

## **Role of Industry in Shielding the Environment: Insights from 2019 CII Conference on Sustainability**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article is based on a report on Conference on Sustainability organized by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in New Delhi on 28 June 2019. The distinguished delegates of the conference deliberated on a range of issues such as diminishing water tables, excessive use of plastics in packaging, need for augmenting resource efficiency, and low carbon mobility for future cities. The panel of speakers included Dr Jitendra Das, Director, Fore School of Management; Mr Sundeep Gupta, Vice Chairman & Managing Director, Jakson Group; Mr S S Acharya, Managing Director, Mott Macdonald India Pvt. Ltd.; Mr A P Abraham, Head, Operations, Continental Carbon India Ltd.; Mr Manoj Pande, Managing Director, Statcon Energia Pvt. Ltd.; Mr Santanu Gupta, Chief General Manager (AE & SD), Indian Oil Corporation Ltd.; Mr Anuj Khanna, Managing Director, C&S Electric Ltd.; Mr Sandeep Singh, Chief Executive Officer, Shuddhoday PMPL; Mr Dheeraj Verma, Associate Vice President & Head, Environment, Health, Safety & Sustainability, JCB Ltd.; Mr Jeevraj Pillai, Joint President, Packaging & New Product Development, Uflex Ltd.; Mr Saroj Banerjee, Chief, Environment, Tata Steel BSL Ltd.; Mr Jajib Rahman, Vice President, Corp HSE & Sustainability, Sterlite Power; Mr Prabhat Kumar, National Program Manager (Technical), Energy Efficiency Services Ltd.; Mr Neeraj Kumar Singhal, Director, Semco Group; and Mr Inshu Minocha, Principal Consultant, Steer Group India among others. This incisive report may be quite useful for practising managers while planning sustainable development initiatives.

**Keywords:** Environment, Sustainability, Resource Efficiency, Low Carbon Mobility, India

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) organized Conference on Sustainability on 28 June 2019 in New Delhi to reaffirm the role of industry in fostering environmental sustainability. The distinguished delegates of the conference deliberated on a range of issues such as diminishing water tables, excessive use of plastics in packaging, need for augmenting resource efficiency, and low carbon mobility for future cities.

Mr Sundeep Gupta, Convenor, CII WUP Core Group on Sustainability and Vice Chairman & Managing Director, Jakson Group, emphasized the need of water conservation, in his welcome address. Mr Gupta observed that every drop of water at home or shop-floor should be

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conserved and recycled wherever possible. He said that the companies should make concerted efforts to reduce water requirements factories and other commercial establishments. Mr Gupta also reiterated the need to reduce plastics in packaging to the extent possible and look for creative and innovative alternatives in packaging. Joining the chorus on water conservation, Mr Santanu Gupta, Chief General Manager (AE & SD), Indian Oil Corporation Ltd., shared how Indian Oil was conserving each drop of rain water in most of its refineries and sales outlets.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Manoj Pande, Managing Director, Statcon Energia Pvt. Ltd. observed that pollution in high measure is caused by overuse or misuse of energy. He said that all the stakeholders should collaborate in order to make electricity network sustainable in the long run. He also reiterated that there was an urgent need for adoption of nuclear, solar and wind energy to meet burgeoning energy demands of an aspirational country –India. He lamented that in spite of advanced technologies in place, the country has failed to harness full potential of solar power. Aside the governmental apathy, people need to conserve energy both at home and workplaces out of their own volition so as to avert any serious energy crisis in future, Mr Pande added.

Dr Jitendra Das, Director, FORE School of Management, highlighted some of the acute challenges in sustainability i.e. carbon footprints and ecosystem stating how eco-systems work while remaining interconnected and dependent on other ecosystems, while chairing the session on ‘Resource Efficiency –Linear to Circular Economy for Indian Manufacturing: Challenges and Opportunities’. According to Dr Das, any by-product of one ecosystem in nature is used by another ecosystem; anything which is a waste for one ecosystem is a reasonably good input for another ecosystem –an example of circular economy. Recycling things implies bringing back to itself even small components as well; if it is not possible for a business entity to entirely eliminate carbon emission, they should start buying out carbon credits, observed Dr Das. He asserted that the traditional model of reuse, recycle and reduce is not enough anymore to achieve sustainability goals in the industry. Further, he vociferously advocated the urgent need for up-cycling, down-cycling and closed loop. Policymakers should incorporate the circular economy to ensure that the sought goals are achieved, Dr Das added.

Mr Dheeraj Verma, Associate Vice President & Head, Environment, Health, Safety & Sustainability, JCB Ltd., said that protection of environment should be the prime objective of all as it is the natural component of the earth where air, water, land, soil, flora, fauna are all interrelated. Sustainable development has to be planned in such a manner that meeting the need of the present can be done without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their needs, he added. Mr Verma also talked about circular economy which minimizes waste and optimizes resources during production and consumption through closed loop material flow while linking the independency on virgin resource extraction and generation of waste at all stages including pollution. He observed that the industry needs to move away from the current linear economy process where extract, produce, consume and trash happen with little or no attention vis-a-vis pollution to a *circular economy* with focus on how can we consume goods and services and yet not depend on extraction of resource and ensure closed loops that prevent the eventual disposal during and after the production process.

Mr Saroj Banerjee, Chief, Environment, Tata Steel BSL Ltd. highlighted the eco-friendly technologies used in his company. He stressed upon his organization’s aggressive sustainability goals in waste management including minimizing of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2025 by utilizing 100% blast furnace slag in cement production and avoiding fugitive air emissions during transportation. Mr Banerjee mentioned that TATA Steel is the 1<sup>st</sup> Indian company to implement an internal carbon pricing in the financial appraisal of the capital project.

Mr. Sandeep Singh, Chief Executive Officer, Shuddhoday PMPL, spoke about various ways and means of water harvesting and water treatment and the hydrological cycle, affecting the environment and the effect of which is already being faced by the country. Mr Singh emphasized the importance of water and how its pollution is putting civilizations in danger. He suggested acceleration of water treatment facilities and making sure that everyone shares the responsibility of saving the water resources.

Mr Jeevraj Pillai, Joint President, Packaging & New Product Development, Uflex Ltd., observed that only 10% waste is recycled successfully in India, of which – 30% in land fill; 20% dumped, 35% littered in the environment as compared to Sweden where 67% waste is recycled. Incidentally, one of the most successful countries in managing waste has been Belgium (95%) with a goal to achieve 'Zero Waste', he added. Mr Pillai, also elaborated on the current scenario of reduction in carbon emission using PNG, reduction in VOC emission by using energy curing systems like E-beam, LED Curing and using water based link and use of incineration – one of several waste-to-energy technologies and other high-temperature waste treatment systems where materials converts the waste into ash, with energy recovery in the process. However, efforts are inadequate with regard to colossal waste disposal problem faced by India, Mr Pillai stated.

A Knowledge Paper was also released on the occasion by CII in collaboration with Mott Macdonald. The Knowledge Paper has research-based incisive readings carbon accounting; Energy: Clean, Green and Credible; Reducing Carbon Footprint through Energy Efficiency; Sustainable Management of Water; Circular Economy: Embedding Circularity in the Infrastructure Asset Life Cycle; Future Mobility and Economic, Social and Environmental Well-being; and Linear to Circular Economy for Indian Manufacturing.

