



Tech Mahindra, Siemens India in Global Clean200 List

Only two Indian companies have made it to the Corporate Knights and As You Sow 2022 Clean200 global list published on 31 January 2022. The list includes publicly-traded companies that are leading the way with solutions for the transition to a clean energy future.

Apple, Alphabet, Intel, TSMC (Taiwan), Iberdrola (SA), Cisco Systems, HP, Siemens are ranked top ten. The United States leads the ranking with 52 companies followed by Canada (18), China (16), France (12), Germany (9). The first report was launched in 2016. 35 countries make up the Carbon Clean 200.

Tech Mahindra, a star company of the Mahindra Group, is into information technology services and consulting. It employs more than 125,000 employs across the globe.

Siemens India is into constructing resource-efficient factories, resilient supply chains, putting up smarter building and grids, to cleaner and more comfortable transportation.

A report in Corporate Knights quoted Larry Fink, the CEO of the largest investment firm in the world, as writing in his 2022 letter to CEOs, "It's been two years since I wrote that climate risk is investment risk. And

Continued on next page

FEATURES 1 - 6



16 Real Estate Firms Join Hands to Decarbonize Construction Sector



Saahas Gets Coke's Fizz to Clean Up Panna

NEWS 7 - 12

- 40 IoT-enabled Pick-up Trucks to Help Treat 100% of Hyderabad Waste
- FlipKart Partners with WWF India to Cut its Plastic Footprint
- Efficiency Measures Can Solve Chennai's Water Woes

FEATURE 12 - 13

- Green Reads for a Greener Future

BOOKSHELF 14 - 19

- Want A Framework to Thrive in the VUCA World?
- A Quest for Corals
- Mythology Meets Natural Destruction
- A Very Beary Story

in that short period, we have seen a tectonic shift of capital. Sustainable investments have now reached \$4 trillion.”

He added, “...the tectonic shift towards sustainable investing is still accelerating. Whether it is capital being deployed into new ventures focused on energy innovation, or capital transferring from traditional indexes into more customized portfolios and products, we will see more money in motion. Every company and every industry will be transformed by the transition to a net zero world.”

More than 1,000 companies have now committed to a net-zero-emission target in line with a 1.5°C future, representing US\$23 trillion in market capitalization, more than the GDP of the United States.

The Clean200 companies are leading the way by putting sustainability at the heart of their products, services, business models, and investments, helping to move the world onto a more sustainable trajectory.

The report noted that this year’s Clean200 companies rose to the top of a pool of 8,480 global firms based on rigorous assessment of the amount of revenue each company earns from products and services aligned with the Corporate Knights Clean Economy Taxonomy. They did so while ensuring that their businesses are not fundamentally offside important criteria for socially responsible investors, including being a company flagged by As You Sow’s Invest Your Values platform, which identifies fossil fuels, weapons, private prisons, thermal coal, or having a record of systemically obstructing climate policy.

Key Findings

Geographically, Europe and the Americas each account for 37.5% of this year’s Clean200, while the remaining 50 companies are headquartered in the Asia Pacific region. The United States dominated the 2022 list, with 52 companies on the Clean200, while Canada had the second largest share with 18, closely followed by China, which is home to headquarters of 16 Clean200 companies.

On average, 58% of revenues earned by Clean200 companies are classified as clean, which is up from 39% in 2021 and significantly above the 20% average clean revenue for their MSCI ACWI peers. These companies also fared well financially. **On this score, as of January 31, 2022, the Clean200 has outperformed its MSCI ACWI peers by 3.94% since the Clean200 was launched in July of 2016.**



Continued on next page

The good news for our species is that the forces of pride and profit have shifted to support the emerging regenerative economy based on justice and sustainability, leaving the extractive economy to wind down.

“We will see this escalate as the transition kicks in and every company on the planet reduces emissions by 5% per year over the next decade.”

The report notes, “We are happy to report that the Clean200 now has more than a five-year track record and is outperforming both the broad-based benchmark and its high-carbon global counterparts.”

Corporate Knights, popularly known as CK, is the first print business magazine and research firm to be a Certified B Corp. It calls itself as the voice of clean capitalism.

<https://www.corporateknights.com/clean-technology/2022-carbon-clean200/>



SustainabilityNext
presents
SN Dialogues
Reimagining Business and Careers
with
Sustainability + Blockchain
26
March 2022
virtual
Pratik Gauri
Founder Sire.org, Time 40u40
Aravind Chinchure
Innovation Leader, Author
<https://sustainabilitynext.in>

greenlitfest
Being Ganga: The Many Pasts, Perils & Possibilities
March 22, 2022 7.30 pm - 8.15 pm
Bidisha Banerjee
Social ecologist, speaker, well-being advisor, embodied leadership coach and author of *Superhuman River*, *Stories of the Ganga*.
Sudipta Sen
Professor of History and Middle East/ South Asia Studies (University of California, Davis), and author of *Empire of Free Trade*, and *Distant Sovereignty*.
Rahul Ram
Musician and member of Indian Ocean band, stand-up comedian with *Aisi Taisi Democracy*, social and environmental activist.
Supported By
THE HABITATS TRUST
Partners
WWF, India Climate Collaborative, teri, ASLE-INDIA



16 Real Estate Firms Join Hands to Decarbonize Construction Sector

Sixteen leading Indian real estate companies including prominent industry leaders **Mahindra Lifespaces Developers**, **JSW Steel** and **Lodha Group** signed up to form a charter in February 2022 to reduce the climate impact from the real estate sector. The charter will facilitate the process of transitioning to a net-zero building and construction sector. Companies are being told that net-zero is an opportunity, not an obligation.

