The future belongs to those who can align purpose with profit, and ambition with accountability.

Let this be the decade where corporate India doesn’t just adapt to climate change—but helps lead the charge against it.

PUBLISHER AND MANAGING DIRECTOR

Harish Chandra Uniyal

EDITOR

Prashant Das

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Dr. Shabnam Asthana

SUB EDITORS

Vatika Singh, Pradeep Kumar Pandey,  
Maanisa Das

CORRESPONDENTS

Subramanya Shastri (Ms.)  
Manish Bhartia

PHOTO EDITOR

Shekhar Ghosh

DESIGNER

B.S. Rawat

DIRECTOR - OVERSEAS

Girish Pant

ADVISOR COMMUNICATIONS

Nava Baro (North East)  
Nigam Ranjan Mohanty (Odisha)

HEAD, MARKETING & SALES

Manoj Sandal

GM MARKETING

Shakti Lukhed

MANAGER, EVENTS & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

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PRODUCTION MANAGER

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CIRCULATION HEAD

Pankaj Kumar

LEGAL ADVISOR

Suman Dobal

ADVISORS

Kawaljit Singh Makkar, Akshay Sharma,  
B.S. Dhillon, Shool Pani Singh

EDITORIAL & MARKETING OFFICE

918, 9th Floor Tower-A, Plot No. 4B, District Centre,  
Mayur Vihar Phase-1 Extension, Delhi-110091  
Phone : 011-41834478

PERSPECTIVE



Nurturing Nature, Sustaining Our Future

In a CSR calendar studded with significant occasions, June 5-World Environment Day serves as a powerful reminder of our collective responsibility toward the planet we call home. As the leading voice in corporate social responsibility, *CSR Times* views this day not as a ceremonial event but as a call to real, lasting action—particularly from the

corporate world and CSR thought leaders.

This day strikes a deep chord and lies at the heart of a growing global concern. **Beat Plastic Pollution**, the theme of World Environment Day 2025, urges worldwide action to tackle the growing plastic crisis. With a strong focus on reducing single-use plastics, it aims to shape a movement that promotes recycling and adopts sustainable alternatives. The success of this initiative rests on the collaboration between governments, industries, and individuals driven by the dedication and resolve to shift toward a circular economy and protect our ecosystems from plastic waste. Their actions must embrace the joint mission of building a cleaner, healthier planet by saying no to plastic pollution.

The world is teeming with critical issues that pose huge challenges to our eco systems but it also unveils opportunities to lead sustainable change. Corporates must adopt practices with measurable outcomes, transparent environmental disclosures and innovation aligned with ecological priorities to counter these challenges and rise to the occasion. Long term business resilience now demands a shift towards green infrastructure, circular economies and regenerative practices.

It is time on this poignant day to reflect on its true significance. Strong action that encompasses an effective public- private partnership for India’s sustainable development strategy and environmental stewardship that is deeply embedded in our corporate DNA is a promising way forward!

When our awareness shifts to accountability and our intentions turn into impact, when we realize that restoring our environment is not just an act of preservation but a profitable priceless investment for the well-being of generations to come, will we truly commemorate this day.

*On this World Environment Day let us embrace and appreciate the fact that when we heal the Earth, we heal ourselves!*

Dr Shabnam Asthana  
Associate Editor

FEEDBACK

editor@csrtimes.org  
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PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY: Harish Chandra on behalf of Brandworks Media Private Limited,  
Printed at Shree Ram Print O Pack., D 10/5 (Basement) Okhla Industrial Area Phase II, New Delhi-110020; Published at Plot No. 1, 312,  
Vardhman Sunrise Plaza, Vasundhara Enclave, Delhi-110096, Editor: Prashant Das

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# GREEN STATES OF INDIA A PANORAMA OF ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

CSR TIMES Bureau



As India marches toward its ambitious net-zero goals, the role of individual states in driving environmental protection and sustainable waste management has become more critical than ever. From the Himalayan foothills to the coastal plains, Indian states are crafting innovative, localized solutions to tackle pollution, conserve biodiversity, and manage waste more efficiently. This cover story explores the standout initiatives across the country, backed by data, policy frameworks, and community participation.

## Kerala: Women Power and Waste Warriors

Kerala's *Haritha Karma Sena* (Green Task Force) is a shining example of decentralized, gender-inclusive waste management. Over **1,000 units** of women-led teams collect non-biodegradable waste from **70% of urban households**, ensuring scientific disposal and recycling. The initiative has created **over 5,000 jobs** and significantly reduced landfill dependency.

The *Suchitwa Mission* complements this by promoting source-level segregation and composting. In 2023 alone, Kerala processed **1.2 lakh tonnes** of biodegrad-

able waste through decentralized composting units, reducing methane emissions and improving soil health.

## Maharashtra: From Plastic Bans to Circular Economies

Maharashtra's 2018 plastic ban was a bold move, but the state didn't stop there. Mumbai's *Dharavi Waste Recyclers* process **600 tonnes of plastic waste daily**, turning trash into treasure and employing thousands in the informal sector.

Pune's *SWaCH Cooperative*, a partnership between waste pickers and the municipal corporation, services **8 lakh+**







**households**, achieving **60% landfill diversion**. The model has inspired similar cooperatives in Nagpur and Nashik.

**Sikkim: The Organic State**

Sikkim’s transition to **100% organic farming** across **76,000 hectares** has made it a global model for sustainable agriculture. The state banned chemical fertilizers and pesticides in 2016, leading to improved biodiversity, healthier soil, and a surge in eco-tourism.

Sikkim also enforces strict bans on plastic and foam packaging. Gangtok, its capital, is among India’s cleanest cities, thanks to strong civic engagement and enforcement.

**Tamil Nadu: Renewable Energy and E-Waste Innovation**

Tamil Nadu leads India in renewable

energy with **15.5 GW** of installed capacity. The state’s *Solar Rooftop Capital* initiative has helped over **2 lakh households** install solar panels, reducing grid dependency.

In Kancheepuram, India’s first

**e-waste park** is under development, aimed at scientific recycling of electronic waste. Chennai’s *Zero Waste Ward* initiative has increased segregation rates from **18% to 70%** in pilot zones.



**Madhya Pradesh: Clinics for E-Waste and Bio-Mining**



Bhopal’s **E-Waste Clinic**, launched in 2020, collects, segregates, and processes e-waste from households and businesses. It has handled **25+ tonnes** of e-waste so far and is being replicated in Indore and Jabalpur.

The state has also undertaken **bio-mining** of legacy waste at major dumpsites, reclaiming **50+ acres** of land and recovering compostable material and recyclables.



**Gujarat: Industrial Waste and Green Ports**

Gujarat, with its industrial might, has **18 hazardous waste treatment facilities**, the highest in India. The *Gujarat Pollution Control Board* enforces strict compliance with the Hazardous Waste Management Rules.

The *Green Port Policy* by the Gujarat Maritime Board promotes shore power, waste reception facilities, and carbon-

neutral operations. Mundra Port now uses **solar-powered cranes** and has reduced diesel use by **30%**.

**Delhi: Battling Smog and Burning Waste**

Delhi’s air pollution crisis has led to aggressive interventions:

- **40+ smog towers** and **300+ anti-smog guns** deployed.
- **Graded Response Action Plan**





(GRAP) in place during winter months.

- **CNG buses** and **EV subsidies** to reduce vehicular emissions.

Delhi also operates **three waste-to-energy plants**, processing **5,000+ tonnes** of waste daily. However, concerns about emissions from these plants persist, prompting calls for cleaner alternatives.

**Goa: Coastal Cleanliness and Marine Waste**

Goa’s *Clean Coast, Safe Sea* campaign engages locals and tourists in beach clean-ups. The state has installed **marine litter traps** in estuaries to prevent plastic from entering the Arabian Sea.

The **Saligao Waste Treatment Plant** processes **100 tonnes/day** with **90% recovery efficiency**, making it one of



India’s most advanced solid waste facilities.

**Uttar Pradesh: Sanitation and River Revival**

Under the Swachh Bharat Mission, UP has built **2.5 crore+ toilets**, achieving **ODF+**

**status** in most districts. The state promotes **community composting** and **biogas units** in rural areas.

The *Namami Gange* program has led to the construction of **150+ sewage treatment plants**, improving water quality in the Ganga and reducing pollution loads.



**North-East India: Forest Guardians and Bamboo Economies**

Assam, Meghalaya, and Nagaland are focusing on **community forest management** and **bamboo-based livelihoods**. Assam’s *Kaziranga National Park* uses **drone surveillance** and **solar fencing** to protect wildlife.

With **60%+ forest cover**, the North-East is vital to India’s carbon sink goals. States receive funding under **CAMPA** for afforestation and biodiversity conservation.

**Expert Voices: What the Data Says**

Dr. Ritu Mathur, Director at TERI, notes: “State-level innovation is the backbone of

**Environmental Protection & Green Energy**

- Tamil Nadu leads India in renewable energy with 15.5 GW of installed capacity (wind + solar) as of 2024.
- Sikkim maintains 100% organic farming across 76,000 hectares, making it India’s first fully organic state.
- Delhi has deployed 40+ smog towers and 300+ anti-smog guns to combat air pollution.
- Gujarat has implemented 18 hazardous waste treatment facilities, the highest among Indian states.



**Waste Management**

- India generates approximately 160,000 tonnes of solid waste daily, of which only 25% is scientifically processed.
- Indore has been ranked India’s cleanest city for 7 consecutive years, with 100% door-to-door waste collection and segregation at source.
- Kerala’s Haritha Karma Sena covers 70% of urban households, collecting and segregating non-biodegradable waste.
- Pune’s SWaCH Cooperative services 8 lakh+ households, diverting 60% of waste from landfills.



**E-Waste & Innovation**

- Bhopal’s E-Waste Clinic has processed over 25 tonnes of e-waste since its launch in 2020.
- Tamil Nadu’s E-Waste Park in Kancheepuram is India’s first dedicated facility for scientific e-waste recycling.



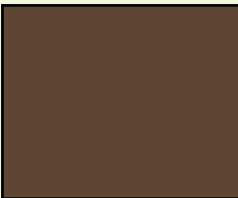
**Water & Marine Initiatives**

- Goa’s Saligao Waste Treatment Plant processes 100 tonnes/day with 90% recovery efficiency.
- Namami Gange has led to the construction of 150+ sewage treatment plants across the Ganga basin.



**Swachh Bharat & Rural Sanitation**

- Under Swachh Bharat Mission, Uttar Pradesh has built 2.5 crore+ toilets, achieving ODF+ status in most districts.
- Community composting pits and biogas units are being promoted in 10,000+ rural panchayats across India.







India's climate strategy. The diversity of approaches—from Kerala's composting to Gujarat's industrial compliance—shows that one-size-fits-all doesn't work."

According to the **India State of Forest Report 2023**, forest cover has increased by **1,540 sq km**, largely due to state-led afforestation drives.

