

# A VIEWPOINT ON SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES OF COLES AND WOOLWORTHS DURING COVID-19

**Asmat Ara Shaikh, Assistant Professor, Bharati Vidyapeeth Institute of Management Studies and Research, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra  
M.Z. Shaikh, Principal, Shri Vile Parle Kelavani Mandal's Shri Bhagubhai Mafatlal Polytechnic**

## ABSTRACT

*This study explores and describes the best sustainability practices of Australian-based world's most considerable retail groups Cole's supermarket and Woolworths's supermarket towards environmental, social, and governance issues during Covid-19. This article highlights the FY 20 sustainability materiality assessment report to understand the substantive issues associated with stakeholders, customers, employees, and society.*

*This is a viewpoint-based article in which authors referred to FY-20 Sustainability report social media, government, and industry trends focused on both the groups' key role to play with captivating towards achieving sustainable results as well as concentrating fiercely on areas where change can be created to achieve desired outcomes and to fulfil the needs of teams, suppliers, customers, and communities to convey positive differences during pandemic COVID-19.*

**Keywords:** Sustainability, COVID-19, Marketing, Coles, Woolworths.

## INTRODUCTION

### Sustainability Practices: ECG Framework

According to the latest McKinsey Global Survey, companies are gradually formalizing and governing sustainable programs as well as uplifting the significance of diversity and inclusion and implementation of sustainability agenda with better alignment between the organization's goals, missions, values, and organization's practices. (Bonini & Swartz, 2014). Address the significance of sustainability management in harmonizing between the current trade practices and environmental, social, and economic responsibilities (Kaptein & Wempe, 2001). Business integrities have engrossed in professed trade-offs between self-regard and ethics (Ulrich, 2008). Many authors support a win-win model that preserves the budding congruence between self-regard (or trade profit-centric) and ethical objectives (Husted & de Jesus Salazar, 2006). According to stakeholder theory that companies must carefully consider the interest of all stakeholders in all business-related activities directly or indirectly to achieve sustainable value over a period. In precise, companies are responsible for functioning in the interest of all stakeholders (Freeman, 1984.)

But on the other hand, dissatisfaction in any stakeholder in a group might have a negative impact on financial outcomes as well as can put a firm's survival at risk (Clarkson, 2016) . Stakeholder theory mainly focused on the healthy association between the company and its stakeholders, each one of them equally considered and contented to achieve sustainable value in the long term (Freeman, et al., 2010). Retailers and FMCG-goods manufacturers have to commit towards environmental and social goals more. It can be in many ways – either it's fair-

trade practices, fair distribution of products, packaging, and quality of raw materials used, guaranteeing good humane conditions at suppliers as well as factories. Because of the distributed nature of the financial, social, and environmental impact and many companies are stressed upon how to measure the financial impact of their social and environmental inventiveness. Investment and profit raised from sustainability efforts are usually based on various activities of an organization. Hence it is always advisable to hire an executive who can keep the record of cost and profit of sustainability action (Berg, 2015). Sustainability is equally important for supermarkets and all other organizations. SMEs are taking the help of social media tools to achieve sustainability (Kumar & Ayedee, 2019). During COVID-19, the marketing strategies of many companies were affected; many firms are running out of cash (Kumar, et al., 2020). In that time, social media tools and other online resources can help organizations to improve their marketing practices (Kumar & Ayedee, 2018). There are challenges in adoption, but for effective operations, those challenges need to be encounter (Kumar & Ayedee, 2021). Organizations need to look towards technology because technology can also help them in reducing the impact of climate change (Kumar & Ayedee, 2021). The education sector is doing well during COVID-19 because they can reach their stakeholders with the help of online conferences and apps (Ayedee & Kumar, 2020). The supermarkets also need to reach their customers through technical means. One can take learning from Xiaomi's business model, which is entirely based on technological means. Xiaomi is doing well with the help of online distributors (Kumar, et al., 2020). The supermarkets need to improve their online customer relationship management (Kumar, 2020).

### **Coles Group Sustainability practices during COVID-19**

During COVID-19, for every organization, priorities were clear. The ultimate purpose of Coles group is the safety, health, and wellbeing of employees, customers, stakeholders. To feed all Australians sustainably and help them to live healthier and happier lives. All Coles supermarkets are well equipped with “automatic external defibrillators (AED)” used to aid customers or team members during a sudden cardiac attack. Helped to raise more than \$5.2 million funds (Coles Group, 2021) from beanies and fresh Coles Brand pork sales to support research into discovering effective treatments and a remedy for “motor neuron disease (MND).” The initiative took for the mental health of team members during COVID-19. Coles launched Community Hours to deliver elderly and helpless members of the community and enhanced access to supermarket stores to purchase vital groceries with a safer shopping experience. During Covid-19 lockdown to meet demand as well as create jobs opportunity by hiring added service agents to deliver online. Provided 2000 convenience meals in association with “Collingwood Football Club and the Salvation Army.” Coles helps and donates 50 tons of food and grocery essentials to isolated Native communities across the Northern Territory. They have raised \$7.9m extra for food and grocery donation to “Second Bite and Foodbank” and 2,200 care packages for the underprivileged community during COVID-19 (Coles Group, 2021).