World Resources Institute (WRI) India along with partners Alliance for an Energy Efficient Economy (AEEE), EcoCollab and Mahindra Lifespaces, launched a voluntary business charter '**Value-chain Approach to Decarbonizing the Building and Construction Sector in India**'.

This business charter took shape after consultations with 150+ key stakeholders through June-July 2021 on four key themes: designing net-zero buildings, construction and operations, occupiers' perspectives and material efficiency.

Houses built now will have a life span of 40 to 60 years. Hence, decisions taken now will have an impact on the thermal comfort, energy use and GHG emissions over the lifetime of these buildings.

Create Awareness

Currently, the lack of implementation of low-carbon strategies including existing energy efficiency guidelines, data on embodied emissions of various materials, pilot demonstrations or case studies are key barriers. There is also a lack of consumer awareness and capacities across stakeholder groups such as architects, contractors, and site engineers. In the newly released Business Charter, stakeholders identified priority action areas across the value chain:

Continued on next page

- Adopting science-based emission reduction targets and climate-responsive design strategies
- Mainstreaming climate-aligned building codes and standards as well as low-carbon materials
- Improving operational efficiency and enabling the low-carbon pathway through policy support

Signatories will lead the way forward together on these actions by first devising a plan of approaching each of these priorities through working groups and other such industry-led engagements.

Leading the charge, Anand Mahindra said: “Businesses that judiciously plan their green portfolio, businesses that are on the path to providing alternatives, businesses whose products and services embody and encourage environmental and social responsibility, businesses that have built new models of sustainability are the businesses that will sustain, and indeed thrive, in the future. I call upon the Indian industry, their CEOs, and all real estate businesses and stakeholders to join forces to raise our ambition. **Let us accelerate the necessary business transformation to put the Indian building and construction sector on a net-zero pathway.**”



Arvind Subramanian, MD and CEO, Mahindra Lifespaces, said, “Net Zero is an opportunity, not an obligation, for the real estate sector in India. The combined commitments and actions of the signatories of this charter will help galvanize positive steps today, for a better urban future tomorrow.” Dr Satish Kumar, president and executive director, AEEE: “If we aim to decarbonize the building sector, then there is a **need to look at the sector in a holistic manner**, covering greenhouse gas emissions from operational and embodied carbon along with the impact of the building sector on water and air.”



Saahas Gets Coke's Fizz to Clean Up Panna

The first multi-stakeholder partnership supporting local government initiative 'Clean destinations' in Panna National Park and 30 villages in the region

The **Coca-Cola Foundation** (TCCF) has provided a grant to **Saahas**, a non-profit organization working towards waste management, for setting up sustainable waste management infrastructure in 30 villages around the **Panna National Park**, over the next two years.

This partnership is aimed at supporting the local government-run initiative towards waste management, along with the Ministry of Tourism, Madhya Pradesh under their initiative 'Clean Destinations'.

The initiative also embraces the Government of India's 'Swachh Bharat' mission, aimed at strengthening sustainable waste management practices across the country, especially in villages.



Sonia Garga, Program Director at Saahas expects this project to become an example of sustainable waste management practices for national parks and natural tourist attractions.

To her, "National parks pose unique challenges due to their remote location and large waste generation by tourists. However, they also offer a great opportunity. The message of sustainable living can be conveyed very impactfully in these pristine surroundings and the parks have the potential to take this message far and wide through the large number of visitors coming from all over the country."

The key focus of this Solid Waste Management (SWM) program encompasses setting up infrastructure for waste collection and transportation systems ensuring creation of end destinations for all waste categories. Additionally, it incorporates information, education and communication (IEC) and awareness campaigns to bring about behavioural change among tourists towards waste segregation and management.

The Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board will play a pivotal role in implementing the project, with different state government departments and institutions including the forest, rural, urban and revenue department along with the district panchayat office. The department has extended its immense support by providing the land for setting up of collection infrastructure along with necessary civic amenities across 30 villages to ensure sustainability of SWM systems.

Saahas is a Bengaluru-headquartered not-for-profit. Set up in 2001, it works with government institutions, communities, businesses, and lawmakers to bring attention to best practices in the management of solid waste and also establishes collection and processing infrastructure. Saahas also works towards providing better livelihood opportunities for the informal sector.

<https://www.saahas.org/>

The Coca-Cola Foundation is the global philanthropic arm of The Coca-Cola Company. Since its inception in 1984, the foundation has awarded more than \$1 billion in grants to support sustainable community initiatives around the world, including protecting the environment, empowering women, and the overall well-being of communities through education, youth development, arts and culture and economic development.

<https://www.coca-colacompany.com/shared-future/coca-cola-foundation>

40 IoT-enabled Pick-up Trucks to Help Treat 100% of Hyderabad Waste

Ramky Enviro Engineers Limited (REEL), a leading provider of comprehensive environment management services, launched a fleet of 40 Internet-of-Things-enabled pick-up trucks to enable efficient solid waste management, in Hyderabad recently. The fleet will be in addition to the company's existing 64 solid and/or liquid waste transportation vehicles.