### Conclusion: A Decentralized Green Revolution

India's environmental journey is being written not just in Delhi's policy corridors but in the towns, villages, and cities of its states. From composting bins in Kerala to wind farms in Tamil Nadu, and from plastic bans in Maharashtra to forest guardians in the North-East, the green revolution is truly decentralized.

The road ahead demands more innovation, stronger enforcement, and deeper public participation—but the momentum is unmistakably building. As each state charts its own path, together they form the mosaic of a greener, cleaner India.

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MAHARATNA



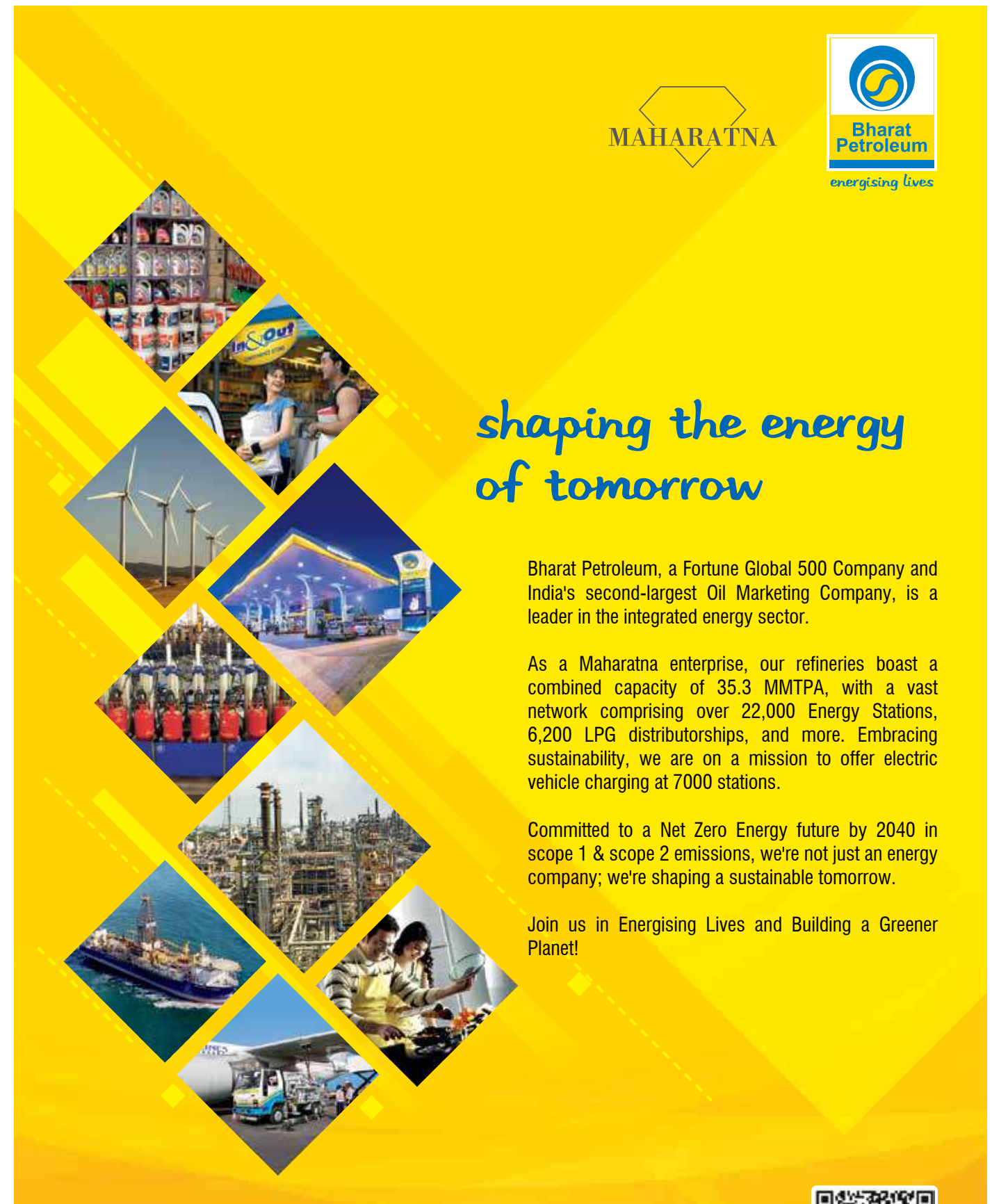
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Adopting energy-efficient technologies and switching to renewables like solar or wind not only reduce emissions but often lower long-term costs. This includes greening office buildings, using smart systems, or even generating onsite energy.

**Carbon Footprint Measurement & Offsetting**

Quantifying a company’s emissions is founda-

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AARTI TIWARI

tional. The next step is reducing emissions and offsetting residual ones via credible carbon credit programs or investments in reforestation and clean energy projects.

**Waste Minimization & Circular Economy Practices**

Implementing robust recycling programs, reducing packaging waste, and designing products for reuse or repair are key elements. Collaborations with recycling innovators can help close the loop.

**Green Supply Chain Management**

Companies can source raw materials responsibly, partner with eco-conscious vendors, and prioritize local procurement to reduce carbon footprints. Adding lifecycle assessments helps track environmental impacts from production to disposal.

**E**ffective CSR strategies for environmental sustainability go beyond one-time gestures—they integrate environmental stewardship into a company’s mission, operations, and impact. Here are several that work well, especially when aligned with genuine intent and strategic execution:

**Water Stewardship Initiatives**

Reducing water usage, reusing greywater, and protecting local water bodies are essential. Brands can also engage in watershed restoration and support community water access programs.

**Environmental Education and Stakeholder Engagement**

Companies can host awareness programs for employees and communities, or partner with NGOs and schools to promote sustainability literacy and climate action.

**Sustainability Reporting and Transparency**

Publishing ESG or sustainability reports that include third-party verification builds credibility. Reporting frameworks like GRI or SASB help standardize metrics and allow public accountability.

**Green Innovation and R&D**

Investing in sustainable product design, biodegradable materials, and low-impact manufacturing processes turns CSR from compliance into differentiation.

**How to implement these strategies**

Implementing CSR strategies for environmental sustainability isn’t just about setting lofty goals—it’s about smart execution and meaningful follow-through. Here’s a structured roadmap tailored to your strategic mindset and consultancy strengths:

**1. Conduct a Sustainability Audit**

Begin by evaluating your organization’s (or client’s) current environmental impact. This includes energy use, waste generation, supply chain practices, and ESG reporting status.



Ensure green practices are not standalone CSR activities but embedded in day-to-day operations—like eco-friendly procurement, efficient logistics, or paperless administration.

A baseline helps you measure progress and identify priorities.

**2. Set Clear, Measurable Goals**

Define SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) targets—like reducing carbon emissions by 30% in five years or achieving zero waste to landfill by 2030. These goals guide action and accountability.

**3. Embed Sustainability into Core Operations**

Ensure green practices are not standalone CSR activities but embedded in day-to-day operations—like eco-friendly procurement,

efficient logistics, or paperless administration.

**4. Engage Stakeholders Across Levels**

Include internal teams, suppliers, local communities, and policymakers. Host awareness drives, training programs, or roundtable discussions to foster buy-in and collaborative action.

**5. Leverage Technology & Innovation**

Use digital tools to track carbon footprints, automate ESG reporting, or optimize resource usage. Explore innovations like circular product design, carbon capture, or AI-driven energy efficiency.

**6. Partner with Expert Organizations**

Align with environmental NGOs, academic institutions, or green tech startups for technical know-how and shared impact. Strategic partnerships can amplify both credibility and outcome.

**7. Create Compelling CSR Communication**

Report initiatives transparently through sustainability reports, newsletters, and social media. Highlight success stories and data to build trust with clients, investors, and the public.

**8. Review, Reflect, and Revise**

Establish an internal sustainability committee or external advisory group to monitor progress and revise strategies. Celebrate wins—but also course-correct when needed.





# CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP IN INDIA: A CSR PERSPECTIVE

In recent years, Indian corporations have significantly elevated their commitment to environmental sustainability through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. With the Companies Act, 2013 mandating CSR spending, many organizations have gone beyond compliance to embed sustainability into their core strategies. This report examines the environmental CSR efforts of

some of India's most influential companies, highlighting their innovative approaches and measurable impact.

**Tata Group** has long been a pioneer in CSR, and its environmental initiatives continue to set benchmarks. Tata Steel's flagship programs focus on water conservation, afforestation, and waste management. The company has implemented large-scale rainwater harvesting systems and aims to

achieve zero effluent discharge across its operations. Tata Power, through its "Act for Mahseer" campaign, has also contributed to aquatic biodiversity conservation, while Tata Green Energy is investing heavily in solar and wind energy to reduce carbon emissions.

**Wipro Limited** has adopted a holistic approach to sustainability. Its "Earthian" program engages students and educators in

environmental education, while its internal operations emphasize renewable energy, water recycling, and zero-waste-to-landfill policies. Wipro's green buildings and closed-loop waste management systems have significantly reduced its ecological footprint.

**Infosys** has emerged as a leader in green innovation. The company has committed to becoming carbon neutral and has invested in energy-efficient campuses, solar power installations, and afforestation projects. Infosys has also published detailed sustainability reports aligned with global frameworks, reinforcing transparency and accountability.

**Reliance Industries**, through the Reliance Foundation, has launched several impactful environmental programs. These include mangrove restoration, climate-resilient

agriculture, and clean energy adoption in rural areas. The foundation's "Bharat India Jodo" initiative integrates environmental sustainability with rural development, promoting long-term ecological balance.

**Vedanta Group** has pledged \$5 billion to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Its CSR programs focus on renewable energy, biodiversity protection, and waste management. Notably, Vedanta has partnered with the World Economic Forum's It.org initiative, committing to plant 7 million trees. The company's solar and water conservation projects have benefited millions across India.

**Hindustan Unilever (HUL)** has aligned its CSR with the "Unilever Compass" strategy, focusing on sustainable living. HUL's "Swachh Aadat, Swachh Bharat"

campaign promotes hygiene and environmental awareness, while its sustainable farming initiatives support local ecosystems and reduce chemical usage.

**ITC Limited** has integrated environmental goals into its business model through afforestation, watershed development, and sustainable agriculture. Its "e-Choupal" platform empowers farmers with eco-friendly practices, while its large-scale tree plantation drives contribute to carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation.

These initiatives reflect a broader shift in Indian corporate culture—from reactive compliance to proactive environmental leadership. As climate change intensifies, such CSR efforts not only mitigate ecological risks but also enhance brand equity, stakeholder trust, and long-term resilience.



