

Role of Social Media Platforms in Sustainable Development of Organizations: A Conceptual Study

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ABSTRACT

Individuals, groups, organizations, the public, and governments at the local, regional, national, and global levels must all work together to achieve sustainable development. Sustainable development is a global aim that affects every city, region, and country. This isn't just for a few years, but for the foreseeable future or maybe the whole future. As a result, it has a broad geographical and temporal reach. It necessitates global thinking as well as local action. As information and communication technology evolve, mediated communication emerges, facilitating the development of relationships and spreading concern for long-term sustainability. Individuals may now interact with hundreds or even thousands of individuals all over the world about their ideas, views, businesses, services, and culture due to social media. By enabling the quick transmission of information obtained from one contact to all others, social media facilitate viral marketing of ideas, events, and organizations. The traditional media has played a significant role in raising awareness about the concept of sustainable development from the early 1990s. However, with the advent of social media, which spreads sustainable development ideas through peer learning, this tendency has shifted. In this study, researcher will explore the usefulness and role of social media platforms in the sustainable development of SMEs and in raising public awareness about sustainable development initiatives in this environment.

Keywords: Socialmedia, Sustainable Development, Small and Medium Enterprises, Marketing, Communication, Environmental Protection.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable business practices are being explored by communities, individuals, organizations, governments, NGOs, and corporate leaders. People are confronted with the challenge of natural resource depletion, global warming, and climate change, necessitating the usage of sustainable business strategies (Damtoft, Lukasik, Herfort, Sorrentino, & Gartner, 2008). Development is a necessity for civilization, but it cannot be at the expense of natural resources. Given the rate at which natural resources are disappearing, future generations will find it difficult to access those resources. Fears of climate change, global warming, and natural resource depletion are driving the globe toward more environmentally friendly and sustainable economic practices. There are several approaches to achieving long-term development. SMEs are one of the most important drivers of economic development in any country. SMEs are also the main drivers of India's economic development. Manufacturing, infrastructure, food industry, chemicals, Khadi, village, and coir industries are all part of India's SMEs sector. In India, there are roughly 63 million SMEs, including registered and unregistered. A total of 80 million individuals are employed by SMEs. It accounts for over 45% of the Indian workforce. MSMEs in India account for around 45 percent of the country's GDP (Haryana Policy, 2019). The MSME sector currently accounts for 6% percent of Country's GDP and 33% of the manufacturing output and 45% of the exports. (As per Haryana MSME Policy, 2019). The MSME sector is facing growing competition, insufficient funding, and a lack of other resources. The use of social media platforms may help SMEs overcome difficulties in a variety of ways. Social media platforms can assist SMEs in attaining their sustainability goals while working with a restricted budget. Sajid et.al (2016) in their study suggested that use of social media becomes necessary for individuals, business in all sectors such as education, health, profit and non-profit organizations. Marketers can blog on social media platforms which can have a positive effect on your company's marketing and development.

Social Media:

In virtual communities and networks, social media refers to the mechanism through which individuals produce,

share, and/or exchange information, ideas, photos, and videos. From shopping to electronic mail, education, and business, social media has become an integral aspect of one's life. People may readily interact with each other through social media, which includes social networking sites and blogs (Shabnoor Siddiqui and Tajinder Singh, 2016). The way we see ourselves, others, and interact with the world around us has all changed as a result of social media. Many beneficial effects of social media may be seen, such as raising awareness for certain issues, advertising companies, and fostering connections between people who might not have met otherwise (Shellabarger, 2016). Social media platforms are being used by 4.65 billion individuals throughout the world. Users spent \$154 billion on social media advertising, and 58.4% of the world's population uses mobile devices to make purchases (Global Report on Digital 2022). The advent of social media as a means of communication has ushered in a paradigm shift throughout the world, allowing users to monitor, interact, and exchange information. The advent of social media as a new technology has transformed the way companies function, which has had a huge impact on their organization's and the world's long-term sustainability. The researcher will examine the usefulness and role of social media in the sustainable development of small and medium scale enterprises.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kumar and Ayedee (2019) explored the use of social media platforms for sustainable development and their influence on the organization's sustainable strategy. This study relies exclusively on secondary data. This study examined research papers published after 2010 on the subject of "sustainability, social media, and SMEs." They searched the Ebsco and Pro-Quest databases for past research articles and case studies. This article found that social media may be utilized for sustainable development since it offers several benefits in the areas of marketing, promotion, communication, waste reduction, and connection building.

