

Q&A with Tata Power’s Chief of Sustainability & Corp. Comm., Ms. Shalini Singh, on their sustainability initiatives, thought-process & achievements

Q. Tell us about the initiatives that Tata Power is doing in sustainability?

A. Over its 100 legendary years of existence, Tata Power has set a standard in adopting sustainable practices within its core business domain. Tata Power’s approach to ‘Sustainability’ is to make it the company’s key differentiator and give an edge to the company’s strategic investment, leading to social progress, financial returns, enhanced stakeholder relations, and better environmental management. It is currently focusing growth through renewables and has 33.7% of its capacity (in MW terms) in clean and green generation sources. The target is to maintain 40-50% of its total generation capacity to be sourced from non-fossil fuel-based generation by 2025, as per the Company’s strategic intent.

As a responsible company, Tata Power addresses global long-term challenges such as climate change and diminishing resources in a socially, ecologically and economically responsible manner. Decarbonization is one of the sustainability levers for Tata Power and in alignment with this, it provides low carbon customer solutions like electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, solar rooftop solutions, microgrids etc. Under the Tree Mittra afforestation initiative, Tata Power conducts massive plantation drives as compensatory afforestation for greenhouse gas abatement. It established the EV charging stations in Mumbai, Delhi and Hyderabad, covering power supply, back-end power supply infrastructure and customized EV charging solutions, thus supporting the Indian Government’s ‘National Electric Mobility Mission’.

Tata Power is truly aligned to the concept of Circular Economy. Not only has it adopted it for the operations but has also extended it to the entire stakeholder value chain, as depicted below.



Also, Tata Power gives utmost importance to sustainable water management with targets on minimization of specific water consumption, maximizing reuse and recycle, and replenishing water. Our Jojobera and Maithon plants are compliant to Zero Liquid Discharge and most of our plants are equipped with rain-water harvesting structures. Tata Power has been diligently ensuring fly ash utilization into making of fly ash-based paint, geopolymeric cement, waste plastic-based bricks. In addition, Tata Power has secured strategic partnerships with Pro India Recycling, Vesac India and WBSCD and Karo Sambhav for waste management.

Q. What are some of the milestones or achievements of Tata Power in its journey towards sustainability?

A. Tata Power has had an enriching sustainability journey with the institutionalization of a robust Sustainability Governance which led to the development of the sustainability strategy and the sustainability model of 'Leadership with Care'.

It has achieved business integration with the UN-Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) through a comprehensive SDG mapping study involving SDG prioritization, roadmap setting and dashboard creation, thus making Tata Power a thought-leader in the sustainability space. The study helped identify business and CSR SDGs material to the Company.

Tata Power has adopted three-year targets for each prioritized business SDGs viz. SDG 7 Affordable & Clean Energy, SDG 9 Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure, SDG 12 Responsible Consumption & Production, SDG 13 Climate Action. Tata Power is probably the only company in India which has not only mapped its initiatives with the SDGs but charted a way forward by creating roadmap and adopted targets on each of the prioritized business SDGs.

Tata Power's flagship biodiversity conservation program began in 1970s and is perhaps the oldest conservation program spearheaded by any business in India. More than 1 million Mahseer fingerlings were produced in the last 3 years of which 0.5 million were dispatched to various states across India, where they ensure 60% survival rate. Our involvement in the conservation of mahseer has shown that long-term commitment leads to commendable results. The sustainability of the program for more than 40 years is an indicator of its success and its acceptability.

As the next level for species conservation, Tata Power undertook the Humpback Mahseer project, an endemic and critically endangered mahseer species found only in the Cauvery river basin. Due to Tata Power's efforts, the Humpback Mahseer got a scientific name called *Tor Remadevii*. This is a crucial step needed to further channel conservation efforts by the government around the Kaveri basin. It is also a key step in placing the fish in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

Tata Power has been a pioneer in running a national movement on energy conservation for the past 10 year known as Club-Enerji. Club-Enerji has established a network of 533 schools in 14 cities where 0.7 million school children have sensitized over 23 million citizens in India to save 25 million units till date, leading to the mitigation of over 25,000 tonnes of CO₂.

Q. Many companies in India still view sustainability as a part of CSR, i.e. something that affects 2% of the profits. But sustainability is a bigger canvas than CSR. How can a paradigm change be brought about in their mind-set ?