# CLIMATE IN CRISIS: TIME FOR CSR TO LEAD THE GREEN REVOLUTION

DEY RUDRANEEL

The signs are no longer subtle. The climate crisis is not looming—it is here. Glaciers are retreating, wildfires rage through forests more fiercely and frequently than ever, and rising sea levels are swallowing coastal lands inch by inch. From flash floods in Germany and India, to historic droughts in Africa and the American Southwest, the world is reeling under the impact of a destabilized climate system. Behind this turmoil lies a disturbing truth: human activity, unchecked and relentless, has disrupted nature's equilibrium.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned that we are rapidly nearing the point of no return. Carbon emissions, industrial pollution, deforestation, and unsustainable consumption have warmed the planet by over 1.1°C since the pre-industrial era. Even this seemingly small rise has proven catastrophic. Heatwaves in Europe are no longer once-in-a-decade events—they're annual. The Himalayan region, home to vital freshwater resources, is now one of the fastest-warming areas on Earth.

It is clear: our pursuit of progress, often at the expense of nature, has gone overboard.

Yet, amid the despair lies opportunity—Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) can be the catalyst for change. Businesses, once considered part of the problem, can become leaders in environmental restoration and sustainability. CSR is no longer just philanthropy; it is a corporate obligation to the planet and future generations.

## The Role of CSR in Climate Action

Companies across the world are beginning to recognize that sustainable business is smart business. In India, the Companies Act, 2013 made CSR mandatory for eligible firms, creating a framework through which corporates can contribute meaningfully to environmental and social well-being. This is especially relevant now, as the urgency of the climate crisis demands action beyond compliance.

Indian corporates have already started taking steps in this direction. For

instance, ITC Limited's "Mission Green Earth" has resulted in the planting of over 90 million trees, contributing to both carbon sequestration and rural employment. Tata Power, through its solar and wind projects, is leading the clean energy transition with a goal of achieving 70% renewable capacity by 2030. Mahindra & Mahindra became the first Indian company to commit to carbon neutrality, demonstrating that even heavy industries can change course.

These are not mere acts of goodwill. They represent a broader vision—one

where businesses understand that long-term success is tied to a healthy planet.

## CSR Beyond the Checklist

But for CSR to make a lasting impact, it must move beyond tokenism. Planting a few trees or installing solar lights in a village is commendable, but insufficient. We need strategic, science-backed interventions—restoring degraded ecosystems, protecting biodiversity hotspots, reducing plastic waste, and investing in renewable infrastructure. Transparency, accountability, and community involvement should

be at the heart of every CSR initiative.

Corporates must also take responsibility for educating consumers and stakeholders. Through green marketing, sustainable supply chains, and eco-conscious product design, businesses can influence public behavior and policy alike.

## Rebalancing Our Relationship with Nature

Human intervention in nature has often been exploitative. We've dammed rivers, razed forests, mined mountains, and polluted the very air we breathe. But nature is resilient—if given a chance. The COVID-19 pandemic was a stark reminder of how quickly ecosystems can rebound when human activity slows down. Rivers ran cleaner, skies were clearer, and wildlife returned to urban spaces.

This glimpse into recovery should not be temporary. It must become our new normal—and CSR can help lead the way.

## Let's not forget

Restoring nature's balance is no longer a moral choice; it is a survival imperative. Corporates have the resources, influence, and responsibility to act. CSR, when implemented with purpose and vision, can be the bridge between economic development and ecological stewardship. The future will not wait. It is time for industry leaders to step up—not just as business executives, but as guardians of the Earth.

Let this be the decade where CSR transforms from a checkbox to a movement—and where businesses choose to profit not from nature, but with it.







# INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY: A CSR AND SDG PERSPECTIVE

ASHOK GUHA, CORRESPONDENT

Since its inception in 2015, International Yoga Day (IDY) has become a global movement promoting health, well-being, and sustainability. Recognized by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), IDY is celebrated annually on June 21, coinciding with the summer solstice, the longest day of the year. With participation from over 190 countries, this day underscores the holistic benefits of yoga in achieving Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) goals and advancing the United

Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## Yoga and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Yoga is more than just a physical exercise—it is a transformative practice that aligns with multiple SDGs, including:

- **SDG 3:** Good Health and Well-being – Yoga enhances mental and physical health, reducing stress, anxiety, and lifestyle diseases.

- **SDG 4:** Quality Education – Schools worldwide integrate yoga into their

curriculum to promote mindfulness and emotional intelligence.

- **SDG 5:** Gender Equality – Yoga empowers women by improving mental resilience and physical strength.
- **SDG 13:** Climate Action – Yoga fosters sustainable living, encouraging eco-friendly habits and reducing carbon footprints.

## Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Yoga

Corporations worldwide are integrating

yoga into their CSR initiatives to promote employee well-being, community health, and environmental sustainability. Leading companies such as Google, Microsoft, and Tata Group have incorporated yoga and mindfulness programs into their workplace culture.

## CSR Initiatives Supporting Yoga

### 1. Workplace Wellness Programs

Companies like Infosys and Wipro conduct daily yoga sessions for employees to enhance productivity and mental health.

Google's "Mindfulness and Resilience" program integrates yoga to improve employee focus and well-being.

### 2. Community Engagement

- The Art of Living Foundation organizes free yoga workshops in rural areas, benefiting thousands.
- Tata Trusts collaborates with NGOs to promote yoga education in underprivileged communities.

### 3. Environmental Sustainability

- Yoga events emphasize eco-friendly practices, such as zero-waste gatherings and plastic-free celebrations.
- The International Yoga Festival in Rishikesh promotes sustainable tourism and environmental conservation.

## Global Participation and Impact India: The Birthplace of Yoga

India leads the global celebration of IDY, with millions participating in mass yoga sessions. In 2024, over 100 million people joined yoga events across Delhi,



Mumbai, and Bengaluru. The Common Yoga Protocol (CYP), developed by the Ministry of Ayush, ensures standardized yoga practices worldwide.

## United States: Corporate and Community Yoga

The U.S. has seen a 300% increase in yoga practitioners over the past decade. Cities like New York and Los Angeles host large-scale yoga events, with corporate sponsorships from Nike and Lululemon.

## Europe: Yoga for Mental Health

Countries like Germany and France integrate yoga into public health programs. The European Yoga Federation collaborates with governments to promote yoga therapy for stress management.

## Asia: Yoga and Sustainable Living

Japan and China emphasize yoga for longevity and holistic health. In Japan, Zen yoga practices are incorporated into corporate wellness programs, while China promotes Tai Chi and yoga fusion for elderly care.

## Challenges and the Way Forward

Despite its global success, yoga faces challenges such as:

- Limited accessibility in rural and underprivileged areas.
- Commercialization, leading to loss of traditional values.
- Lack of standardization in yoga education and certification.

To overcome these hurdles, governments and corporations must invest in inclusive yoga programs, ensuring affordable and accessible yoga education for all.

## Last but, not the least...

International Yoga Day is more than a celebration—it is a movement toward holistic well-being, sustainability, and social responsibility. As businesses and policymakers integrate yoga into CSR strategies and SDG frameworks, the world moves closer to a healthier, more sustainable future. With continued efforts, yoga will remain a powerful tool for global harmony and environmental stewardship.



# CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION AMID CLIMATE CRISIS - A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

ASHOK KUMAR MAITY

As the climate crisis intensifies, corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives across the globe are evolving from symbolic gestures to strategic imperatives. In the past quarter, a wave of environmentally focused CSR programs has emerged, reflecting a growing urgency among businesses to mitigate their ecological footprint and contribute meaningfully to the fight against global warming.

One of the most compelling developments comes from Singapore, where the National University Hospital (NUH) has become the first international recipient of the Healthcare Sustainability Certification jointly awarded by the Joint Commission International (JCI) and the International Hospital Federation's Geneva Sustainability Centre. NUH's efforts include transitioning away from desflurane—an anaesthetic gas with a global warming potential 2,590 times that

of CO<sub>2</sub>—in favor of greener alternatives like sevoflurane and propofol. This shift alone has saved the hospital over \$577,000 and prevented 1,904 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, equivalent to removing 680 cars from the road.

Meanwhile, a sobering study published in *Nature* by the Climate Impact Lab has revealed that rising global temperatures could slash food production by the equivalent of 120 calories per person per day for every additional degree Celsius of warming. This translates to a 4.4% drop in daily caloric intake, disproportionately affecting food-insecure populations. The study underscores the need for CSR programs that support sustainable agriculture and climate-resilient food systems. It also highlights the limitations of current adaptation strategies, such as altering planting dates or crop varieties, which may only offset one-third of projected losses by 2100.

In France, the Third UN Ocean Conference concluded with a sweeping

political declaration signed by over 170 countries, committing to urgent action to protect marine ecosystems. The conference spotlighted the role of private sector partnerships in combating plastic pollution and illegal fishing—two major threats exacerbated by climate change. Several multinational corporations pledged to reduce ocean-bound plastic in their supply chains and invest in sustainable packaging solutions.

India, too, has seen a surge in grassroots CSR initiatives. On World Environment Day, a female Gram Pradhan in Uttar Pradesh gained national attention for converting village waste into compost,

turning “garbage into green gold.” Her initiative not only improved local sanitation but also created employment opportunities and fostered environmental awareness. This model of community-led CSR is gaining traction, especially in rural areas vulnerable to climate extremes.

In the corporate sector, tech and manufacturing giants are increasingly aligning their CSR strategies with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Several companies have announced net-zero targets, with interim goals focused on renewable energy adoption, water conservation, and biodiversity restoration. Notably, a consortium of Indian firms has

launched a “Green Supply Chain” initiative aimed at reducing Scope 3 emissions—those generated indirectly through suppliers and logistics.

However, challenges remain. Critics argue that some CSR efforts still amount to greenwashing, lacking transparency and measurable impact. To address this, global watchdogs and ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) rating agencies are tightening disclosure norms and pushing for third-party audits.

In conclusion, the latest wave of CSR activity reflects a paradigm shift: environmental stewardship is no longer optional but essential. As climate risks escalate,

businesses are being called upon not just to do less harm, but to actively contribute to planetary healing. The road ahead demands innovation, accountability, and above all, collaboration—across borders, sectors, and communities.

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# SMART + SUSTAINABLE: INDUSTRY 4.0 IS REDEFINING GREEN MANUFACTURING IN INDIA

BY DR. ARULSAMYS

India's industrial landscape is changing. Smokestacks, while once the harbinger of industrial success, today it is smart systems and green sensors that mark industry progress. Industry 4.0, the convergence of digital, physical, and biological technologies, is not just revolutionizing manufacturing; it is sparking an eco-industrial renaissance. Going forward, this change cannot be undermined and will impact all platforms manufacturing,

whether it is big, small or medium units.

## The Great Indian Paradox: Growth versus Green

India's Manufacturing sector has emerged with a GDP contribution of 17% and is rising as a global player, comprehending diversity and complexity. Equally, as a country, it has struggled for decades over a paradigm problem: how to industrialise quickly, yet keep environmental damage to a minimum.

Conventional production models, emissions, high carbon footprints, waste generation, air and water pollution are major concerns for the country. That is where Industry 4.0 comes in: no silver bullet, but an effective array of technologies to reconcile and create balance.