The new fleet is meant to ensure that garbage disposal in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad will take place through covered vehicles, thereby eliminating public hazards and ensuring human dignity by reducing manual intervention. It also provides for segregation of waste at source, eliminating odour and leachate, reduction of carbon footprint, decentralising operations by reducing the turnaround time of tippers and other garbage collection vehicles.

With this, Hyderabad is set to become the only Indian city to treat 100% of its waste. The city has measures to improve waste collection with equal focus on solid and liquid waste.

Ramky Enviro spokesperson said the firm's adoption of new technologies like GPS would help strengthen better waste management across the city.

REEL, a KKR-backed company, is one of Asia's leading providers of comprehensive environment management services. REEL offers a whole gamut of environmental services and infrastructure solutions under various categories such as Waste Management – hazardous, municipal, and biomedical, MAR POL, construction waste & e-waste; Waste to Energy; Recycling – wastewater, paper, plastic, and integrated waste; Environmental Solutions such as remediation, ETPs and wastewater treatment; automated car park management and Facilities Management. It has a growing global footprint, including over 60 operating locations spread across India, Singapore, UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia Kuwait, Oman, and Tanzania. With over 25 years of operational history, REEL has a strong presence across the entire waste value chain and has been a long-standing partner in the environmental solutions space to its customers.

FlipKart Partners with WWF India to Cut its Plastic Footprint

FlipKart collaborated with WWF India under the **Un-Plastic Collective** (UPC) – a voluntary, multi-stakeholder initiative, to drive corporate action toward solutions on plastic leakage. The aim was to unlock barriers to circularity and create new business models to transform the plastic packaging sector by amplifying the collective voice of multiple stakeholders across the value chain.

The case study (<https://bit.ly/3IS0pim>) shows the FlipKart's immense journey and what it has been able to achieve. It is worth a read by not only e-commerce firms by anyone who is looking for learnings on what goes into the transformation and transition process.

The foreword of the case study makes a telling statement on how India generates 9.46 million tons of plastic waste annually, of which 40% remains uncollected; 43% is used for packaging, most of it is single-use. Packaging uses 40% of all plastic produced—but the average “working life” of a plastic bag is only 15 minutes—resulting in massive resource and energy loss. This exposes companies with large quantities of plastic in their supply chains to material and reputational risk, but also presents them the opportunity to innovate and close the loop on plastic production, by introducing more sustainable options into customer chains.

The foreword further states: “Building a responsible value chain is an extensive, complex, and challenging task, and must take centre stage in decision-making. Flipkart's ambition is to use the strength of its platform to do good for people and the planet. With that in mind, we knew we wanted an approach to creating long-term value for our communities by incorporating environmental, social and governance aspects of doing business.”

Journey of Sustainable Packaging at Flipkart

March 2019

The packaging team **kicks off the design and development process** to scout for options to reduce and reuse packaging, replace single-use plastic, and recycle plastic waste generated in the supply chain to ensure **zero waste to landfill** across all Flipkart operations

December 2019

Shredded paper, 2-ply wraps, and other alternative materials replaced plastic in all our packaging filler materials

February 2020

Replaced plastic security bags with recyclable paper bags customised for e-commerce deliveries

May 2020

Single-use plastic eliminated by 50% in all shipments fulfilled by Flipkart. Replaced all single-use plastic for the state of Maharashtra

June 2020

National EPR authorisation received by Flipkart as a Producer/Brand Owner. Flipkart, compliant with recycling norms across India, starts **working with recyclers to divert all plastic waste generated away from landfills**

August 2020

Flipkart **introduces No-Package Shipping.** Starts working with sellers and suppliers to eliminate the need for outer packaging

December 2020

Single-use plastic eliminated by 56%. The sustainable packaging program expanded across Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh

January 2021

61% reduction achieved with sustainable packaging introduced in Haryana

May 2021

15% of products shipped without secondary packaging under the 'No Package Shipping' program. **96% of customer shipments from fulfilment centres (FCs) shipped in Sustainable Packaging.**

June 2021

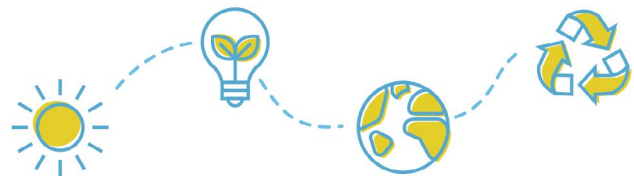
Stopped all fresh procurement of single-use plastic materials for FCs.

July 2021

Flipkart achieved the **milestone of 100% elimination of single-use plastic** in its own supply chain covering **more than 70 facilities** across India.

September 2021

Marketplace seller adoption for **sustainable packaging reached 75%+.** It began with targeting **70 hubs** in the state of Maharashtra and today it covers **700+ hubs** across the country.





Efficiency Measures Can Solve Chennai's Water Woes

By Pallavi Singh and Lahari Babu

Leading Chennai citizens identify solutions to beat the recurring water crisis at a discussion organized by the AltTech Foundation and WOW Action Forum recently

WOW Chennai is an Action Forum launched by about a hundred citizen leaders of the city. This is part of a larger mission across many cities that the **AltTech Foundation** has launched in collaboration with **The International Centre for Clean Water** that is housed in the IIT-Madras Campus.