Balaswamy and Palvai (2017) investigated the extent to which social media contributes to sustainable development and how it brings like-minded individuals together and motivates them to take collective action. This research is based on an examination of previously published articles on the role of social media in supporting sustainable development. While sustainable development is an integrated and holistic approach that requires the participation of individuals, groups, organizations, the public, and governments at the individual, local, regional, national, and global levels, social media can aid in the achievement of sustainable development goals. According to the findings of this study, information and counselling services provided through interactive forums on websites, free direct calls, and interactive social networking will certainly become more essential in the forthcoming. **Omen (2020)** conducted a literature research to gather insights about the use of social media platforms to meet the objective of sustainable development. This study also examined the usefulness of social media platforms for long-term sustainability. The conclusion of the study demonstrated that social media platforms may assist achieve the aims of sustainable development. Social media technologies may play an essential part in reaching sustainability goals. These tools may link communities, organisations, customers, and students, among others, in a single thread dedicated to environmental sustainability.

Wagh (2019) investigated the impact of media in achieving sustainable development goals. This article indicated that the most essential communication instrument, given in many forms, particularly mass media, has played a significant influence in moulding attitudes and knowledge of the SDGs. In order to disseminate scientific information to the people, mass media businesses and advertising agencies use a range of media, including print, electronic, internet, radio, and a variety of new media. However, because electronic media is the most widely consumed medium these days, it efficiently prepares a group for introducing innovation and reinforcing messaging. Electronic media are rapidly and successfully sharing information about the SDGs with the assistance of government officials, environmental activists, scientists, businessmen, and broadcasters, who have set the agenda for raising awareness about the SDGs. This study indicated that media may play a critical role in raising awareness and accomplishing SDGs through various concepts, gimmicks, and new techniques, taking into account the public's receptive receptivity.

Jones, Borgman&Ulusoy (2014) discovered the role and economic impact that the internet, specifically websites and social media, have on small businesses. It aimed to investigate the benefits of the internet and social media usage for small businesses that operate in underserved regions. The research employed a case study methodology grounded on two surveys and semi-structured interviews with the owners or managers of five small companies in the western mountain region of Maine, underserved region. Findings of the study demonstrated that the benefits derived from the usage of internet and social media websites consist of an increase in awareness and inquiries, enhanced relationships with customers, an increase in the number of new customers, enhanced ability to reach customers on a global scale, and co-promotion of local businesses that enhance the image of small businesses in the region. This study suggested that internet technologies and social media can help stressed small businesses to communicate with mass customers in a cost-effective manner and it opens the new opportunities for sales and growth.

Dilhan& Ibrahim (2014) aimed to analyze the role of social media for small & medium enterprises as a new marketing strategy tool for the firm's performance. This study compared & analyzed the four American and Turkish companies, Facebook & Twitter accounts in terms of the number of likes and followers, richness of content, interaction with customers & the use of language. The findings of this study suggested the common problems of Turkish SME's related to using formal language in the communication process, lacking the richness of content. On the other hand, American SME's were less effective in using Twitter when compared to their Facebook accounts.

Researchgap

The use of social media in business is increasing, although it is still mostly confined to huge corporations. The application of social media techniques for the purpose of promoting sustainability is still in its infancy. There is small amount of research is available on how to use social media technologies to achieve sustainable development goals. As a result, the purpose of this study is to examine the role of social media platforms in raising awareness of the organization's sustainable development goals and efforts in India.

Objectives of the Study:

The objective of the research study is to examine the usefulness and role of social media for the sustainable development of small and medium scale enterprises.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research design has adopted in the study. Secondary data has been collected through, previously published research papers, company's websites, organization's profiles on the social media (Facebook, Instagram Etc.) and various reports. Researcher thoroughly studied the previously published research papers on the topic of sustainability through social media channels and exclude the papers which are not related to the study.