Technologies such as Internet of Things, AI, and robotics enable factories to decrease their energy usage, anticipate maintenance, optimize production processes, and eliminate waste, all while improving profitability. Sustainability

and smart manufacturing convergence are not just a trend, but a necessity.

## Jugaad to Juggernaut: India's Industry 4.0 Journey

India's innovation ethos has traditionally been characterized by 'jugaad' - resourceful, often low-cost improvisation. Now, that tradition is gaining high-tech form. Pune, Bengaluru, and Chennai factories are embracing green automation and cyber-physical systems to not just keep up with the world but lead it with the principles of sustainability.

Consider the automobile industry, for example: Tata Motors and Mahindra have coupled sophisticated analytics to reduce waste and emissions. Pharmaceutical companies such as Cipla utilize data-driven modelling to curtail energy consumption in delicate production environments.

## A Sustainable Business Case (Not Simply A Moral One)

Let there be no confusion: to be green is no longer good PR, it is good business. Carbon accountability is now the expectation across global supply chains. ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) data drives capital flows. Consumers prefer to pay more for ethically sourced goods. Industry 4.0 enables Indian factories to fulfil these expectations without sacrificing efficiency.

For instance, smart grid-based real-time energy monitoring enables businesses to reschedule loads and lower electricity bills. Predictive maintenance prolongs equipment life and cuts downtimes. Raw materials usage is cut by up to 80% through 3D printing. They are

not just environmental gains; they are bottom-line gains.

## Roadblocks on the Runway

However, such a green revolution is not without turbulence. Sunk costs, lack of skilled labour, cybersecurity issues, and fragmentary policy backing still inhibit widespread adoption. In addition, India's continued dependence on coal-intensive electricity compromises the environmental pay-offs from even the most technologically sophisticated gadgets.

But where the discussion needs to mature is to move beyond waiting for ideal conditions to act. Pilot projects, public-private initiatives, and skill-development missions can achieve stepwise adoption. Industry 4.0 is not an endpoint, it is an ongoing, dynamic process. It is an ongoing journey of innovation, where technology evolves alongside efforts to find solutions to environmental challenges

## The Role of the Government: Catalyst, Not Controller

India needs to change its policy paradigm to be more incentive-based, not compliance-based. Make in India can be turbocharged through tax incentives for green tech adoption, rapid approval for smart factories, and grants for research and development towards solutions for sustainability. More critically, environmental regulations must reward, and not simply penalize, good performance.

The National Manufacturing Policy must be overhauled immediately to adopt digital-ecological metrics. State governments, usually the actual implementors, must become proactive partners in supporting decentralized smart manufacturing clusters.

## The Future is Hybrid, Holistic, and Human-Centric

The future leap will be marked by hybrid models: the partnership of human creativity and machine precision, centralized digital command centers and localized green values, and scalable technologies and bottom-up implementation. Envision solar-powered factories based on AI-optimized systems, where artisans and robots codevelop export-quality products.

This is not science fiction. It is already underway, quietly, in isolated places. India has the potential to take these mini-successes to macro-changes.

## Last Word: From Imitation to Innovation

India does not have to follow or learn from the West's industrial experience. Our own culture has evolved from the human values that have venerated all the five elements. We can leapfrog. Embedding environmental sustainability in the DNA of smart manufacturing can help not only decarbonize India's growth trajectory but also provide a model for the Global South as well. Let us not present Industry 4.0 as an upgrade in technology. Let us look at it for what it is, really, an economic, moral, and environmental imperative. Within this confluence of smart and sustainable is the industrial destiny of India.

The author of the article is Head – Karma Yoga, Area of Expertise: Sustainable Livelihoods, Cross-Cultural Management, Inter Cultural Communication, Conflict Management and Development Communication Models for Sustainable Development, Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai



# A MEANINGFUL CONFLUENCE OF CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY AND COLLECTIVE ACTION — WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

SHABNAM ASTHANA



June 12<sup>th</sup> assumes special significance every year as the world observes World Day Against Child Labour. This day also brings into focus millions of children globally who are deprived of their basic rights, education, and a dignified life.

In the year 2002 this day was established by the International Labour Organization with the objective of raising awareness and prompting action to address child labour in all its forms and take constructive steps towards its elimination.

The theme of 2025 “Let’s Act on Our Commitments: End Child Labour!” makes it imperative for governments, corporations, and civil society to move beyond pledges and translate them into tangible outcomes. Through a process of thoughtful evaluation, they should reflect on the role that they play in ensuring that children are not exploited but instead, protected, nurtured, and educated.

## The Stark Reality of Child Labour Globally

In a hard-hitting reality check, the latest estimates of ILO and UNICEF indicate 160 million children—which is roughly 1 in 10 worldwide—engaged in child labour, with close to half of that figure involved in hazardous work that poses a huge danger to their physical and mental well-being. The numbers are not only staggering but coupled with the concerning uptick in recent years on account of global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, economic downturns, climate-induced displacement, and conflicts they assume grave proportions.

The agriculture sector accounts for 70% of child labour and the services and industry including manufacturing and mining follow closely. Many children are exposed to long work hours in unsafe conditions in return for minimal or no payment in most cases. Apart from robbing them of their childhood, this also creates cycles of poverty and inequality.

## The Pivotal Role of Corporates in addressing the ills of Child Labour

It is important to note that apart from governments and NGOs, businesses with global supply chains can play a crucial role in policy and grassroots interventions, and are uniquely positioned to drive systemic change.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) no longer remains of ornamental value for corporates, which can be adorned by choice. It has evolved from being a mere accessory to an imperative, which most companies include as part of their core operations, which helps them in prioritizing ethical practices.



### 1. Supply Chain Transparency

The lower tiers of global supply chains, are rife with instances of child labour due to limited oversight. Corporates have to discharge their responsibility by ensuring the compliance of all partners with international labour standards and this can be brought about by investing in robust supply chain due diligence. By adopting a process of regular audits, certifications and collaboration with local NGOs the important aspect of inadvertent violations can be corrected

### 2. Fair Wages and Community Development Initiatives

When businesses focus on community development initiatives in the regions that they operate in, by offering fair wages to adults, investing in healthcare, infrastructure and local education, they help address the vulnerability of the low-income communities. Desperation is often the root cause that compels low income communities to encourage child labour. The financial stability that these initiatives bring for the families will help diminish the



likelihood of their children being forced into child labour.

### 3. Certification and Ethical Procurement

By sourcing materials and services from child-labor-free certified suppliers, companies can adopt and encourage ethical procurement policies.

### 4. Employee and Consumer Awareness

Well informed and aware employees and consumers on the issue of child labour proves to be crucial. This awareness can be raised through internal training programmes which can assist the procurement and HR departments to understand the role that they play in compliance. For the external public, regular and transparent communication about CSR activities enhances brand credibility and trust. Consumers too are encouraged to support products that maintain ethical standards.

### Success Stories: Corporate Action That Made a Difference

Several corporations have created strong benchmarks in illustrating their stand on child labour. IKEA and Nestle amongst others are names to reckon with.

### Legislative and International Support

The movement to eradicate child labour has received support through various global frameworks:

- The UN Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 calls for the end of child labour in all its forms by the year 2025.
- The ILO Convention No. 182 on the worst forms of child labour has been universally ratified.
- ESG (Environmental, Social,



Governance) disclosures, are mandated by many countries, including labour practices, holding corporations accountable.

Sadly though, the enforcement remains scattered, and the role of the private sector assumes great importance for it is here that they must rise to fill the gaps that occur due to policy limitations.

### A Shared Responsibility

Most of us realize and agree that ending child labour is not the responsibility of governments or NGOs alone—but a shared one. Corporates are key players in this mission, with the immense power they can wield through their supply chains, or their investment strategies, or their huge social influence. They can lead by example and adopt ethical practices, support education, and empower families. Their efforts can ensure a promising future for the children in their regions devoid of compulsions of child labour.

This World Day Against Child

Labour, let us look at the solutions within our reach instead of the problem we are faced with. This mission has justice, equality and human dignity at stake. When we see a child forced into labour, we see a failed system glaring back at us, but with every child enrolled in school and rescued from misery we see a strong ray of hope.

### Call to Action

CSR leaders and decision-makers must commit to:

- An implementation and enforcement of zero-tolerance policies on child labour
- Collaboration with civil society and government bodies for effective action.
- Working on sustainable livelihoods for vulnerable communities.
- Transparent CSR communication incorporating the progress and challenges.

*Let us commemorate this significant day by catalyzing lasting change through decisive action!*

**अनुभव करें  
95 ऑक्टेन का रोमांच  
सचमुच लाजवाब**

शानदार परफॉर्मेंस  
इंजन की कार्यकुशलता बढ़ाए  
स्मूद ड्राइव  
धुंआ कम

IndianOil **XP95**  
95 OCTANE PREMIUM PETROL





# MONSOON AND CSR PREPAREDNESS IN INDIA CORPORATE ACTION FOR RESILIENCE

VATIKA SINGH

India's monsoon season, while vital for agriculture and water resources, brings with it recurring challenges, including floods, landslides, infrastructure breakdowns, and widespread displacement. As climate change accelerates the unpredictability and intensity of monsoon events, disaster preparedness has become a pressing national priority. In this context, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives have taken on a significant role in complementing government efforts to build community resilience,

enhance early warning systems, and support emergency response.

## The Challenge of Monsoon in India

The Indian monsoon, spanning June to September, accounts for over 75% of the country's annual rainfall. While it replenishes reservoirs and sustains agriculture, it also contributes to severe disasters, especially in low-lying and densely populated areas. In recent years, urban flooding in cities like Mumbai, Chennai, and Bengaluru has exposed vulnerabilities in

civic infrastructure, while states such as Assam, Bihar, and Odisha experience frequent riverine floods that affect millions.

The situation is further aggravated by climate change, deforestation, poor drainage planning, and rapid urbanization. Vulnerable groups, including farmers, informal workers, and slum dwellers, often bear the brunt of monsoon-related disasters. As traditional disaster response systems become increasingly strained, the private sector's engagement through CSR has emerged as a crucial support mechanism.

## From Reactive Relief to Proactive Preparedness

India's Companies Act, 2013, mandates that companies with a net worth of ₹500 crore or more, or an annual turnover of ₹1,000 crore or more, must spend at least 2% of their average net profit on CSR activities. Disaster management, including preparedness, relief, and rehabilitation, is included in Schedule VII of the Act.

Earlier, CSR support in the monsoon context was largely reactive: distributing food, water, and essentials after a disaster. Today, companies are increasingly adopting a forward-looking approach that integrates resilience-building, awareness, infrastructure support, and climate adaptation into their CSR strategy.