The city is home to about 1.1 crore people. At about 150 litres of water used per person per day, about 180-200 crore litres of fresh water is needed every day. The metro water supply now supplies about **80 crore litres** a day from the existing reservoirs. And leakages in the distribution system account for 40 percent of the water, or about 30 crore litres. The city supplements the rest of the daily need of about 150 crore litres with groundwater reserves.

Continued on next page

The city administrators have been heavily investing in large water supply projects to secure an additional **88-90 crore litres per day** from sources that range from the Minjur desalination plant (10 crore litres a day), Krishna water (50 crore litres), Nemeli desalination plant (10 crore litres), and Cauvery water from the Veeranam Tank (18 crore litres).

The population of the City is expected to grow to 1.5 crore **by 2035**, with the demand for fresh water increasing to 300 crore litres a day.

Here is a Nine Point Action Plan to enable the Goal of a Water Positive Chennai by 2030:

1. To Cowlagi Sripathi of the International Centre for Clean Water, "What Chennai needs to do is not use less water, but use water efficiently. We have enough solutions. If City leaders galvanised action in city wards and apartment and small industry communities, with local leaders connecting with Action Forums like WOW for solutions, we will see a clear one-half drop in demand for freshwater in about 3 years of such campaigning. What is even more interesting is that this can be achieved without the government intervening at all, and with just water-users adopting solutions that are available at good costs and effective technology."
2. E Nandakumar, an IITM 1984 alumni, and in recent years the CEO of the International Centre for Clean Water that is housed in the sprawling IITM campus, "If just 10 apartments of about 300 flats to each of them, can save about 2 crore litres a year of the 3 crore litres they currently consume, that will reduce freshwater demand by 20 crore litres. Add the math at about 500 apartments of the 20,000 apartments Chennai has, and you will see a saving of 500 crore litres in a year, and this is a saving that will recur every year. Water efficiency is a major road to solving Water deficiency."
3. **Nurture existing finite sources.** It is a blend of solutions at the building scale with active water-user participation to ease their challenge and to save financially costs of water purchase, and coupled with Chennai's public bodies and the government focusing on the restoration and nurturing of lakes that have survived all the abuse of the last 40 years. There used to be over a thousand lakes. The City has sustained even today on the water supply from Poondi and Chembambakkam or the Sholavaram lake and not by the three rivers of Chennai – two of which [Adyar and Cooum] have been reduced to being sewers. Kosathalaiyar, the third river, is still a source of sustenance for the city. The Buckingham canal – which traverses 800 km from Villupuram, south of Chennai, to Kakinada, north of Andhra– is another treasure that Chennai has to nurture, and protect. These are all finite sources. They cannot yield any more than they do as fresh water supply to the city.
4. **Create Shallow or Dug Wells** in private and public lands. There's then the concern of a lot more rain in Chennai than there was in earlier years. The water table is already high, and the higher precipitation means floods and inundation as the 2021 November rains also rudely reminded the citizens.

"Restoring water bodies and developing rainwater collecting sites will make a big difference," says Sekhar Raghavan, a veteran rainwater harvesting expert. How do we work on such

Continued on next page

potential? What are likely deterrents? Why have people not acted on these even if they seem as alluringly simple? Raghavan is a long-time water-watcher who brings clarity in understanding of the situation on the ground. But voices such as his do not get heard as much as they should be. He says, “Every home, every building, must create open shallow wells, and use them to draw water. We have to **create a ‘live bank’ of water** that is deposited and withdrawn for the shallow aquifer and the soil strata of the city to be alive, and working for us.”

5. **Use groundwater** and not Chennai’s Metro water when you can. What the city saw in November 2021 in Chennai is very different from the past. Raghavan observes, “We received a lot of rain in previous years, which caused overflow and floods in the city. This last monsoon, though, we were being flooded by our own groundwater. This is something that few are aware of. People want recharge wells whenever there is flooding.

Flooding is caused only by recharging wells! What is more important is that drawing of water should be practised every day in every building. There is an alluvial layer above the hard rock and another beneath the hard rock, and continuous depositing of water and drawing of it will keep the strata nurtured and groundwater retention strengthened, apart from helping us ward off threats of floods in each of the city suburbs. People should drill wells near their homes but must also extract water regularly: only then will the threat of floods subside.”

6. **Pricing of water.** The other challenge that the government has to address is the cost of water. Says Raghavan, “If people don’t pay enough for it, they will not prize it. Chennai has a flat rate for every six months—regardless of how much a home or building consumes. So the need to use groundwater doesn’t exist. If water costs more, users will turn to drawing water from shallow wells. It will build a hydrological cycle for the city that will help beat the risk of floods and of deficits. Will we learn our lesson from 2021 and set specific citizen action targets? Will the City Administration and Government also endorse it?”
7. A low-hanging fruit that Chennai’s water administration and the state government can resolve with a little effort is the persistent, **massive loss of nearly 40 percent on leakages and distribution**. With grid water supply to the city at about 80 crore litres a day, this loss alone accounts for 30 crore litres a day and more! So where does Chennai get the rest of the fresh water demanded every day by both citizens and industry? Groundwater. No surprise that the **very economy of Chennai** is threatened this decade with much more that is required to make it sustainable and liveable. *The city draws more than half its need from groundwater.* The story that is not told by official data is of industry and the massive quantum of water they draw in the northern parts of Chennai [Ennore] which have served as the source of water, and is threatened as the city extends rapidly to its west [Sriperumbudur] and the south [Chingleput].
8. Learn from cities like Puri and Bhubaneswar. Water experts in Chennai have long advocated simple measures the government and the water utility can take to plug the massive leakages in the system of pipelines that is at least a century old and creaking under its own weight. ‘Non-revenue water’ goes unbilled despite the cost that is incurred in hauling such water all the way to the city, treating it, and then losing it to leakages. Solutions that bring digitisation and monitoring the distribution lines are available. Cities like Puri have shown in the last 2-3 years