Since 2013 Coles has a partnership with “National Children’s Cancer Charity-Red kite to extend counselling services, financial, information resources, education, and career support to children who have cancer. During COVID -19, Coles donated 50cents from every pack of Coles branded cookies and biscuits. During COVID-19, priority to prevent food waste and partners with “Second Bite and Foodbank” to deliver unsold eatable food to Australians in crises. Within five days on the weekend of Anzac Day in April 2020, Coles Groups has raised \$232,000 (Coles Group, 2021) for “Bravery trust” to provide moral support to previous and existing Austrian servicemen and women with medical expenses, food coupons, energy bills, and education expenses.

## Woolworths Group Sustainability Practices During COVID-19

For everyone, FY-20 has been the most challenging year, depicting the significance of a sustainable business model. With the help of Australia Post and DHL Supply Chain, Woolworth Groups created 'Basic Box' comprises meals, snacks, and essentials. They were providing home delivery services and steadfast assistance to the older people living with incapacity and those in required isolation. Three hundred fifty thousand customers have benefited from "Priority Assistance" to date (Woolworths Group, 2020). They are introducing dedicated shopping hours for the old and disabled customers as well as community hours for the healthcare workforce.

It is providing employment from affected businesses to meet the demands of the community and business. In the month of March, Covid-19 was at its high peak and need to supply hand sanitizer, so Woolworths Group has helped local supplied 300,000 liters of hand sanitizer (Woolworths Group, 2020). During COVID-19, supply food to remotely situated native communities. The first wave of COVID-19 established 'Countdown' food as well as bestowed \$1 million to food release and food welfare charity allies to help them in immensely augmented demand for food sustenance and help them instantly to operate it (Woolworths Group, 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, Woolworths Group has a Partnership with "Australian food services supplier PFD" to care for the temporary execution of orders to B2B customers and crucial services, including day-care centres, schools, and nursing homes.

## REFERNCES

- Ayedee, N. & Kumar, A., (2020). Indian Education System and growing number of online Conferences: Scenario under COVID-19. *Asian Journal of Management*, 11(4), pp. 395-401.
- Berg, A.S.N. a. S.M., (2015). Getting the most out of your sustainability program. McKinsey. Retrieved, , Volume 6, p. 2019.
- Bonini, S. & Swartz, S., (2014). Profits with purpose: How organizing for sustainability can benefit the bottom line.. McKinsey on Sustainability & Resource Productivity, Volume 2, pp. 1-15.
- Clarkson, M., (2016). A stakeholder framework for analysing and evaluating corporate social performance. Toronto, University of Toronto Press.
- Coles Group, (2021). (2020) Sustainability Report: Winning Together, s.l.: Coles Group.
- Freeman, R., (1984). Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Perspective. s.l., Pitman, Boston, MA.
- Freeman, R. et al., (2010). Stakeholder Theory: The State of the Art. UK: Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Husted, B. & de. Jesus Salazar, J., (2006). Taking Friedman seriously: Maximizing profits and social performance..*Journal of Management studies*, 43(1), 75-91.
- Kaptein, M. & Wempe, J., (2001). Sustainability management: Balancing conflicting economic, environmental and social corporate responsibilities. *Journal of Corporate Citizenship*, Volume 2, pp. 91-106.
- Kumar, A., 2020. Effective Usage of E-CRM and Social Media Tools by Akshay Kumar: Most Prolific Bollywood Actor of Last Decade. *International Journal of Management* , 11(2).
- Kumar, A. & Ayedee, N., (2018). Social Media tools for business growth of SMEs. *Journal of Management*, 5(3), 137-142.
- Kumar, A. & Ayedee, N., (2019). Sustainable development in SMEs through social media channels. *International Journal of Management, Technology and Engineering*, 9(6), pp. 1066-1075.
- Kumar, A. & Ayedee, N., (2021). An Interconnection between COVID-19 and Climate Change Problem. *Journal of Statistics and Management Systems*, pp. 1-21.
- Kumar, A. & Ayedee, N., (2021). Technology Adoption: A Solution for SMEs to overcome problems during COVID-19. *Academy of Marketing Studies Journal*, 25(1), pp. 1-16.
- Kumar, A., Ayedee, N. & Gupta, N. (2020). Xiaomi's Journey in India: A Roller Coaster Ride. *International Journal of Management*, 11(3).
- Kumar, A., Syed, A.A. & Pandey, A., (2020). How Adoption of Online Resources Can Help Indian SMEs in Improving Performance during COVID-19 Pandemic. *Test Engineering and Management*, 83(83), pp. 3394-3400.

- Ulrich, P., (2008). *Integrative economic ethics: Foundations of a civilized market economy..* s.l.:Cambridge University Press.
- Woolworths Group, (2020). *Committed to a better tomorrow: 2020 Sustainability Report*, s.l.: Woolworths Group.