## Key CSR Initiatives for Monsoon Preparedness

### 1. Tata Group: Building Disaster Resilience

Tata companies, through the Tata Sustainability Group and Tata Community Initiatives Trust, have developed a structured approach to disaster management. Their programs focus on community-based early warning systems, training for disaster volunteers, and pre-positioning of relief materials in flood-prone zones. In Assam and Bihar, the group has supported the construction of elevated community shelters and mobile health camps during flood emergencies.

### 2. HCL Foundation: Urban Flood Preparedness

HCL Foundation's urban resilience program emphasizes disaster risk reduction (DRR) in partnership with local governments and civil society. In cities like Noida and Chennai, the foundation has supported

the development of climate-resilient infrastructure, conducted flood drills in schools, and mapped drainage bottlenecks to inform city planning. Their green CSR initiative, *Harit*, also promotes urban tree planting and rainwater harvesting to mitigate flood risks.

### 3. Reliance Foundation: Real-Time Relief and Recovery

Reliance Foundation plays an active role in disaster response, particularly during monsoons. They have deployed mobile medical units, distributed hygiene and nutrition kits, and provided real-time weather updates to coastal communities in Maharashtra and Gujarat. Their collaboration with local fishermen associations to share cyclone alerts has helped reduce casualties and improve livelihoods.

### 4. ITC Limited: Water Stewardship and Climate-Resilient Farming

ITC's CSR projects in water conservation and sustainable agriculture indirectly strengthen monsoon preparedness. The company's watershed development programs in drought- and flood-prone regions have rejuvenated water bodies and enhanced groundwater recharge. Additionally, ITC trains farmers in climate-resilient practices, such as crop diversification and soil health management, to cope with erratic rainfall.

### 5. SEEDS India and Corporate Partnerships

NGOs like SEEDS (Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society) have collaborated with companies such as Honeywell, AXA, and Axis Bank to create community-based disaster resilience programs. These include constructing flood-resilient school buildings, training local first responders, and developing risk maps

to identify vulnerable populations. Their model emphasizes the power of public-private-people partnerships.

## Long-Term Impact and Way Forward

Corporate India's evolving approach to monsoon preparedness shows a shift from short-term charity to long-term impact. However, several areas still require attention and scaling:

**Public-Private Synergy** - Closer coordination with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and local authorities can improve resource utilization and avoid duplication.

**Technology Integration** - Use of GIS mapping, AI-based flood modeling, and IoT-based water level sensors can enhance early warning systems and planning.

**Community Ownership** - CSR programs must empower local communities by training local youth and creating village-level disaster committees.

**Focus on Infrastructure** - Investing in resilient infrastructure, like elevated housing, embankments, stormwater drains, and green zones, is essential in both urban and rural settings.

As India faces increasingly severe monsoon seasons, CSR efforts must evolve beyond post-disaster charity to pre-emptive action rooted in science, technology, and community partnership. The examples of Tata, HCL, Reliance, ITC, and others demonstrate that corporates can play a transformative role in protecting lives and livelihoods from climate-driven risks. CSR, when strategically directed, becomes a catalyst for sustainable development and climate resilience vital ingredients for a safer, more prepared India.



# RENEWABLE ENERGY: A PILLAR OF ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

RAJA DEBNATH, CORRESPONDENT



The conversation around climate action and environmental sustainability is incomplete without discussing the transformative role of renewable energy. As nations grapple with rising carbon emissions, unpredictable weather patterns, and depleting fossil fuel reserves, renewable energy sources have emerged as a powerful solution to ensure environmental stewardship. The shift toward

solar, wind, hydro, and bioenergy is not just a technological revolution—it is a global commitment to a greener and healthier planet.

## The Environmental Benefits of Renewable Energy

Renewable energy plays a crucial role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving resources, and protecting biodiversity. Unlike traditional fossil fuels, clean

energy sources:

- Emit zero or significantly lower CO<sub>2</sub>, mitigating climate change.
  - Reduce reliance on finite resources, ensuring long-term sustainability.
  - Have minimal environmental impact, avoiding air, water, and soil pollution.
  - Encourage decentralized energy production, improving energy security.
- Research by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)

estimates that tripling global renewable energy capacity by 2030 could cut carbon emissions by 70%, directly aiding climate mitigation efforts.

## Asia's Growing Renewable Energy Landscape

Asia is leading the charge in renewable energy adoption, with several nations making tremendous strides in sustainability:

### 1. China – The Solar Powerhouse

China is the world's largest producer of solar energy, contributing over 40% of global solar capacity. The country's efforts in developing high-efficiency solar panels and subsidizing large-scale installations have transformed its renewable energy sector. The Tengger Desert Solar Park, spanning over 1,500 hectares, is a prime example of China's commitment to clean energy.

### 2. India – Pioneering Green Energy Initiatives

India is rapidly expanding its renewable energy infrastructure, aiming to achieve 500 GW of non-fossil fuel energy by 2030.

Key milestones include:

- The Bhadla Solar Park in Rajasthan, one of the largest solar parks globally, generating over 2,245 MW.
- The Pavagada Solar Park in Karnataka, covering 13,000 acres, and designed to reduce coal dependency.
- The National Hydrogen Mission, promoting green hydrogen production for energy independence.

India's dedication to wind energy is equally notable, with Tamil Nadu and Gujarat housing some of the largest wind farms in Asia.

### 3. Japan – Innovation in Offshore Wind Energy

Japan, despite limited land availability, is pioneering offshore wind energy. Projects like the Fukushima Floating Wind Farm demonstrate how technology can overcome geographical constraints and drive sustainability.

## Global Leaders in Renewable Energy

Beyond Asia, several countries are making remarkable contributions to environmental



stewardship through renewables:

- Denmark's commitment to 100% renewable energy by 2050, led by wind power, has set a benchmark for sustainable development.
- Costa Rica's near-total reliance on renewables, utilizing hydropower, solar, and geothermal sources.
- Germany's Energiewende policy, which strategically phases out coal and nuclear power for a cleaner future.

## Challenges and Opportunities

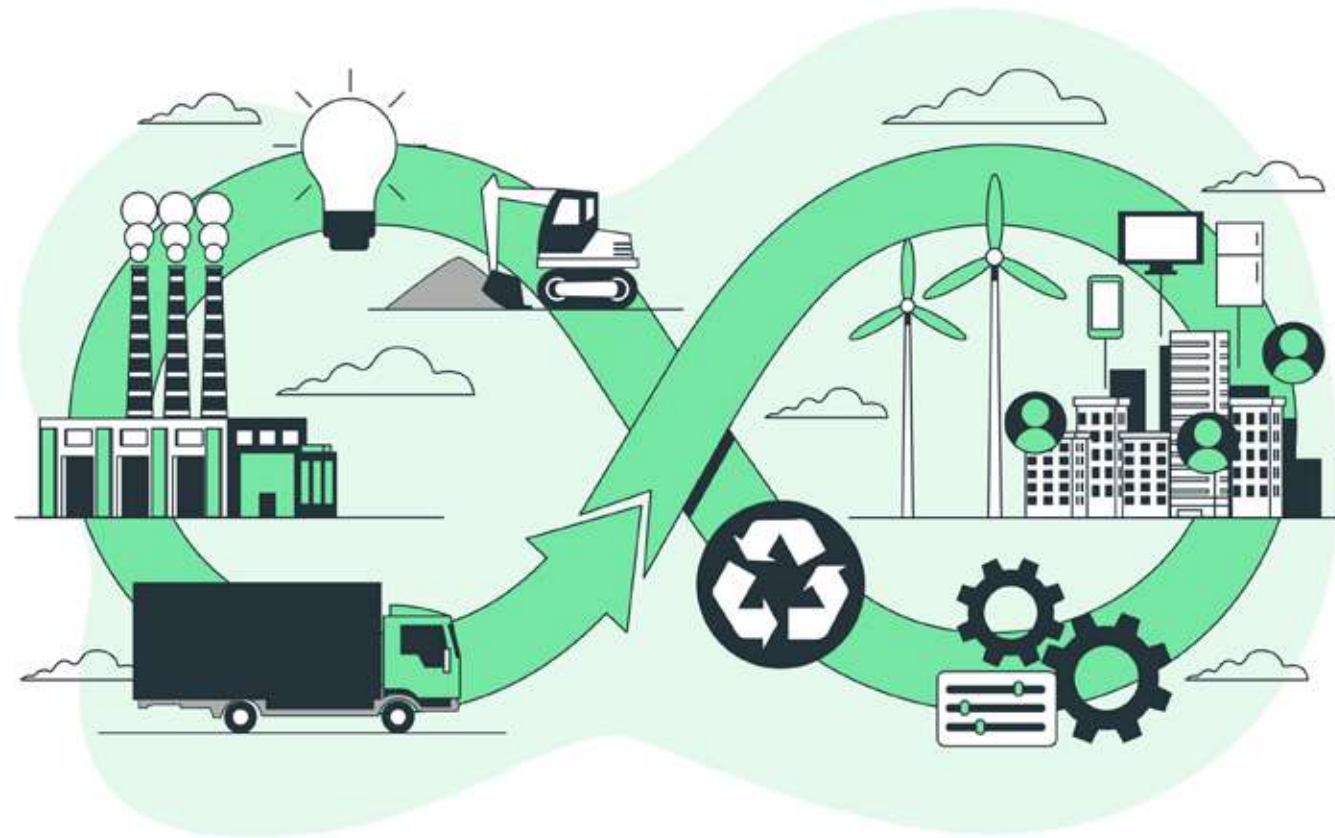
Despite the progress, challenges such as high initial costs, grid integration issues, and intermittency concerns remain. However, advancements in battery storage, smart grids, and energy-efficient solutions are overcoming these barriers.

Governments and corporations are increasingly investing in sustainable financing and green bonds, ensuring renewable energy projects are economically viable.

## In the end...

Renewable energy is more than just an alternative—it is the cornerstone of environmental stewardship. With countries across the globe prioritizing clean energy, the transition toward a sustainable future is not just possible, but inevitable. As businesses and policymakers collaborate, renewable energy will continue to shape a resilient, eco-friendly world for future generations.





# SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN: A PATHWAY TO CLIMATE RESILIENCE

TANMOY ROY, CORRESPONDENT

In today's corporate world, sustainability is no longer a buzzword—it is an urgent necessity. As businesses increasingly focus on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) goals, sustainable supply chains have emerged as a pivotal force in mitigating climate change. Organizations across sectors are recognizing that supply chain

operations contribute significantly to carbon emissions, resource depletion, and environmental degradation. The need to transition toward green, ethical, and climate-conscious supply chains has never been more pressing.

## The Environmental Impact of Supply Chains

Supply chains are responsible for 60%

of global carbon emissions (CDP, 2021). From raw material extraction to production, packaging, transportation, and disposal, each stage has a profound environmental footprint. Studies reveal that over 80% of a company's greenhouse gas emissions come from its supply chain rather than direct operations (McKinsey, 2022). Additionally:

- Deforestation due to unsustainable

raw material sourcing leads to loss of biodiversity.