that such digitising monitoring can plug leakages dramatically. There are experts willing to offer solutions. The State and the water utility will have to act in earnest.

9. **Nurture the shallow aquifer across the city.** There is then the matter of how we deal with the city shallow aquifers, says Ashok Natarajan, the former CEO of TWIC. “It is easy to forget how Chennai’s aquifers have served the city’s people in the past.”

Saravanan Janakiraman, an urban analyst, adds, “We know very little about groundwater sources. We need to understand Chennai’s aquifer across the city’s geographic spread. It is this aquifer that was classified as ‘ground zero’ two years ago but has since rebounded back; it is this aquifer that meets our needs in every drought. During the 1981 drought, Metro Water supplied just 300 million litres per day. We were able to access about 600 MLD of ground water from the city’s wells and borewells. We must understand these underground sources. The data and analysis gathered by that study, helped us locate possible areas inside the city that can meet about 100 MLD.”

Pallavi Singh & Lahari Babu are part of Team WOW Action Forum

WOW AF is a multi-city citizen-led initiative now in action in four Indian cities of Bengaluru, Chennai, Trichy, Hyderabad. It is led by water experts and citizen leaders who seek to bring water efficiency with water-users adopting solutions to meet a Mission Target of Saving 3000 Crore Litres.

www.alttech.foundation/wor-af

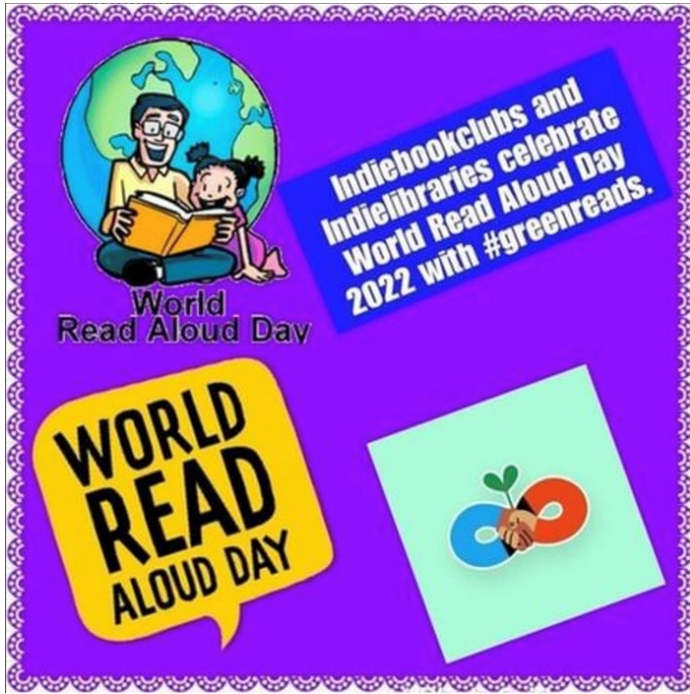
<https://youtu.be/xrBK9xh6TYc>

Green Reads for a Greener Future

On 2 February, World Read Aloud Day (WRAD), a group of children’s book clubs and libraries all across India began a month-long programme on social media, reading books on the environment for children. Tagged #greenreads, this initiative is the brainchild of **Archana Atri**, who revolutionised children’s book clubs in India with **AA’s Book Nerds**, one of the earliest individual-led initiatives in Delhi-NCR to encourage reading among children for the joy it brings.

The moderator of the children’s jury at the first edition of the Green Literature Festival (GLF), she followed her stint by reading the books listed by the festival with the children at her book club. She also connected with a few other book club hosts and children’s libraries to ask if they were reading and discussing books on the green theme and if they had books they’d recommend. To make the exchanges simpler, she set up a Whatsapp group called Green Reads towards the end of December 2021.

In February, on the occasion of WRAD, they all came together to begin posting read alouds of green books on their social media handles with the ‘greenreads’ hashtag. Gratifyingly, many people in the kidlit space and other enthusiasts joined them in reading books on this theme and tagging their readings as #greenreads. All these readings were shared as stories on the Instagram handle of GLF, which helped to amplify the initiative.



Talking of the importance of this literature, Archana says, “Green literature is particularly significant in contributing to the growth of an ecological conscience among children, with knowledge of the past, awareness of the present and recognition of what the future holds. ‘Green Reads’, therefore, is an initiative that seeks to consciously popularise such literature by bringing together various ‘reading champions’ in a child’s world.”

