

THE DS GROUP WALKING THE TALK



Rajiv Kumar
Vice Chairman, DS Group

Leading the way to a greener future

The DS Group is a shining example of an Indian organization that is committed to a sustainable ecosystem, and makes a significant contribution to the world through its environmental initiatives.

The environment is everyone's responsibility.

We have all learned this the hard way. Climate change and the state of the very basics of our lives – air, water and soil— have been threatened by decades of thoughtless consumption.

Currently, roughly half of worlds ~8 billion people are estimated to experience severe water scarcity for at least some part of the year due to climatic and non-climatic factors. During the last two decades, the global glacier mass loss rate exceeded 0.5 meters water equivalent per year, impacting humans and ecosystems. Agriculture and energy production have been impacted by changes in the hydrological cycle. Between 1983 and 2009, approximately three-quarters of the global harvested areas experienced yield losses induced by drought, with the cumulative production losses corresponding to USD 166 billion. (Source: IPCC_AR6_WGII_)

The impact is being experienced on a global, planetary scale, and directly within our homes and communities. A thriving and healthy environment is a non-negotiable imperative and it is critical today to work towards sustainability and environmental well-being to nurture a happy society, a successful country, and a balanced world. All our achievements can only be meaningful when we create a renewable and supportive environmental, economic and social world. Many nations and governments are working within their countries towards this goal, and there has been a clarion call worldwide to come together for earth-first.

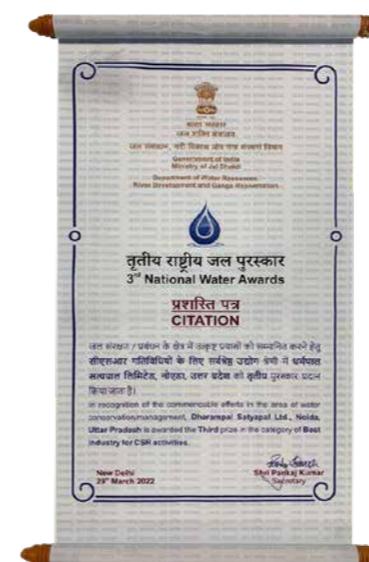
The Group's Vice Chairman Mr. Rajiv Kumar stated, *"In the pursuit of improved prospects for the future generations and safeguard our resources, we work to balance environmental, societal and economic considerations. Our sustainability initiatives are spread across the country and in area of energy management, water management, material conservation, recycling and waste management. This aligns our business, social and environmental objectives to make significant contribution to the society and the country. This fulfils our ethos of responsible growth, while delivering superior value to all our stakeholders".*

The DS Group has, very early on, recognized the huge potential that corporates and organizations hold to influence and transform the environment within their reach. The Group has led the way with intent and action.

A multi-business corporation, the DS Group is one of the leading FMCG conglomerate with a strong Indian and international presence. Founded in the year 1929, it is an inspiring and successful business story that blends a remarkable history and legacy with visionary growth. Guided by a clear set of values and built on a strong foundation of philanthropy, corporate responsibility is an integral part of the Group's business objectives to enhance livelihoods and build sustainable communities.

Water Conservation

Water is at the core of the sustainable well-being of humankind, serving crucial links between society, economics, and the environment. Realizing the vitality of water resources, the DS Group has been diligently undertaking cross-sectoral Integrated Water Conservation and Management projects, through its CSR activities in 6 states, benefitting millions of people from impoverished communities. The Group has developed more than 900 water-harvesting structures, with the cumulative capacity of around 80 lakh cubic meters covering 2300 hectares of area under irrigation. Consequently, the crop productivity in the respective areas have increased many-fold.



Water Economic Zone project by the DS Group, and other interventions have been recognised and honoured with the National Water Award, 2020 & FICCI Award (Category- Environmental Sustainability). 'Water Economic Zone' project alone has benefitted 23000 tribal people in Alsiagarh and Kurabad situated in Udaipur district. The project has significantly improved the water table, introduced efficient irrigation techniques, and used solar energy in agriculture. This also potentially brought around 11000 hectares of land under double cropping. All these measures have led to an improved and sustainable economy for the local tribal communities.

A Leading Symbol of Green: The World's No.1 Green Building

The DS Headquarters, housing the corporate office, an R & D center with state of art manufacturing facilities has been awarded Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum certification, under the USGBC (US Green Building Council) existing building O&M (Operation and Maintenance) program version 4.0 making it a global leader amongst all LEED v4 O&M existing buildings worldwide. Holding the highest number of credits amongst existing green buildings, the Group remains at the forefront for three consecutive years. The building also has a vision to get a carbon neutral status in next few years.

Majority of the total work force at the DSHQ uses alternate transport. This results in approximately 4,50,000 ton less CO₂ emissions, which is equivalent to planting 21,600 trees per year. An area of 26% is devoted to native vegetation. The building has nine rain water harvesting pits, and open grid pavers to reduce the storm water run-off from the site and enhance water quantity. The DSHQ also has an organic



waste composter making it a close loop system of zero organic waste. Indoor water consumption has been reduced by 32%. Outdoor water usage has significantly reduced by using state of the art systems and technology for irrigation, sewage and effluent treatment. More than 50% of the regularly occupied area at DSHQ has daylight view, reducing artificial lighting consumption. The DSHQ's EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) energy star score is 95.

Towards Green Energy

Even though their processes are not energy intensive, DS Group has taken numerous initiatives towards Green Energy in line with the National Goal of reaching Net Zero Emission for environment protection and combating climate change.

The Group promotes the optimization and reduction of energy through well-defined processes and building a culture of commitment across the organization. Modern technologies have been implemented in various processes to reduce energy consumption, as well as to encourage use of renewable energy at the plants and corporate offices wherever possible. The energy consumption is monitored regularly to achieve continual improvement.

The Group is aggressively moving forward in captive power generation. Roof-top **Solar Power Plants** with cutting edge solar technology and a capacity of 2.94 MW have been installed at various locations of the organization. They have also entered into **Solar Open Access** agreements to obtain Green Energy of approximately 7.49 MW capacity. By these green energy initiatives, approximately 130.31 Lakhs kwh grid energy is saved and about 10,297 ton of CO₂ emission is reduced.

The DSHQ meets 80-82 % energy demand with the help of green power (In-house rooftop solar + open access solar).

Agro Forestry

To plant trees is to give body and life to one's dreams of a better world ~ Russel Page

In keeping with its vision of safeguarding environmental resources even while responding to in-house requirements, the DS Group entered the Agri Business with a focus on large-scale plantation by acquiring waste and semi-arid land parcels in different parts of the country and converted them to lush green forests for plantation purposes.

The DS Group is well known for its R&D excellence, and here too, the in-house R&D facility focuses on improving variety selection, planting material, package of practice, soil and nutrient management. Water conservation is ensured through 100% drip irrigation and with bio mulch (to conserve surface moisture), sub-surface tanks and ponds. Specially developed water storage structures in the barren lands have not only ensured self-sufficiency in water throughout the year, but also contributed to groundwater replenishment, and an ideal environment for the growth of local bio-diversity.

The environmental impact has been transformative. Besides the resultant biodiversity of flora and fauna, the afforestation has led to soil conservation, a reduction of soil erosion, more oxygen, and natural reduction in the weather temperature. Apart from the environmental impact, improvement of local infrastructure - road connectivity, electricity, education & local business has also taken place. Empowerment through employment to local men and women has led to improvement in socio economic conditions and reduction of rural outmigration.

The commitment and actions of this organization in building a better world for present and future generations are singularly outstanding. Their contribution is noteworthy and they lead the way for others to follow in our quest for a healthy world.