- Water consumption in manufacturing industries strains freshwater reserves.
- Packaging waste, particularly plastic, contributes to ocean pollution.
- Given these statistics, businesses must revamp their supply chain strategies to align with environmental goals.

## Success Stories in Sustainable Supply Chains

One inspiring case is **Patagonia**, the outdoor apparel brand that ensures 100% transparency in its supply chain. It has eliminated toxic dyes, switched to organic cotton, and introduced worn wear programs for product longevity. Similarly, Tesla's commitment to sustainable lithium sourcing for batteries has revolutionized ethical mining practices.

A lesser-known example comes from India, where **Tata Steel** has integrated a zero-waste policy in its supply chain, ensuring recycling and reusing scrap metal to cut down landfill contributions.

## Challenges and the Road Ahead

- Despite promising developments, businesses face hurdles such as:
- High initial costs of sustainable infrastructure.
- Limited availability of eco-friendly raw materials.
- Regulatory complexity in different countries.

However, with incentives for green procurement, growing consumer demand for ethical products, and technological advancements, sustainable supply chains will soon become the norm rather than the exception.

## Finally...

A well-structured sustainable supply chain does more than reduce carbon footprints—it builds resilience, enhances brand reputation, and future-proofs businesses against

One inspiring case is **Patagonia**, the outdoor apparel brand that ensures 100% transparency in its supply chain. It has eliminated toxic dyes, switched to organic cotton, and introduced worn wear programs for product longevity.

climate-related disruptions. As corporate leaders and CSR stakeholders, the opportunity to champion environmental stewardship through supply chains is vast. The time to act is now. Organizations that embrace sustainability today will not only help mitigate climate change but will also shape a profitable and ethical business future.

## Sources

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- *Patagonia Sustainable Business Model*
- *Unilever Supply Chain Transparency Initiative*
- *Tata Steel Sustainability Framework*
- *Tesla Ethical Mining Practices*

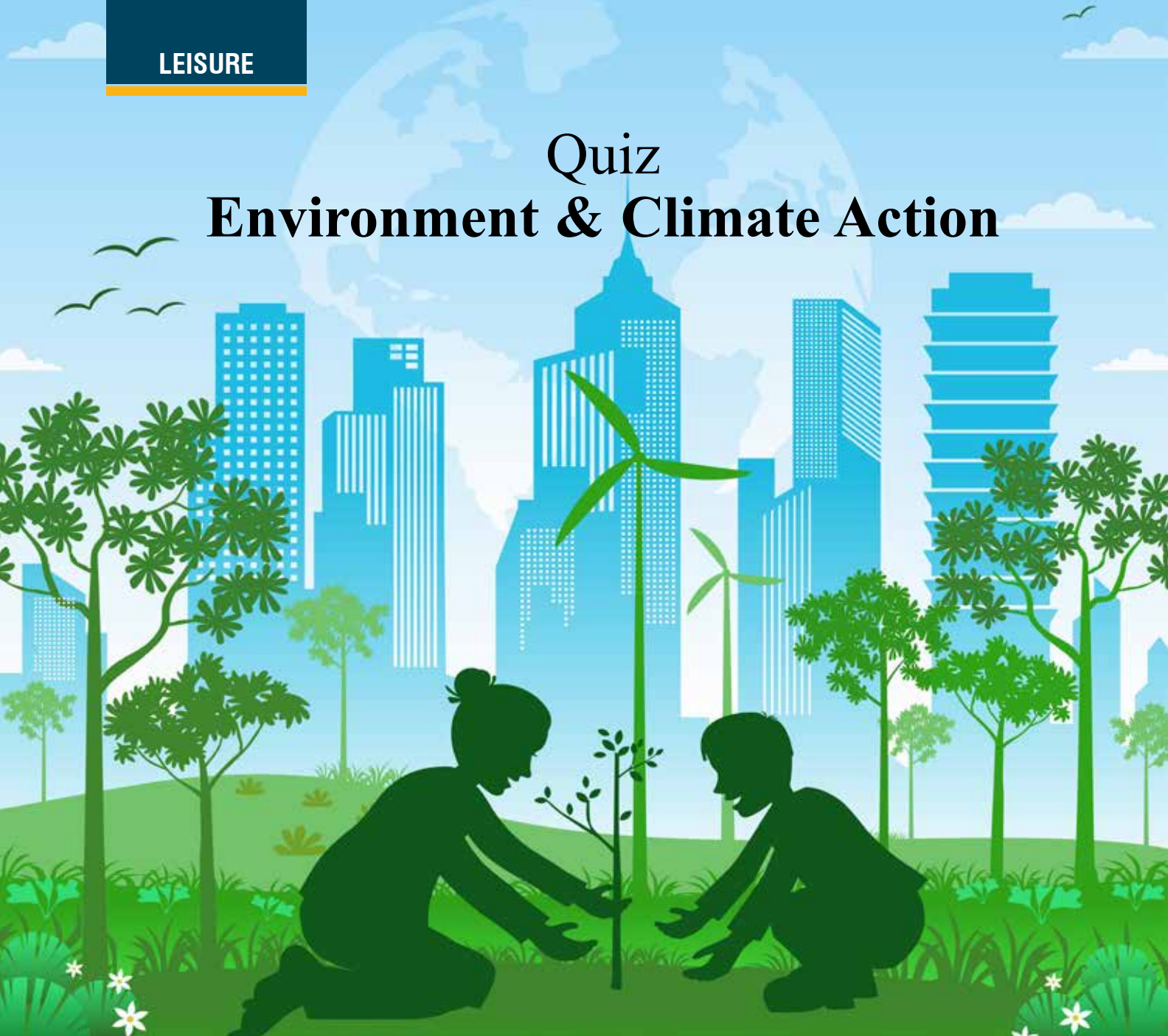
## Trailblazers in Sustainable Supply Chain

- **Carbon Neutral Logistics** Companies are adopting electric and hydrogen-powered fleets, investing in efficient route optimization, and promoting carbon offset programs. Major corporations like Amazon and DHL have pledged to achieve net-zero logistics by 2050.
- **Ethical Sourcing and Circular Economy** Brands are moving toward recycled materials and sustainable procurement. The rise of the circular economy, where products are designed for reuse or upcycling, has gained momentum. For example, Nike's **Move to Zero** initiative focuses on recycling sportswear materials to cut down waste.
- **Renewable Energy Adoption** Manufacturing hubs are shifting from fossil fuels to solar, wind, and hydro-powered facilities. Apple and Google have already achieved 100% renewable energy usage across global operations.
- **AI and Blockchain for Transparency** Artificial Intelligence and Blockchain help monitor real-time emissions, track supplier ethical standards, and enhance supply chain accountability. Unilever's "Traceability Initiative" uses blockchain to ensure responsible sourcing of palm oil.



# Quiz

## Environment & Climate Action



- Which Indian company launched the 'Green Pledge' campaign to promote sustainable practices among its employees and stakeholders?
  - Infosys
  - Tata Steel
  - Wipro
  - Mahindra & Mahindra
- What is the name of Reliance Industries' initiative aimed at becoming net carbon zero by 2035?
  - Carbon-Free Future
  - Green Reliance Mission
  - Mission Sustainability
  - Net Carbon Zero Plan
- Which IT giant in India runs all its campuses on 100% renewable energy and is carbon neutral?
  - TCS
  - HCL
  - Infosys
  - Tech Mahindra
- The 'Caring for Climate' India initiative is led by which of the following organizations?
  - NITI Aayog
  - UN Global Compact Network India
  - FICCI
  - Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

- Which Indian auto company was the first to launch a fully electric SUV – the e2o – as part of its clean mobility drive?
  - Tata Motors
  - Maruti Suzuki
  - Mahindra Electric
  - Hyundai India
- Which of the following Indian companies has committed to planting over 1 million trees annually as part of its environmental CSR?
  - ITC
  - JSW Group
  - HDFC Bank
  - Adani Group
- Which Indian city hosted the first Climate Finance Leadership Initiative (CFLI) India meeting, involving major corporates?
  - Mumbai
  - New Delhi
  - Hyderabad
  - Bengaluru
- The 'Harit Bharat Sankalp' initiative is associated with which Indian PSU?
  - ONGC
  - NTPC
  - GAIL
  - Indian Oil Corporation
- Tata Power has developed India's largest solar microgrid program in partnership with which global agency?
  - World Bank
  - USAID
  - UNDP
  - Rockefeller Foundation
- Under its 'Green Belt Project,' which company is working to increase green cover in mining-affected areas?
  - Coal India
  - Vedanta
  - NMDC
  - Hindalco

### NUTSHELL

By P.D.

**Intern:** "We posted a reel about our tree planting drive."  
**CEO:** "Perfect. Did we actually plant any?"  
**Intern:** "Not yet. But the filters are 100% organic."  
**CEO:** "Which means we're sowing 'likes' not seeds!"





# PLASTIC: THE NECESSARY EVIL WE CAN TURN INTO GOOD

SAMIR BANERJEE

Plastic is the paradox of our time. Invented for convenience, hailed for versatility, and now condemned for its permanence—it has gone from miracle material to environmental menace in just a few decades. Oceans choke with plastic waste, marine animals perish from ingestion, and microplastics have now entered our food chain, our water, and even our bloodstreams. The image of a plastic bottle drifting in the sea has become the universal symbol of pollution.

The dangers are undeniable. India alone generates over 3.4 million tonnes of plastic waste annually, and a significant portion of it ends up unmanaged. Plastic bags clog drainage systems, PET bottles float endlessly in rivers, and landfills grow like synthetic mountains. Its resistance to degradation, once considered an advantage, is now a global crisis. According to UN estimates, it takes hundreds of years for plastic to decompose—time the planet simply doesn't have.



But here's the question we rarely ask: **Can plastic, the villain, become part of the solution?**

It's time to stop looking at plastic solely as waste and start seeing it as a resource—one that, if redirected, can support infrastructure, generate livelihoods, and drive innovation. The problem isn't plastic itself. It's how we've misused and mismanaged it.

## A Different Way of Thinking: Plastic as a Building Block

Across the globe, innovators are reimagining plastic not as trash, but as a raw material for transformation. In India, initiatives like **plastics-to-roads** have already gained traction. Cities like Pune and Chennai are using shredded plastic waste to lay stronger, more durable roads. These roads not only recycle thousands of kilos of non-recyclable plastic but are also resistant to potholes and wear—a practical and scalable solution.

Elsewhere, social enterprises are converting plastic bottles into **modular bricks**, which are being used to build homes, schools, and toilets in underserved communities. These eco-bricks are waterproof, fire-resistant, and affordable—a triple win in the face of both housing and environmental crises.

This presents a powerful opportunity for CSR programs. Imagine a project that collects plastic waste from urban slums and turns it into building material for rural classrooms. Or one that trains women's self-help groups to manufacture plastic-based street furniture, tiles, or shelter kits. Such initiatives

don't just clean the environment—they uplift communities, create green jobs, and drive circular economies.

