

An all-encompassing endeavour



When Madura Fashion & Lifestyle (MF&L) started its sustainability journey, it naturally decided to follow the Aditya Birla Group's Sustainability Framework. Accordingly, in June 2013, the Apparel & Retail Sector (A&R) leadership, comprising of MF&L, Pantaloons Fashion & Retail Ltd. (PFRL) and Aditya Birla Retail Ltd. (ABRL), adopted the Aditya Birla Group vision statement.

The Aditya Birla Group vision statement declares: "By 2017, the Aditya Birla Group endeavours to become the leading Indian conglomerate for sustainable business practices across its global operations, balancing its economic growth with environmental and societal interests". It addresses various aspects related to the long-term sustainability of the businesses, through defined Sustainability Missions. Leaders at MF&L have been keenly involved in driving these Sustainability Missions.

"We must balance our economic growth with environmental and societal interests by integrating sustainable business practices into our ways of working. We are committed to giving back more than we take from our ecosystem," said **Pranab Barua, Business Director, Apparel & Retail Business, Aditya Birla Group.**

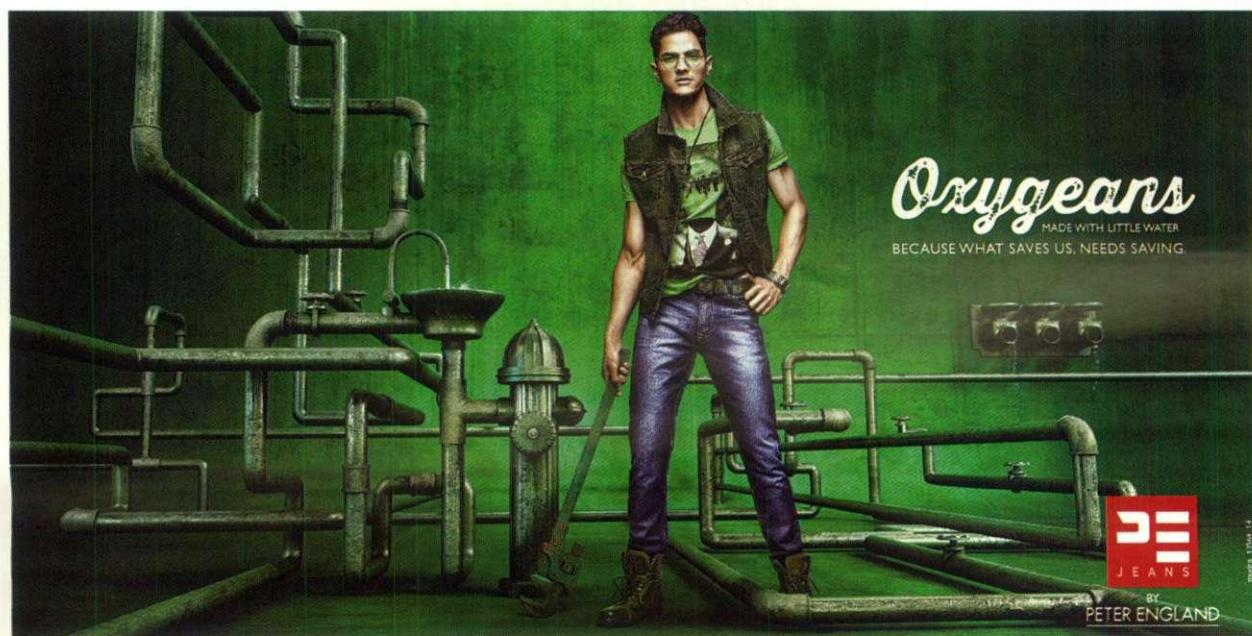
Over the years, the community initiatives at MF&L have evolved from being focused on providing benefit to the com-

munities around its factories, to encompass a larger sphere of activity. In doing so, MF&L has been able to touch 1.25 lakh people across 34 villages and provide employment to close to 15,500 people, 70% of whom are women from semi-rural areas.

"At MF&L, we strive to integrate sustainability into our business by means of conserving natural resources and developing products which have minimum negative impact on the environment and society," said **Ashish Dikshit, Business Head, Madura F & L.**

Corporate Social Responsibility at M F & L

MF&L's Corporate Social Responsibility mission is to create sustainable livelihood for 25,000 people, impact 3,000 girl children and create 100,000 hours of employee volunteering by FY 18. The three key pillars of its CSR focus on communities who hail from socio-economically challenged backgrounds with special emphasis on:



Oxygeans from Peter England is an eco-friendly line of jeanswear that saves approximately 80 litres of water per pair in its manufacturing process

- **Girl Child Education**
- **Building Sustainable Livelihoods, and**
- **Health & Sanitation**

Notably, MF&L's educational initiatives have helped more than 21,000 students, and its healthcare activities have aided over 2,11,000 people. Its teams from CSR, factories, Aditya Birla Centre of Retail Excellence (ABCRe) and employees have together contributed to this endeavour. Some of the key initiatives undertaken by them include '**Help Vidya Write**', '**Give India Campaign**', **blood donation camps**, and support for cancer patients, among others. MF&L employees and brand teams have also contributed generously during natural calamities such as the Uttarakhand and Jammu & Kashmir floods, Nepal earthquake and most recently the Chennai floods with cash and relief material.