Social Media, Sustainability and Small Scale Business

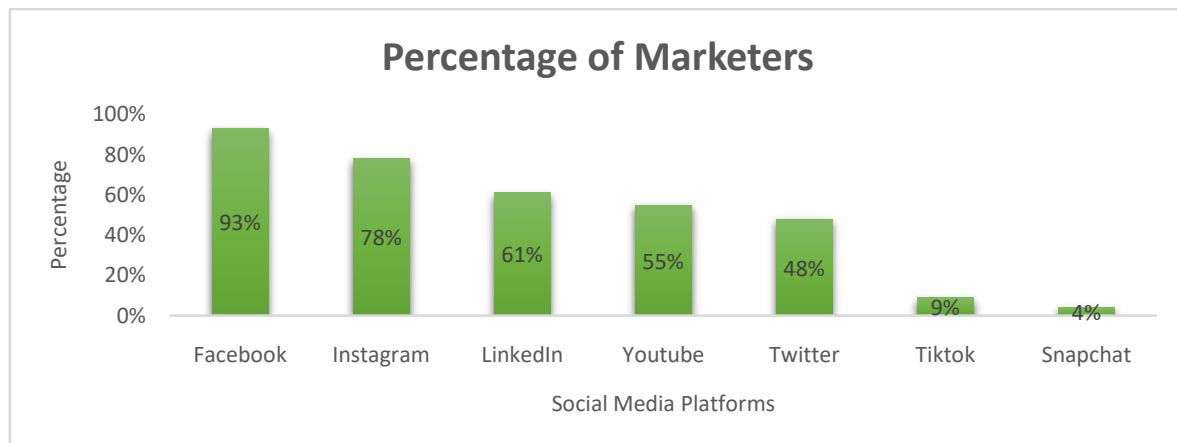


Several research on the topics of SMEs and sustainability have been conducted during the last several decades. However, there is no connection between the issues. SMEs want to adapt technology as well, but cumbersome procedures, danger, a lack of specialist services, and human technology are stumbling blocks. All of these issues may be addressed using social media technologies. The use of social media in many company operations can lead to sustainability, and it is less difficult and costly in nature. Social media platforms contribute to sustainability in a variety of ways. Because nothing is concealed behind closed doors, social media technologies improve authenticity. The information is transparent, as is the establishment. Social media platforms facilitate the gathering of people from various communities, understandings, backgrounds, ages, and nations. Social media platforms increase openness and encourage two-way conversation. These technologies enable businesses to easily communicate and disseminate information about sustainability activities.

People's attitudes toward sustainable development issues have shifted as a result of social media platforms. In one-way communication mode, previous media instruments such as television, radio, newspapers, and journals advocated for sustainable development. Social media, on the other hand, is building two-way communication through the use of various skill sets. Experts, connectors, and salespeople are the most popular skill sets. Mavens are experts in ideas, while connectors are experts in people.

Connectors know a wide range of people from many subcultures and locations. These individuals communicate with one another using social networking sites. In September 2015, the United Nations Assembly considered and endorsed 17 sustainable development objectives. Social media techniques may be used to educate people throughout the world about sustainable development goals. Because they are effective communication tools, these instruments propel the rise of sustainability. Organizations and individuals may communicate with a large number of people via social media. These tools also aid in the development of people's confidence in companies. The use of technology in social media platforms is reducing the necessity for paper in enterprises. The majority of the promotion effort and debates take place on social media tools, which saves the firm money. Social media platforms are really helpful in obtaining economies of scale.

Social media in sustainable marketing



Source: Statista.com

Businesses rely heavily on marketing. Marketers or business use social media platforms for different objectives as we can see there are 93% users used Facebook, highest utilizing platform for posting, sharing content regarding their marketing activities and sustainable development goals. Adoption of social media marketing tools will assist SMEs in reaching their aims of sustainable marketing as well as resisting competitive threats (Lee, Reynolds, & Kennon, 2008).