A. Tata Power has always focused on differentiating itself from its competitors with an endeavour to be transparent, sensitive and caring to the needs and requirements of the stakeholders. This has, over the long term, become an important competitive advantage for Tata Power as the community in the vicinity of a project or a plant, discerning customers, business partners, and other concerned people, all prefer to associate themselves with

Tata Power's brand which cares about long-term sustainability and societal good. Sustainability is hence a core element of the Tata Power strategy.

Tata Power's focus on CSR was never compliance/or expenditure driven. Instead, our vision is to make Tata Power the 'Neighbour of Choice' of communities and earning the right to co-exist and co-create by working jointly for social well-being and improving the quality of life. With this vision, Tata Power's has focused on scalability and the replication of its CSR initiatives has positively impacted 2.24 million lives.

It is in the best interest of every business to contribute towards the sustainability of stakeholders. Building sustainable relationships with the neighbouring community allows social harmony and mutual co-existence. It is therefore essential for all businesses to approach the communities with sensitivity, to develop alliances for sustainable development programs that substantially improve the quality of life.

Q. What are the opportunities for collaborations that development agencies/partners have with Tata Power in sustainability?

A. Tata Power's strategic partnerships with WBCSD, ICSI, IABC, ABCI, UNDP, NABARD, and Government agencies have helped in streamlining sustainability with the national goals. Tata Power has also represented causes like resource conservation, women empowerment and business responsibility at various national and international forums of repute such as Global Sustainable Electricity Partnership, United Nations Global Compact, TEDx-IIMA, NITI Aayog, ESG Matters-Asia Panel Series (Bank of Merrill Lynch) and CSR Live Week.

While these collaborations have proved valuable, Tata Power is on a constant lookout for benchmarking and learning in an endeavor to improve existing sustainable initiatives or introduce new ones, with the help of exemplary knowledge partners.

Q. How do you see the talent availability in business sustainability in India?

A. The talent pool in India in the area of business sustainability is ever expanding and I truly believe that there is no dearth of talent availability. In today's age of social media, the millennials have adequately learnt and subscribed to the concepts of sustainability and are already leading a sustainable lifestyle. Also, reputed B-Schools are grooming students to be environmental conscious and consider social responsibilities. Therefore, with marginal intervention, young talent can be primed to develop the sustainability mindset required for any business.

We have had students coming from London School of Economics, Berkeley University, IIM Ahmedabad and IIM Indore for various sustainability projects. The students have been involved in creating solutions to address sustainability and social issues in the larger interest of stakeholders, and their diverse geographic exposure only adds on to their quality of work.

Q. Is triple bottom-line achievable, or does it need more tweaking for implementation?

A. Over the last few years, sustainability has shifted from boardrooms to grassroots and its effectiveness will determine the future quality of our lives. The understanding of this change is at the very core of the role of anyone working on sustainability. On similar lines, the triple bottom line approach of People, Planet and Profit has also metamorphosed into the capital/value based approach in the current scenario. The capital/ value based approach is about how a business creates value for itself and for its stakeholders in long term horizon.

Tata Power is fulfilling its commitments to sustainability through its motto of 'Leadership with Care'. We believe 'Leadership with Care' is the right way forward towards the sustainable value creation methodology. Care is one of the core values which entrusts Care for Environment, Care for Community, Care for Customers and Care for People in Tata Power's Sustainability model. The model aims to strengthen structures and processes for

environmental performance, stronger engagement with community, customers and employees, by using enablers like new technology, benchmarking and going beyond compliance in key operational parameters.

Q. In your view, how can other South Asian markets benefit from Tata Power's sustainability efforts? Do you see the scope of cooperation on these aspects?

A. Tata Power's approach to 'Sustainability' is unique & renowned in the industry and aligned to global SDGs. It gives an edge to the company and helps to keep it grounded and focused on the core competency of operational excellence without compromising on the nuances of resource conservation, social value creation and stakeholder engagement.

Tata Power would be open to seek opportunities to collaborate with neighbouring developing economies in working towards the global SDGs, CSR areas of importance where we can jointly contribute to the important topics like climate change, women empowerment and the social upliftment of marginalised communities. Together, I am sure we can make a positive change and make our effort count.