She also observes that book selections at most book clubs and libraries focus largely on fiction as it deemed to be a more popular tool to hook young readers and encourage an empathetic connection with environmental issues. Non-fiction tends to be ignored, as it’s erroneously

limited to the domain of school-work. However, while shadowing the books listed by the festival, the children at her book club read their first non-fiction books and she was surprised to see how well they took to it. “I realised that **children necessarily need to read non-fictional books on the environment to get more factual information that clears misconceptions and misinformation, makes readers more aware of what the future holds and prods them to ask the right questions.** There’s a lot of diversity in non-fiction on the environment for children. It is written simply and honestly and engages children to be aware of real-world issues that can’t be brushed aside.”

Discussing her plans for #greenreads, she says that apart from the read alouds, she’s hosting in-depth book discussions around green literature with the children at her book club. On 26 February, together with she is also part of a panel at GLF that would be discussing green books with children’s book clubs and libraries that function outside the school ecosystem. Stay tuned!

Book Clubs & Libraries in the initiative

Shefali Shridhar of [Potli Shefali ki](#), Ludhiana

Shefali at [Bukmuk Library](#)

Anisha Tulsian Bajaj from [Kidzalaya](#), Mumbai

Jyoti Narayan of [Reade: Books to Enjoy, Explore and Express](#), Mumbai

Lakshmi Mitter of [Talking Circle](#), Chennai

Nidhi Agarwal of [Wee Read](#), Faridabad

Tina Bakhtiani of [Nest & Den library and book club](#), Vadodra [Varsha Seshan’s reading program](#)

BOOKREVIEW

Want A Framework to Thrive in the VUCA World?

By Benedict Paramanand



Everyone was relieved that the Covid pandemic's third wave passed without much pain and started preparing to adapt to the 'new normal.' But news of the Russian invasion of Ukraine has come as a big jolt.

A fourth Covid wave is being predicted and the climate crisis of severe heat and heavy rains are at our door steps. While these make it to headlines, a more powerful and sinister disruption is taking place right under our nose. Artificial intelligence, machine learning, big data, metaverse and blockchain are sending everyone's lives, jobs, studies and businesses into a tizzy. Where does one go for advice, for mentorship, for guidance and for a playbook, at these challenging times?

Dr. Aravind Chinchure's book *The New Age Organization: How to Navigate Rapid Disruption & Lead in the Fourth Industrial Revolution* plays all these roles pretty well. Although the title looks pretty weighty, it is surprisingly an easy read. It is power-packed with what entrepreneurs and business leaders should not do, and what they can do, to not only survive but also thrive in the VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, chaotic and ambiguous) age.

The author's hands-on experience in blue-chip organizations across continents as a scientist with four patents in his name, as a senior executive in MNCs and at Reliance, as a mentor at a renowned start-up accelerator, and lately, an academic who reimagined curriculum at a top business school, has helped him write this book as a first-person account. The book is full of anecdotes and relates to stories of leaders who have resurrected their companies from near death scenarios.

This is a management book without the 'management bias'. It looks at what's working for leaders who dared to reinvent their companies and makes a case as to why they are worth emulating. It's a rich abridged case book of multiple organizations and tells the reader why they are where they are today. Microsoft, Amazon, Reliance, Apple, Zoho, owe their success to business leaders who are at the helm today. Dr. Chinchure captures their leadership traits elegantly.

Framework for the Future

While this book is a rich repository of past and present leadership wisdom, the book's centre-piece is about showing a strategic roadmap about what could work, and what will not, given the trends that are shaping the world today.

The emergence of defining trends like green consumerism, climate crisis, sustainability as a strategic



imperative, decarbonization, and how to respond to them, is at the heart of the book. He bases his understanding on late management guru **C K Prahalad**, who predicted more than a decade ago that Sustainability would drive innovation in the 21st century. Re-imagining the very idea of profit is crucial for future organizations for ensuring long-term sustainability.

Dr. Chinchure predicts that future employees, unlike now or in the immediate past, “will come from diverse sectors like economics, humanities, and design because industry boundaries will surely blur and all sectors will see the effects of automation.” To him, multi-skilled employees will be the key to success of firms.

His contribution to MBA education is significant. Instead of MBA graduates lining up in front of corporations, he imagined them to be job providers instead. He introduced an MBA course on innovation and entrepreneurship at Symbiosis Institute of Management, Pune in 2014. It is said to be a big hit.

Most business or management books are a difficult read because they are prescriptive self-help books for managers/leaders and are loaded with jargon and quotes. Even the case studies in them look like force-fits. This book is a fun read, too.

To top scientist Dr. R A Mashelkar, the author’s most persuasive contribution is his emphasis on ‘systems-of-systems’ thinking for meeting rising customer expectations. This is a big leap from pure platform or systems approach to problem-solving.

One of the biggest challenges for managers and leaders is acquiring effective communication skills in an atmosphere where technology and human coexist as near equals. This will be a big business opportunity for those who can teach these skills. Leaders and managers will also need heavy doses of empathy and emotional intelligence to succeed in tomorrow’s workplace. A holistic approach to skilling that includes tech, human and innovation skills will give companies the edge.

Interestingly, the new paradigm, according to Dr. Chinchure, is that, “An automated workplace must not be envisioned as a cold, cruel place where machines have ousted us. In fact, it must be a workplace where technology augments humans, enabling the workforce to build on their existing capabilities and develop more. Future-facing organizations have already actioned programs to help human workforce enhance their ‘human’ capabilities.”