## CSR as a Catalyst for Plastic Transformation

Corporates can and must play a pivotal role in this rethinking of plastic. A CSR initiative built around plastic repurposing can tick multiple sustainability boxes: environmental conservation, livelihood creation, skill development, and even education infrastructure.

For



instance, a company can set up decentralized plastic collection units in partnership with local municipalities, employ waste pickers and train them in sorting and processing, and channel the waste to certified organizations converting plastic into usable construction material. The same company can fund the construction of community centers, libraries, or Anganwadi centers using these materials—thus closing the loop.

Such a program doesn't just reduce plastic pollution—it also tells a story of transformation. It sends a message that what was once considered waste can be reborn as a resource. It shifts the narrative from despair to innovation.

## A New Plastic Narrative

Demonizing plastic alone won't solve the problem. We need smarter, more imaginative ways to deal with it. While reducing plastic consumption and promoting biodegradable alternatives remain critical, so does harnessing the plastic already in circulation. The key lies in **rethinking plastic's role**—not as a curse, but as a challenge that can fuel innovation.

Through visionary CSR programs, companies have the opportunity to lead this transformation—to not just clean the environment, but to rebuild lives and landscapes from the very material we once discarded.

Plastic may not disappear anytime soon. But with responsibility, creativity, and commitment, we can ensure it finds its place in building a better, cleaner future.



# INDIA'S NET-ZERO GOALS: A GREEN DREAM WITH A DEADLINE

CSR TIMES BUREAU



India has made a big promise to the planet: to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2070. That means by then, we'll balance the amount of greenhouse gases we release with the amount we remove from the atmosphere. It's like trying to eat as many samosas as you burn off at the gym—tricky, but not impossible!

## Why 2070?

Some countries like the U.S. and the U.K. have set net-zero targets for 2050. India, being a developing country with over 1.4 billion people and a growing economy, needs more time. We're still building roads, homes, and industries—and we need energy to do that. So, 2070 gives us a fair shot to grow and go green at the same time.

## The Five Big Promises

At the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid out five key climate goals, also called "Panchamrit." These include:

- Reaching 500 GW of non-fossil energy capacity by 2030.
- Meeting 50% of energy needs from renewables by 2030.
- Reducing carbon emissions by 1 billion tonnes by 2030.
- Cutting emissions intensity of GDP by 45%.
- And of course, net-zero by 2070.

## What's Happening on the Ground?

India isn't just talking the talk—we're walking (and cycling, and solar-paneling) the walk.

Indian Railways is going electric! It aims to be net-zero by 2030. That's



right—your next train ride might be powered by the sun instead of diesel. ONGC, the oil giant, has created a green subsidiary and plans to invest ₹1 lakh crore by 2030 in solar and other clean energy projects.

The government has also doubled funding for green hydrogen, a clean fuel that could power everything from buses to factories.

## But Wait, There's More!

The 2025-26 Union Budget gave a big boost to clean energy:

₹26,549 crore for renewable energy.  
₹20,000 crore for the Surya Ghar Yojana, which helps people install solar panels on rooftops.

₹6,000 crore for green hydrogen.  
Even small modular nuclear reactors are getting attention—tiny power plants that could light up villages without polluting the air.

Challenges? Oh Yes.

Let's not sugarcoat it—there are hurdles. Land for solar farms is hard to find. Green hydrogen is still expensive. And shifting to green ammonia in fertilizers could raise costs for farmers. Plus, we need better waste management, smarter cities, and a lot more trees.

But hey, Rome wasn't built in a day—and neither is a carbon-neutral India.

## What Can You Do?

You don't need to build a wind farm in your backyard (though that would be cool). Start small:

Switch off lights when not needed.

Use public transport or carpool.

Plant a tree. Or ten.

Support companies that care about the planet.

## Final Thoughts

India's net-zero journey is like a long train ride with many stops—solar, wind, hydrogen, nuclear, and maybe even electric tuk-tuks. It's not going to be easy, but it's definitely worth it. After all, we're not just saving the planet—we're saving our future chai breaks under a shady tree.

## Sources:

- *NetZeroIndia.org* – India's Net Zero by 2070 Plan
- *ET EnergyWorld* – India Net Zero Forum 2025 Highlights
- *ORF* – Budget 2025-26 and Climate Goals
- *Economic Survey 2025* – India's Climate Strategy



# GREEN GROWTH IN THE AGE OF AI: CAN INDIA ACHIEVE ECONOMIC EXPANSION WITHOUT ENVIRONMENTAL COLLAPSE?

BY DR V.P. SINGH

## Sustainability challenging GDP Growth

“India is set to be the main engine of global economic growth in 2025 and 2026” says World Economic Forum’s (WEF) Chief Economists Outlook report. IMF projects the GDP growth rates for these years to be 6.2% and 6.3% respectively. These numbers pale in comparison to images of Chinese GDP growth of early 2000s. China joined WTO in 2001 and grew at an average growth rate of around 10% till the 2008 Global Financial crisis. World changed significantly since then. Green growth desires have slowed

the economies across the globe. In 2010, China reclaimed 10% GDP growth but by then it had also achieved the ‘dirty nation’ tag given its high carbon emissions. By 2015, China announced Made in China 2025 plan to reduce the energy intensity of manufacturing industry by 18% in 2020 and 34% in 2025 compared to 2015 level. The proposed transition witnessed slowing down of the economy and since then China hasn’t been able to reach 10% GDP growth.

## Does India need to be wary of such slowing down with its green initiatives?

India’s case looks different. In 2015, manufacturing had 40 per cent share in China’s GDP. Service sector contributed 50.5%. While in India, the service sector contributed approximately 61% to India’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the manufacturing sector had a share of mere 15.4%. Even now the manufacturing sector’s share is 17%. Due to this small share, India’s transition path to more efficient economy faces lesser threat of low-capacity utilisation of existing industry. Low-capacity utilisation usually disrupts flow of money in the economy, which in turn slows the GDP growth. Evidence lays in the fact that despite facing challenges of large population and its growing consumption compulsions, India has achieved its initial Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) goals ahead of schedule, including a 33% reduction in emissions intensity by 2019. The updated 2030 NDC of reducing its emission intensity by 45% from 2005 levels, alongside the other clean energy objectives, positions India as one of the successful contributors to global climate goals. In February 2025,

non-fossil fuel sources in India’s total installed electricity generation capacity had a share of 47.37%. Such large a large share enables India to be ranked among the top 10 global climate performers. Despite all these growth arresting initiatives India continues to be fastest growing large economy. The growth rate does need to be raised and that is where AI play its role.

## Artificial intelligence is a new driver of efficiency and growth

### Agriculture

India’s agriculture sector contributes 15% to the GDP and growth realised in this sector has been traditionally low. Around 85% farmers, classified as small and marginal farmers, own less than 2 hectares land. Inadequate capital, unpredictable prices, erratic weather, lack of storage leads to low yield and almost 40% loss of produce for these farmers. World Economic Forum’s Artificial Intelligence for Agriculture Innovation (AI4AI) stepped in to transform India’s agriculture. One initiative, ‘Saagu Baagu’ pilot, developed in partnership with Telangana state government has substantially improved the chili value chain for more than 7,000 farmers by creating India’s first agriculture data exchange and agri data management framework.

The initiative helped farmers achieve 21% increase in chili yields per acre plus reduction in pesticide use by 9%, plus decrease in fertilizer usage by 5%, and unit prices rising 8% due to quality enhancements. Farmers’ incomes increased by more than INR 66,000 (around 800 USD) per acre per crop cycle, effectively

doubling their earnings. The project has expanded and aims to impact 500,000 farmers, encompassing five different crops across ten districts. Application of data driven precision farming enabled thru AI propelled Netherlands to becoming world’s second largest exporter of agricultural produce. It has a tiny population of 18 million. Imagine the scope that India has in expanding GDP through AI enabled agriculture.

### Manufacturing

AI adoption in manufacturing in India seems to be ahead of the global averages. Rockwell Automation’s 10th annual State of Smart Manufacturing Report released on 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2025 says that 99% of surveyed Indian manufacturers are focused on AI/ML investments, and 94% of Indian firms have in place a formal sustainability program, particularly in energy management and eco-friendly practices across product lifecycles. The reports says that globally, 95% of manufacturers have invested or plan to invest in AI/ML. More interesting part is 48% of the manufacturers are redesigning the roles of the workforce in response to smart manufacturing, and 50% plan to use AI/ML for quality control in the coming year.

These developments infuse confidence that India’s economy can have rapid as well as green growth through adoption of AI. India’s 2024 Q4 GDP growth of 7.4% yielded full year GDP growth of 6.5% higher than IMF’s forecast. It surprised many and many more pleasant surprises are in store as India gallops to achieve the third largest economy status.

The author of the article is **Program Director, PGPM, Great lakes institute of management, Gurgaon.**





# GREEN DREAMS & BOARDROOM SCHEMES: WHEN CSR MEETS CLIMATE (AND COMEDY)

SANJIV RATHI

Once upon a time in the land of quarterly reports and PowerPoint decks, a group of well-meaning executives gathered around a mahogany table and declared, “Let there be green!” Thus began the age of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects aimed at saving the planet—one press release at a time.

The intentions were noble. The execution? Well, let’s just say Mother Nature wasn’t always impressed.

Take the curious case of “Project Leafy,” a grand initiative by a beverage company to plant 10,000 trees in urban

areas. The launch was spectacular—drones flew overhead, influencers posed with saplings, and hashtags trended. Unfortunately, no one remembered to water the trees. By month three, the only thing green was the envy of the marketing team watching a rival brand’s composting campaign go viral.

Then there was “Solarize 360,” a tech firm’s ambitious plan to install solar panels on all its office rooftops. The catch? Most of their offices were in leased buildings with no roof access. After several months of legal back-and-forth and one unfortunate incident involving a drone, a ladder, and a very angry pigeon, the project was quietly rebranded as “Sunlight Awareness Week.”

Let’s not forget “The Great Plastic Purge” by a retail giant that vowed to eliminate single-use plastics from its stores. They replaced plastic bags with paper ones, which promptly disintegrated in the monsoon. Customers left with soggy groceries and a newfound appreciation for the durability of polyethylene. The company’s sustainability officer was last seen muttering “biodegradable doesn’t mean waterproof” into a cup of herbal tea.

Of course, not all CSR projects flop. Some just... meander. One conglomerate launched a “Green Commute Challenge” encouraging employees to bike to work. The only problem? Their headquarters was located on a highway with no bike lanes and a population of particularly aggressive stray dogs. Participation peaked at three brave interns and one confused courier.