Small and medium-sized businesses face stiff market competition because they lack the marketing and promotional capabilities of large international corporations. Print media, newspapers, television advertisements, and other channels are examples of classic marketing tactics. Lee et al. conducted a descriptive research on the marketing techniques of bed and breakfast businesses in Texas. A total of 1,140 bed and breakfast establishments were investigated, and a random sample of 775 persons was acquired. According to the survey, word-of-mouth marketing is the most effective and major marketing approach. Nakara, Benmoussa, and Jaouen (2012) investigated the use of social media marketing for SMEs' business operations. Seven semi-structured interviews with web marketing experts, an online poll of 104 tourist owner managers, and ethnographic studies all generated encouraging outcomes for business managers (Nakara, Benmoussa, & Jaouen, 2012). According to the findings of the study, many SMEs are present on social media but do not use social media tools for marketing. The majority of SMEs have websites; however, they are not used for advertising. Resistance to shifting from traditional marketing approaches to social media marketing is also a problem. However, using social media technologies will boost SMEs' visibility, link them to a large number of clients, give a scope of globalization since the kind of their beginnings, and require fewer resources. All of the studies discovered that social media technologies aided SMEs in growing their businesses by increasing exposure, transparency, and lowering costs. All of these elements contribute to corporate sustainability. Marketers or business use social media platforms for different objectives as we can see in the graph, there are 93% users used Facebook, highest utilizing platform for posting, sharing content regarding their marketing activities and sustainable development goals.

Use of Social Media in Long-Term Communication

Another use of social media that can improve the long-term success of small and medium-sized businesses is in SMEs' communication. SMEs must also develop contact with their dealers, clients, agencies, and other social groups. Social media platforms can aid in the establishment of these communications. In terms of marketing, innovation, and cooperation, SMEs may improve their company performance and communication in the B2B setting. Social media platforms can also help to increase communication security. New innovation and company performance put pressure on SMEs. They may learn from large international corporations. These global corporations use social media platforms to connect with their customers about their long-term marketing goals. Walmart has developed eco-friendly products and services profile on social media. Traditional media channels such as print media and advertising did not allow for two-way connection between the firm and its clients, but social media channels are assisting enterprises in developing two-way communication. Posting photographs and videos on social media networks makes it simple to receive feedback on products and services.

Social Media and Environmental Protection "Our environment is a common resource, one that has increasingly been challenged by the fast development of extractive activities to meet up with demands fueled by consumerism and moulded by industry," Shannon Dosemagen (2017) highlighted. In general, technology has given us the

opportunity to modify some of our behaviors and conduct "greener" business, but we are still falling behind the rate of environmental changes caused by our abuse of resources. "Social media has become a significant instrument for giving a platform and means for the public to participate in influencing or opposing environmental choices that have historically been taken by governments and companies that impact us all." It has enabled individuals to relate local environmental concerns and solutions to larger-scale themes affecting us as a global society." Social media use among environmental groups is quickly gaining traction not just as a tool, but also as an image builder. The notion of electronic communication may project an image of "greenness" or sustainability in its communication techniques, and so may help to efforts to promote environmental conservation and preservation. The audience's perception of this is still being assessed. Nonetheless, it is expected that social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter will be equally valuable for environmental groups to get access to user mind space.

Companies Promoting Sustainable Development through Social Media Platforms:

HCL (Hindustan Computers Limited) is an Indian multinational IT firm. HCL was founded in 1976 as one of India's first IT start-ups. It is credited as the creator of modern computing, including the debut of personal computers based on an 8-bit Central processing unit in 1978.

"Bridging the Gap Between People, Planet, and Prosperity" HCL culture is centered on shaping and enhancing communities' economic, social, and financial futures. They have witnessed the impact of focusing on ESD aspects on company performance and society, and they ensure that these are in line with our growth goal and are entrenched in our implementation. (HCL, 2021 Sustainability Report). In India, Company created the HCL Foundation (HCLF) in 2011 as HCL Technologies' CSR arm. It is a value-driven non-profit organisation that contributes to specific national and international development goals in order to make a long-term good influence on people's lives through long-term sustainable projects.

HCL Samuday defines the Foundation's resolve to improve the lives and economic well-being of rural communities.

HCL Uday seeks to break the cycle of urban poverty through an integrated community development approach.

