

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES

Prof. Ashish H.Hore
Yavatmal

Abstract

This is one of the most important and relatable topic in current scenario of business environment. In the past few centuries, human progress and development have been significant such that even the poorest and the least developed countries have focussed on substantial improvements in living standards, health care and access to education. However, all this development came with minimum regard to social evolution and environmental protection. But in the long run such form of development is unsustainable. In this process private sector is a key stakeholder having significant impact on the sustainability effort. The research paper consists of three sections in which the first section examines the concept of sustainable practices - its origin, definition and taxonomy. The second section explains reason of focus on sustainable business practices. The third and final section explores on the ways in which sustainability can be practiced by businesses. It provides a comparison of the various frameworks, guidelines, standards and tools by asking few questions. The aim of this paper is to make a case for sustainable business practices.

Keywords: Sustainable Business Practices, Business Framework, Business Tools, Business Guideline.

Introduction

Sustainable business practices is quickly gaining popularity and becoming a mega trend, particularly in the western developed countries. The reason behind it is simple, a wide range of social and environmental problems impacts the global community today. Social inequality, unequal distribution of wealth, failing economics, war and conflict, gender inequality, lack of education, rampant poverty, changing climate, habitat loss, species loss, ecological loss etc. Much of these problems can be addressed if the private sector adopts more sustainable business practices. These problems are especially acute in developing and less developed countries. In 2015 the United Nations declared seventeen goals for the global community to achieve. These came to be known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set two decades earlier (UNDP, n.d.). The seventeen goals are aimed at addressing these very same issues affecting the global communities today. Various stakeholders have taken up the responsibility to address these issues at the local, national and international levels. They include the government, non governmental organizations, non profit organizations, educational institutes, research institutes, consumer bodies, scientific and technological community and the private sector i.e. business and industry. Out of these stakeholders, the private sector is viewed to be one of the most influential and dominant force having the most significant impact in achieving these goals (Lucci, 2012). Indeed much of the current problems has its roots in the practices and policies of the private sector so much so that it has called into question the entire notion of capitalism and free markets (Dawood & Menghwar, 2017). It is beyond the

purview of this paper to discuss the merits and demerits of the prevailing form of capitalism. It is certain without a shred of doubt is the enormous impact of the private sector on these issues. Climate science has clearly linked industrial activities with the change in global climate which has wide repercussions in so many areas - global warming, fresh water scarcity, ecological damage, loss of species etc. Hence, business cannot continue as usual. There is a profound need to re-examine, re-assess, and re-think, business values, priorities and practices.

Literature Review

In contemporary times characterized by increasing environmental challenges and a rising social consciousness, firms are compelled to include sustainable business practices into their corporate strategies in order to ensure long-term sustainability and relevance. The objective of this literature review is to present a thorough examination of the fundamental concepts, theories, and empirical research related to sustainable business practices, with a particular emphasis on their crucial significance in modern corporate strategy. International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR) E-ISSN: 2582-2160 • Website: www.ijfmr.com • Email: editor@ijfmr.com IJFMR23068098 Volume 5, Issue 6, November-December 2023. Defining Sustainable Business Practices Sustainable business practices encompass the implementation of ecologically and socially responsible policies, strategies, and operations within an organizational framework. The notion of the "Triple Bottom Line" was first established by Elkington in 1998. Elkington said that corporations should not just focus on financial performance, but also consider their effects on the environment and society. The tripartite paradigm presented herein

elucidates the inherent interdependencies among the economic, environmental, and social elements, which are crucial for attaining sustained organizational prosperity. • **Environmental Responsibility and Conservation** Environmental responsibility is a fundamental aspect of sustainable business practices, involving the reduction of adverse ecological effects and the preservation of natural resources. This includes several endeavors such as enhancing energy efficiency, minimizing waste generation, mitigating pollution, and embracing the use of renewable energy sources (Bibri & Krogstie, 2020). The literature has demonstrated a significant association between the implementation of environmentally responsible practices and the overall performance of organizations, as evidenced by empirical investigations (Suganthi, 2019). Furthermore, the implementation of eco-efficient processes not only results in financial benefits by reducing costs, but also has the potential to improve brand reputation and reduce regulatory concerns (Dragomir, 2019). • **Social Responsibility and Stakeholder Engagement** The concept of social responsibility encompasses not just an organization's internal operations, but also its engagements with other stakeholders such as employees, communities, consumers, and suppliers. This involves the cultivation of equitable labor practices, the advancement of diversity and inclusion, active participation in philanthropic endeavors, and the establishment of ethical supply chain management. According to Wulur & Mandagi (2023), empirical evidence suggests that firms that exhibit a sincere dedication to social responsibility see improvements in their reputation, the ability to attract and retain high-performing employees, and the cultivation of customer loyalty. This literature review offers a comprehensive examination of the fundamental aspects and empirical discoveries pertaining to sustainable business practices and their incorporation into corporate strategy. The statement highlights the significant impact that sustainability may have on fostering innovation, improving brand reputation, and attaining sustained organizational success. The interaction of environmental responsibility, social involvement, and strategic integration constitutes the fundamental basis of a comprehensive approach to sustainability. In the future, enterprises that place emphasis on sustainable practices are well-positioned to not only manage the intricacies of the evolving paradigm but also to flourish within a dynamic and linked global business landscape.

Research Methodology The selection and

implementation of a research methodology play a vital role in ensuring the strength and credibility of the analysis conducted in the study of sustainable business practices. This section provides an overview of the research design, data collection methods, and analytical tools employed in the examination of the incorporation of environmental and social responsibility into corporate strategy.

Research Design

The study used a mixed-methods design, integrating qualitative and quantitative procedures. The hybrid approach employed in this study facilitates a thorough investigation into the several aspects of sustainable business practices. The qualitative component is employed to gain a comprehensive grasp of the subject matter, whereas the quantitative component serves to validate the findings statistically and establish their generalizability. Utilization of this approach aids in the identification of fundamental concepts, theoretical frameworks, and empirical discoveries that are pertinent to the incorporation of environmental and social responsibility into corporate strategy.

Content Analysis The content analysis methodology is applied to examine the reports, publications, and sustainability disclosures of specific organizations. The process entails a methodical examination of textual material in order to discern repeating themes, trends, and patterns pertaining to sustainable business operations. The utilization of content analysis facilitates the identification of subtle and intricate insights derived from organizational papers and reports.

Quantitative Research Methods

1. **Survey** A comprehensive survey is conducted on a varied sample of organizations from various industries. The purpose of the survey is to measure the extent to which sustainable business practices are implemented and their influence on the overall performance of organizations. The survey encompasses inquiries pertaining to environmental efforts, social responsibility programs, and their incorporation within company strategy.
2. **Statistical Analysis** Descriptive statistics, including measures such as the mean, median, and standard deviation, are commonly employed to provide a concise summary of survey data. In the realm of statistical analysis, inferential statistics, such as regression analysis, are utilized to ascertain the connections between sustainable business practices and the outcomes experienced by organizations. The present study employs quantitative analysis to empirically validate the qualitative insights obtained from case studies and interviews.