The author deftly fuses his experience as a top scientist and a senior business executive to showcase his unique understanding of the interplay of new technology and human capabilities. This blend shows up as a framework which leaders can refer to while making critical decisions. As Desh Deshpande says in his praise for the book, “I would recommend anyone who wants to lead in the 21st century to read *The New Age Organization*, not only to gain insights and examples, but also to pick up actionable ideas on how to do it.”

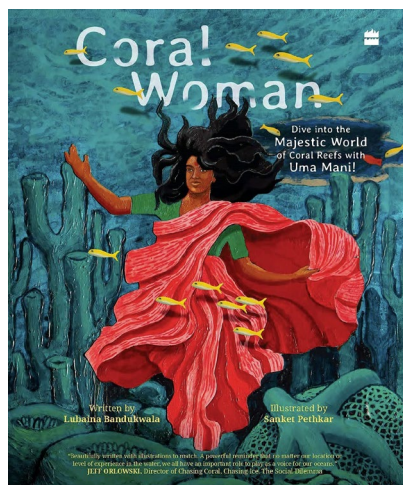
With a title like *The New Age Organization* I expected the book to be spattered with tech or geek language. I tried to pick a hole or two in the book, but couldn’t. This book is an essential read for anyone who aspires to thrive in these uncertain times.

<https://youtu.be/ckFWO-CqPsw>



A Quest for Corals

By JoAnne Saldanha



Uma Mani was an average housewife, whose life centered around home and family. On watching a film about coral reefs at a French class, she became fascinated with corals. But Uma didn't know how to swim, let alone dive. So, she picked up her brushes and began to paint the beautiful underwater world that enchanted her, using pictures that she and her husband collected. Soon, she began to exhibit her paintings. It was at one of these exhibitions when a flippant remark from a guest, inquiring whether she had actually seen a coral reef herself, hurt Uma. The comment ignited a spark that inspired her to learn more about the corals she loved. Overcoming her fears and battling the negativity that besieged her, Uma learned how to dive, and was rewarded with a ringside view of a world that rivetted her.

With every dive, she began to realize the devastation the coral reefs were facing. Hungry to know why they were getting destroyed, she talked and questioned. She learned about the ill-effects of coral mining, the threat of non-native algae that had been thoughtlessly introduced into the ecosystem, the effect of sewage, fly ash from thermal plants, pollution, and climate change, on the corals. So, she began raising awareness about the importance of coral reefs and the need to protect them at every opportunity she got.

Based on a documentary film of the same name by Priya Thuvasserry, **Coral Woman** published by Harper Collins, is filled with the most stunningly detailed, realistic illustrations by **Sanket Pethkar**, bringing alive the world that captivated Uma. Illustrations by children who participated in a workshop based on this book, pepper the pages, lending an imaginative feel to a factual read and encouraging young readers to follow suit. **Lubaina Bandukwala's** writing flows easily, weaving in various facts into the narrative.

In my experience, children often connect to stories about 'older people' when they are able to learn a little about their childhood. This gives them an opportunity to put themselves in the protagonist's shoes as they journey through the story. However, by missing out on this little detail, the book skips an opportunity to enhance the connections a child reader could make with it. Why was Uma so taken in by the film? Was she always this curious? Such questions might inadvertently come up while reading the story. In some places, details could have been avoided. For instance, the mention of the rude guest as being from Delhi, was unnecessary for it didn't add anything to the story but might be seen as reinforcing a stereotype.

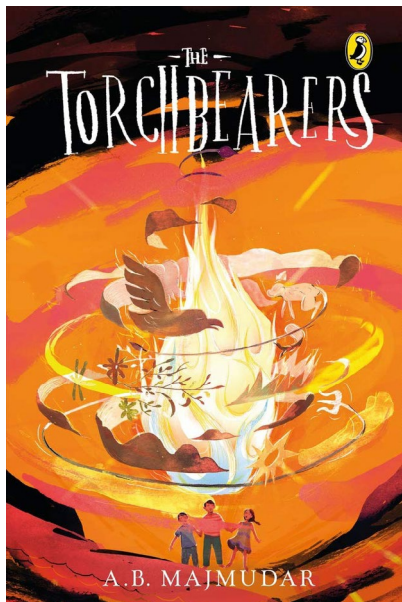
While the environmental message on the destruction of coral reefs is strong, Uma's story also sends out a subtle message on the power of a woman to follow her dreams at an age that is traditionally housebound, when given the space and support. It underlines how learning can happen at any age and how it is never too late to follow one's passion – a message I hope young readers hold onto as they dive into the 'unknown'.

The book is conceptualised and supported by Avid Learning, an ESSAR initiative.



Mythology Meets Natural Destruction

By Meghaa Gupta



Set in world where a majority of the Gods and their virtues have been beaten by the quest for wealth and power, **Ami Majmudar's The Torchbearers**, published by Puffin, seamlessly blends mythology with environmental destruction. Demons abound, and nature has been taken over by forces that look at its bounty as a 'resource', with little feeling or care for its emotional richness and beauty. A deadly poison – kaalakuta – is spewing out of an ocean that's been drilled for oil and everyone, including the demons, is suffering. Something needs to be done and done fast, before the waters are irrevocably destroyed.