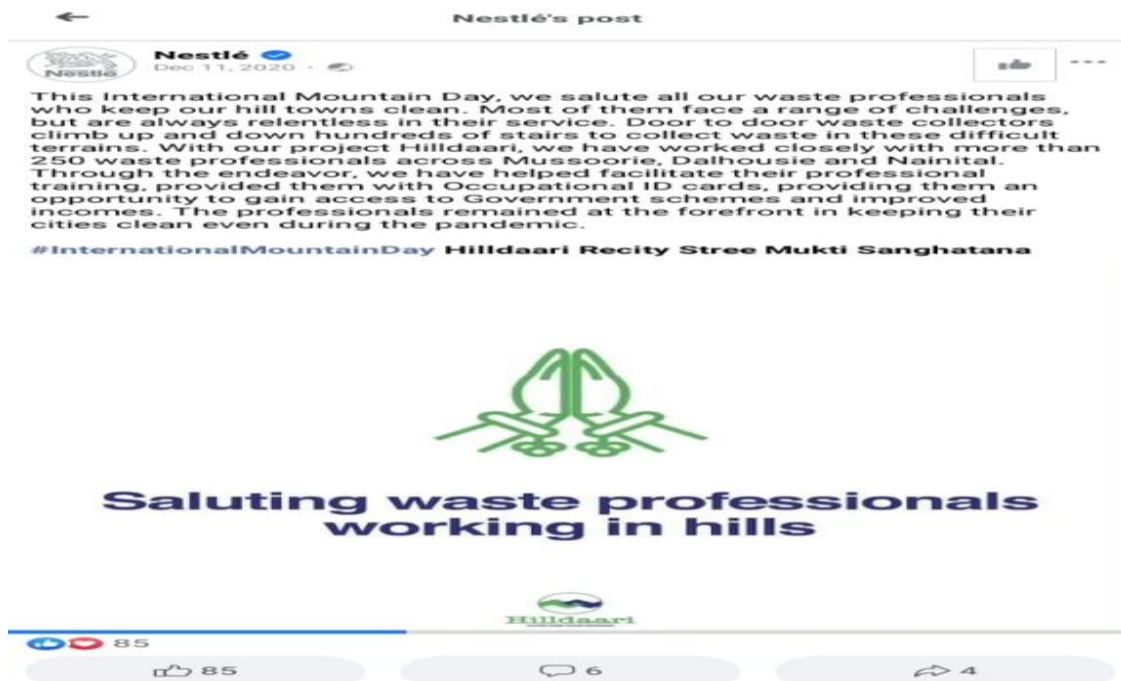
HCL Harit – The Green Initiative – is a flagship program for environmental action, with the vision to conserve, restore, and enhance indigenous environmental systems and respond to climate change in a sustainable manner through community engagement.



Nestle India: Nestle India is a dynamic company that delivers global-standard products to Indian consumers and is devoted to long-term sustainable growth and shareholder pleasure. After more than a century, Nestle now operates 8 production sites and 4 branch offices in India.

Water and Environmental Sustainability: "Our objective is to offer attractive and nutritious food and drinks with the smallest environmental imprint possible, thus we try to continually enhance operational efficiency and environmental performance" (www.nestle.in)

Nestle continues to collaborate with institutions with expertise in the field of research and outreach around the country to raise awareness about water conservation and sustainability. Through their presence on social media platforms like as Facebook, Instagram, and others, they are constantly sharing and informing their stakeholders on their sustainable development projects and encouraging them to contribute to the effective use of the world's resources. They are constantly increasing awareness and pushing others to decrease waste on Facebook by sharing articles, photographs, and videos about their "Hilldari initiative."



Usha Exim Company:

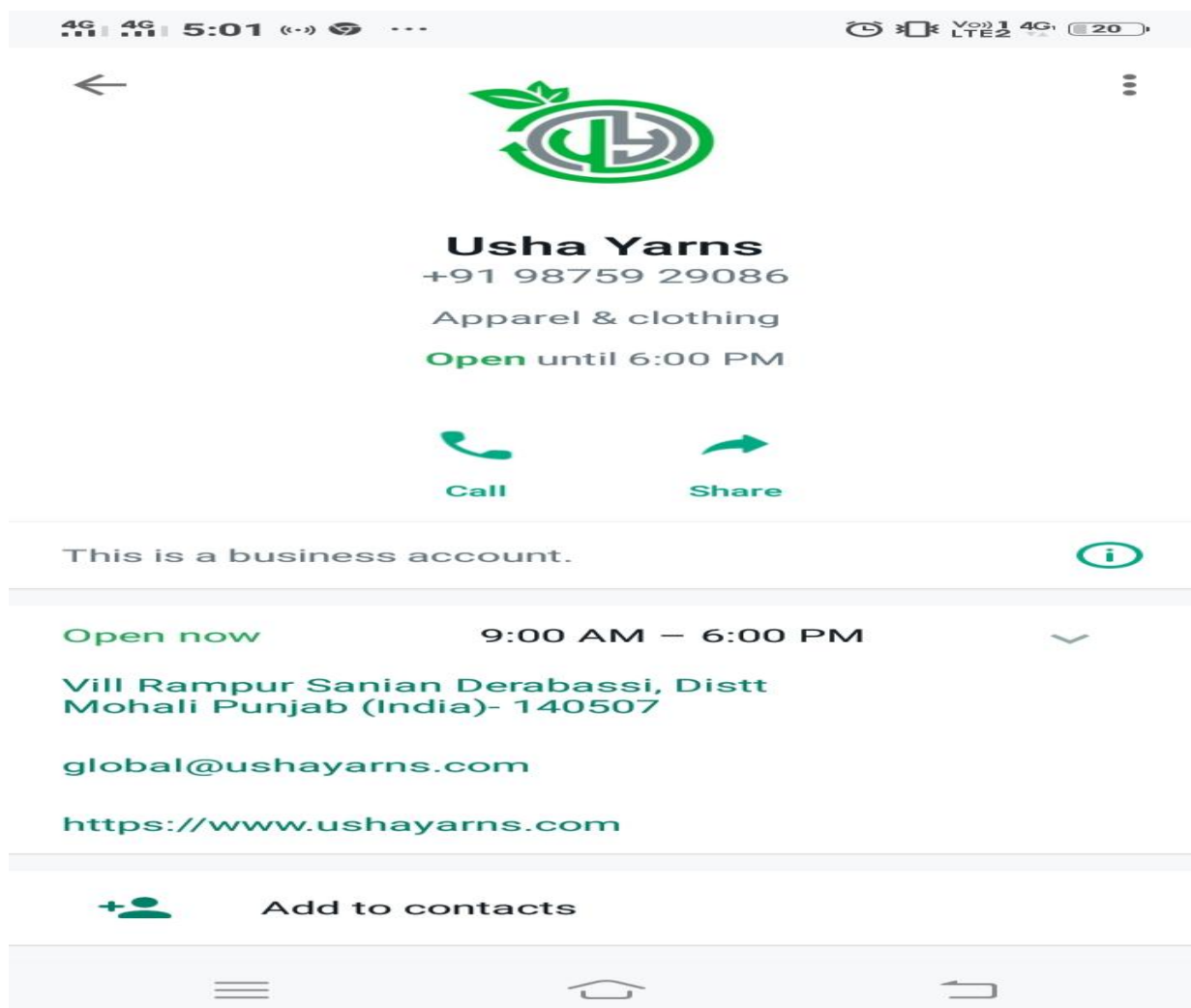
Usha Exim is a certified ethical and fair trade multi-product export organization led by a team of hardcore professionals and industry experts. This organization has created a niche in the global market since 1994 as a reliable supplier of quality fair products and novel handicrafts to world markets.



Usha Yarns Ltd.

“Recycle to Perfection – Align with Nature”
A Sustainable Textile Company – Usha Yarns

Usha yarns a sustainable cotton textile company on circular mission to offer recycled material for sustainable fashion. This company is on mission to recycle post and pre consumer textile waste generated from garment mills and consumers.



CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, it can be stated that social media tools may be employed in sustainable development since they favorably impact numerous elements of company, such as marketing, promotion, communication, waste reduction, and connection building. Large multinational corporations compete fiercely in the market with SMEs. The expansion of these SMEs is required since SMEs contribute significantly to the country's GDP growth. The use of social media platforms can assist SMEs in reaching long-term objectives in marketing, promotion, communication, waste reduction, and other company tasks. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can post videos, images, ideas and their initiative of sustainable development and organizing contest and campaign on social media platforms which create awareness about the company and encourage the people to contribute towards sustainable development of world.

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