And then there’s the classic “Eco App” that tracks your carbon footprint. A brilliant idea—until users realized it calculated emissions from their morning coffee but not their 12-hour air-conditioned



## “CSR Gone Wild”

*An intern biked 12 km to work during the Green Commute Challenge. HR awarded him a diesel cab voucher for “emergency recovery.”*

## “Memo from Marketing”

*“Could we Photoshop the saplings bigger for the quarterly report? Asking for a stakeholder.”*

Zoom marathons. One reviewer wrote, “Apparently my oat milk latte is destroying the planet, but my server farm isn’t. Cool.”

Yet, amid the missteps and miscalculations, there’s something oddly endearing about these efforts. They reflect a growing awareness that businesses can’t just profit from the planet—they have to protect it

too. Even if that means occasionally planting trees that don’t survive or launching apps that guilt-trip you over your sandwich.

Because here’s the thing: the climate crisis isn’t waiting for perfect plans. It needs action—messy, well-intentioned, sometimes misguided action that learns, adapts, and improves. Every failed tree-planting drive teaches us to plan better. Every soggy paper bag nudges us toward smarter materials. Every pigeon-related rooftop incident reminds us to check the lease.

So, to all the CSR warriors out there—keep dreaming green. Keep trying. Keep laughing at the bloopers and learning from them. Because the Earth doesn’t need flawless heroes. It needs persistent ones.

And if your next big idea involves biodegradable confetti, maybe test it indoors first.



# Reflections on Climate, Sustainability & Corporate Responsibility



In a world increasingly shaped by environmental disruption and ecological urgency, words have the power to ignite action and inspire responsibility. At CSR TIMES, we believe that the future of our planet lies not just in policy or technology, but also in perspective. The following quotes are more than just thoughts—they are calls to conscience which urge us to rethink our relationship with nature, our corporate choices, and our collective responsibility. Let them serve as reminders that sustainability is not a slogan—it’s a way forward.

*“Nature doesn’t send invoices—but when the balance is broken, the bill arrives with interest.”*

*“Every tree we plant is a vote for the future—silent, strong, and standing for generations.”*

*“The planet doesn’t need saving. We do. Earth will survive. Will we?”*

*“Climate change is not a forecast—it’s a reality report delayed by human denial.”*

*“When glaciers melt and oceans rise, it’s not nature being cruel—it’s us being careless.”*

*“Sustainability isn’t a lifestyle trend—it’s the last exit before extinction.”*

*“A product that pollutes in silence is more dangerous than a war that shouts.”*

*“Businesses that ignore the climate today will struggle to find customers tomorrow.”*

*“A responsible company doesn’t just count profits—it counts its impact on people and the planet.”*

*“The true legacy of a corporation isn’t measured in market share—but in the clean air, clear water, and conscious choices it leaves behind.”*

## Answer Key (on a different page)

- |                                    |                           |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| B) Tata Steel                      | D) Indian Oil Corporation |
| D) Net Carbon Zero Plan            | A) ITC                    |
| C) Infosys                         | D) Rockefeller Foundation |
| B) UN Global Compact Network India | A) Mumbai                 |
| C) Mahindra Electric               | A) Coal India             |

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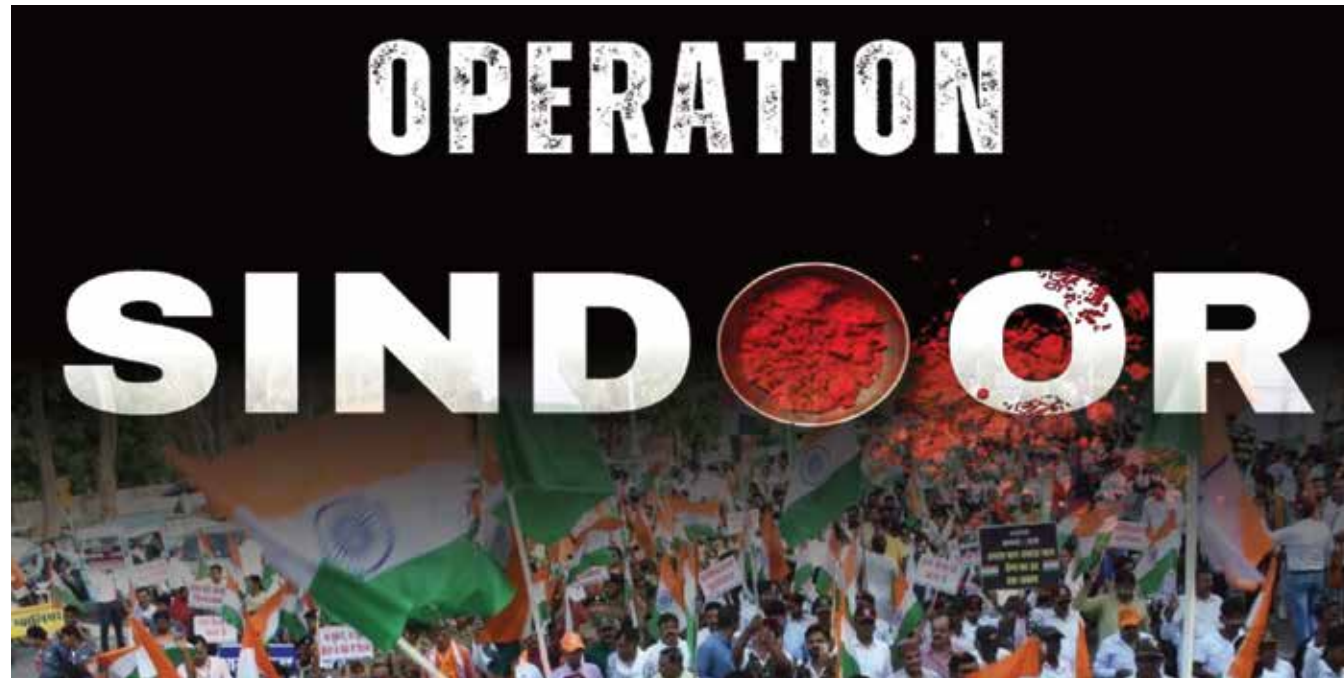
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# NATIONAL SOLIDARITY THROUGH CSR IN INDIA

VATIKA SINGH

In the wake of disasters, moments of unity often define the resilience of a nation. *Operation Sindoor*, an emblem of national solidarity, represents one such moment in India's journey, where the spirit of collective responsibility triumphed over tragedy. While the operation was led by government agencies and the armed forces, its broader success also highlighted how Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in India can serve as a critical force multiplier during times of national crisis. The operation, and the corporate response it galvanized, provide a blueprint for how businesses can integrate disaster

response, relief, and recovery into their broader CSR strategy.

## Understanding Operation Sindoor

Operation Sindoor was launched as a swift humanitarian mission in the aftermath of a catastrophic natural disaster that struck the Himalayan region in early 2025, resulting in massive landslides, flash floods, and widespread destruction across parts of Jammu & Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. Named after the reddish hue of the soil left in the wake of the landslides, the operation sought to evacuate stranded civilians, provide emergency medical aid, restore essential services, and rehabilitate

affected communities.

The Indian Army, Air Force, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), and local administrations were at the forefront. However, what made Operation Sindoor unique was the coordinated participation of civil society and corporate India. Within days, companies across sectors responded not just with donations, but with logistics, manpower, medical aid, and technological support—underlining how CSR in India is maturing from check book philanthropy to proactive nation-building.

## CSR as a Pillar of National Solidarity

India's CSR framework, governed by the

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Companies Act, 2013, mandates eligible companies to allocate 2% of their average net profits towards social development. While this mandate traditionally emphasized areas like education, health, and rural development, disaster management, including relief and rehabilitation, is explicitly included under Schedule VII of the Act.

Operation Sindoor brought the full potential of this clause into focus. It demonstrated how the corporate sector can swiftly pivot its CSR activities to respond to emergencies, support government missions, and, more importantly, help rebuild communities with long-term resilience in mind.

### Corporate Response to Operation Sindoor - Leading by Example

#### 1. Tata Group - Logistics, Shelter, and Relief Support

Tata Sons, through Tata Trusts and Tata Steel Foundation, mobilized significant resources within 48 hours of the disaster. They deployed mobile medical units to affected districts and collaborated with local NGOs to set up temporary shelters. Tata Communications supported telecom recovery operations, while the Tata Motors team provided heavy-duty vehicles for logistics and evacuation.

#### 2. Adani Group - Infrastructure and Power Restoration

With electricity supply cut off in large areas, Adani Electricity and Adani Green Energy worked with local authorities to restore power in record time. Their CSR arm facilitated the installation of solar-powered lighting in temporary shelters and distributed emergency kits including

hygiene products, dry rations, and water purifiers to over 25,000 families.

#### 3. Infosys Foundation - Technology-Enabled Relief

Infosys Foundation developed a real-time disaster-mapping dashboard, integrating satellite data and on-ground information to help emergency services identify high-risk zones. The platform was made freely available to district administrations. Volunteers also supported the setting up of mobile classrooms and Wi-Fi hotspots for displaced students.

#### 4. Mahindra Group - Vehicles and Rural Rehab

Mahindra's tractors and utility vehicles were used by the NDRF and NGOs to access remote, mountainous areas. Mahindra Foundation's CSR program also initiated "Rebuild Villages"—a long-term rehabilitation project that focused on rebuilding homes, creating livelihood opportunities, and restoring education in severely affected districts.

#### 5. Hindustan Unilever (HUL) - Health & Hygiene Campaign

HUL, already known for its public health campaigns, leveraged its supply chain to distribute sanitation and hygiene kits. Their "Clean Hands, Safe Families" campaign was relaunched in temporary shelters with awareness sessions conducted in partnership with local healthcare workers to prevent disease outbreaks post-disaster.

### Lessons from Operation Sindoor - A CSR Blueprint for Disaster Management

The collective corporate response to

Operation Sindoor reveals several key insights:

#### 1. Speed and Decentralization Matter

Many companies had pre-approved CSR disaster funds and decentralized decision-making structures, which allowed for quick mobilization. This agility is crucial in disaster response.

#### 2. Partnerships Are Powerful

Effective partnerships between corporations, NGOs, and government agencies were central to Operation Sindoor. These collaborations helped align on-ground needs with available corporate resources.

#### 3. Going Beyond Relief: Building Back Better

Companies didn't stop at providing immediate relief. Several initiated long-term rehabilitation projects focused on housing, education, mental health, and livelihood restoration—ensuring a holistic recovery.

#### 4. Tech-Driven Response

The use of drones for aerial surveys, mobile apps for aid tracking, and data dashboards helped coordinate relief more effectively. CSR strategies that integrate digital solutions are proving to be more impactful.

Operation Sindoor symbolized more than a response to a natural disaster; it was a moment of unified action, with corporate India rising as a crucial pillar of national solidarity. It showed how CSR, when applied with purpose and speed, can transcend charity and become a core part of nation-building. In times of crisis, it is not just the strength of government machinery but the combined will of citizens, civil society, and corporations that defines a country's resilience. India's CSR ecosystem has proven it is ready—not just to respond, but to rebuild.

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