



By **ONKAR KANWAR**

# IN SYNC WITH SUSTAINABILITY

**W**E ARE WITNESSING A TIME where sustainability has become increasingly strategic rather than academic. The model of development today clearly underlines the notion that sustainability is the future. Thus, the organisations and nations integrating this thought into their framework will stay while the rest of them will have to slowly fade away. In the Indian perspective, this is even more critical on two counts: 1) We are in the twilight zone between developed and developing worlds, moving towards the former, and 2) The globe is looking up to us on our sustainability agenda.

**Sustainability goals: The Indian challenges:** The sustainable development goals (SDG) have proved to be the watershed point in mainstreaming sustainability goals into federal strategy. The global community will put all out effort in achiev-

## Policy makers and corporates need to work towards achieving sustainable development goals

ing the targets set out in the 17 SDGs. It is opined that the achievements of Millennium Development Goals (MDG) were propelled by China and India will have a role to play for similar impact of SDGs.

In the Indian context, these 17 SDGs transform into many programmes that the government has already rolled out. The real challenge shall be in their implementation linked with the Five-year plans and achieving the objectives set out in each of these programmes. The better outreach we achieve will be an indicator of our success in the quest to make our development a sustainable one.

**Commitment to combat climate change:** The Indian government has clearly defined its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) that reflect the nation's willingness to shoulder the responsibility for climate adaptation for the globe setting aside the developed versus developing world debate. Our commitment to reduce the emission intensity of our GDP by 33-35 per cent by 2030 from 2005 level, is an ambitious target. This will only be possible by technology adoption by the manufacturing sector propelled by an enabling policy regime. So essentially, this will call for greater synergy between policy makers and industry players as well as partnerships for technology development, R&D and deployment.

The Indian government has championed the cause of biodiversity conservation globally. Its target to create an additional carbon sink of 2.5-3 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030, is an indication to that. We have ourselves been contributing to this by undertaking plantation activity around the Chennai area to support social forestry among subsistence farmers.

**Skilling of young India:** To increase India's competitiveness and for its sustainable economic growth, having a skilled workforce is extremely critical. In the wake of the changing economic environment, there is a dire need to fo-

cus on imparting and advancing the skill sets of the young population of the country. And, currently, we lag far behind in skilling our youth, as compared to other countries.

Realising this need the government, under National Skill Development Council (NSDC), has made elaborate and integrated plans for skilling the working population, especially the 144 million youth in 18-23 age bracket, to enable them to contribute to the country's growth process. However, reaching out and educating the young population in the rural and remote parts of the country, would be our biggest challenge.

**Manufacturing excellence - 'Zero defect, zero effect':**

The Prime Minister's clarion call to 'Make in India' holds enormous promise for a sustainable future of the country and to radically transform the Indian economy. 'Zero defect, zero effect' is a key phrase which has come to be associated with the Make in India campaign. In the words of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, "Let us think about making our product which has 'zero defect'... and 'zero effect' so that the manufacturing does not have an adverse effect on our environment". Such manufacturing excellence can lead to sustain-

able development in the country, as it imposes high-quality manufacturing standards, in addition to minimising environmental and ecological impact.

According to a recent report by Global Compact Network of India and Accenture, two-thirds of CEOs of Indian companies believe in sustainability to be the key for the success of their businesses, and surprisingly, less than half think business is making sufficient efforts to address global sustainability challenges. Considering this, it is our imperative to further push on the sustainability agenda among the Indian corporate fraternity. While this will propel sustainability embedded models, it will also help in realising the national development goals. **BW**

The author is chairman, Apollo Tyres

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