In the midst of this 'godlessness', three little children armed with the wisdom of the Vedas, set out to find Shiva – the only one who can drink the poison and control the catastrophe. But Shiva has been missing for a while, and it won't be so easy to find him. Besides, once

Shiva drinks the poison, the ocean will throw up other things – precious gifts including the Nectar of Immortality, coveted as much by the demons as by the powerless Gods and war between the Gods and Demons may become imminent.

Gripping and well-written, the narrative can be used to explore mythological stories, what gives Gods the power we think they have, what godlessness can mean and how nature is often tied to religion.

There are several little verses in the book that the protagonists chant to invoke the Gods and I loved reading these. Sample this:

Fire hidden in your third eye
Your abode higher than birds fly
The Ganga's source your topknot high\

We invoke Shiva, vast as sky.

Sometimes, lived reality and the horrors we witness in the news fill us with dread about the world we inhabit. It's not difficult to question the very concept of God and I know many people who are atheists. But the beauty of this novel is that it shows the vulnerabilities of 'supposed' Gods and makes us realise that empowerment lies within us. The Gods and the Demons are essentially about what we give precedence to, in our lives. Do we choose to keep our faith in all that is good within us, or do we fall prey to our weaknesses. In the midst of this, lies a deep-seated questioning of our relationship with nature and how we treat our planet that selflessly gives us all that we need.

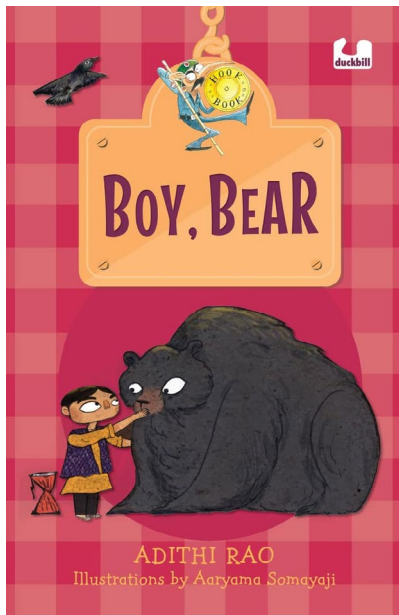
(A version of this review originally appeared in the Facebook group 'Reading Raccoons')



A Very Beary Story

by Adithi Rao and illustrated by Aaryama Somayaji

By Rati Girish



Boy, Bear is part of the Hook Book series published by Duckbill, a children's imprint under Penguin Random House India. As the title suggests, this book is about a boy, his father, and their dancing bear. The father, a street performer, teaches the bear to dance to earn a living. Years pass as the boy observes his father and the bear at work, but never intervenes. One day, tragedy strikes and boy and bear are left to fend for each other. A new relationship develops as one caretaker dies and another takes his place. In a surprise turn of events, boy makes a decision that will change his life and bear's, forever.

What struck me instantly was the sensitive way in which the author, **Adithi Rao** has told the story. Instances which might have made readers cringe, take a moral stand, or feel sad about animal performers have been written with a light touch, allowing young readers to mull over

the situation instead of imposing opinions on them. The story has virtually no dialogues and even the characters are drawn without visible mouths. However the nuanced illustrations by **Aaryama Somayaji** fill this space by bringing out the size difference between the characters and the depth of their expressions. The book is an excellent way to talk to children about animals in entertainment. My son and I spoke at length about whether animals can feel emotions as humans do.

Definitely a great early chapter book to have on your bookshelf!

Editor & Publisher

Benedict Paramanand

CEO - bangalorebizlitfest.com

Please share your article ideas, views, thoughts and feedback to

benedict@managementnext.com

91-80-41126557

<https://sustainabilitynext.in/>

Design

H.S. Ganesh Keerthi

<https://ganeshkeerthi.com/>

© Rishabh Media Network

Information in this publication is drawn from a variety of sources, including published reports, interviews with practicing managers, academia and consultants. While doing so utmost importance is given to authenticity.

Subscribe to



<https://www.magzter.com/IN/ManagementNext-Media-/Sustainability-Next/Business/>

Support Green Journalism

Dear Readers,

SustainabilityNext (SN) has been educating and exciting thousands of entrepreneurs, executives and graduate students, since March 2013 every month, for free. SN's purpose is to educate, inspire and provoke all stakeholders to move swiftly from AWARENESS to ACTION.

SN is by far India's most read digital magazine that covers articles/reports on Green Business, Green Products, Social Entrepreneurship, Green Literature, Green Technology, among others. A Children section was added in mid 2021.

SN launched India's first Green Literature Festival (www.greenlitfest.com) in December 2021.

For SN to grow and stay relevant it needs to transition from a grant-self-funded model to a community-funded as well as a sustainable for-profit business model. Your timely and generous support will truly help its mission.

Why Support SN – <https://sustainabilitynext.in/support/>

Options

Subscribe	Supporter	Benefactor	Sponsor
<u>1000</u>	<u>2500</u>	<u>5000</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>

All supporters get two-year subscription to SN.

You can Gift Subscription to your colleagues/friends/family.

For sponsorships and advertising please contact

[Benedict Paramanand](#)

Publisher & Editor

benedict99@gmail.com