MF&L has also progressed much in the three areas identified under the CSR Mission:

For '**Girl Child Education**', MF&L provides education to 50 tribal girl children in the remote parts of Karnataka through its partnership with the Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement. While **Project Gyanarjan** supports higher education coaching for Class 10-12 students, **Project Sukanya** supports 7,000 students in 47 government schools (including 10 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas).

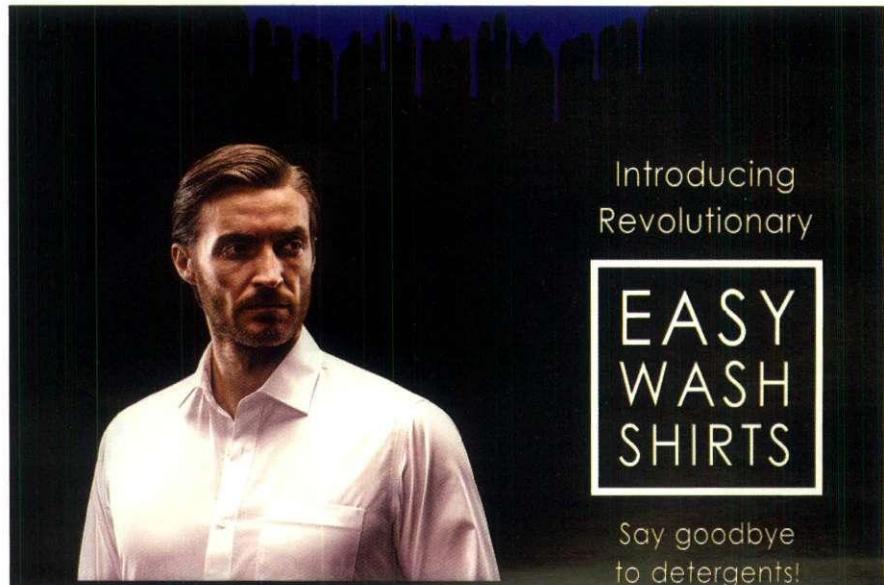
Towards '**Building Sustainable Livelihoods**', **Mission Sankalp** focuses on skill building programmes through Skill-ing Partners for youth from economically challenged backgrounds. Even as this programme is being rolled out nationally, 25 of its members have successfully joined MF&L stores. MF&L has also partnered with CII for **Project Kaushalya** and **Model Career Centres**, focused on vocational skills and providing opportunities for employment respectively.

MF&L's '**Health & Sanitation**' initiatives impact the **local communities around its factories**. For example, last year, it built 150 sanitation facilities at homes situated around its factories.

"MF&L is committed towards realizing our Chairman's sustainability vision by ensuring compliance with the Group's sustainability policies & technical standards, and by adopting industry best practices," said, **Biren Vora, Head-Sustainability & Business Excellence, Apparel & Retail Business, Aditya Birla Group**.

MFL Sustainability Initiatives & Framework

MFL has taken a slew of initiatives to walk the path of sus-



Easy Wash shirts from Van Heusen

tainability. As a process oriented organisation, the journey has evolved:

- a. MF&L has a strong governance structure in place under which all the sustainability initiatives are periodically reviewed by the leadership team.
- b. As an organisation, it has set for itself key benchmarks or Sustainability Metrics to enable efficient tracking of its initiatives towards energy efficiency, carbon and water footprint, sustainable packaging, safety and more.
- c. Regular sustainability training has been instituted for MF&L's leadership team and the rest of the organisation; several intense training sessions have already taken place. Several members of MF&L's top management are certified CII-ITC Sustainability assessors today.
- d. Implementation of sustainability software to enable reporting - Through this software, MF&L is able to keep track of its sustainability initiatives and implement them in a phased manner.

Progress of missions: In its endeavour to make the operations capable of meeting international standards and expectations, MF&L has embarked on several sustainability missions. The progress on some of these missions is tabulated below:

- a. **Energy** - Achieved a significant reduction in energy consumption through LED lighting. Work on this front has been in progress since the last two years to convert all its 2000+ stores to LED lighting. MF&L is also looking at improving operational efficiencies and increasing use of renewable energy.
- b. **Packaging** - A significant percentage of its packaging material today is 'zero pollution' material.
- c. **Sustainable Product** - MF&L adopted the Higg Index, an apparel and footwear industry self-assessment standard for assessing environmental and social sustainability through-

out the supply chain. The Higg Index has been developed by the Sustainable Apparel Coalition (a global non-profit organisation) of which MF & L is a member. At MF&L, Higg Index self-assessment and improvement plan, trainings on Higg Index, sustainable sourcing of raw material or recycled material, life-cycle assessment study are conducted for some products to identify opportunities for reducing the environmental impact on society, and Brand Sustainability Guidelines are related initiatives undertaken by the company,

- d. **Safety** - Safety is a priority at MF&L. Adequate safety training is provided for all employees. This includes reg-



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Audit System, and Restricted Substances List to top vendors of MF&L.

MFL Sustainability mission targets: MF&L has also identified certain Sustainability Mission Targets which are enumerated below:

Green buildings - MF&L is looking to achieve Green Building certifications for identified facilities by 2018. The methods it is using in this regard are as follows:

- MF & L will assess the opportunity or viability for converting existing and new buildings into green buildings.
- It will assess the possibility for improving the sustainability ratings for identified factories.
- It will facilitate a feasibility review for Leadership in En-

Louis Philippe's range of 'Evolve' shirts use natural herbs and mineral dyes in the manufacturing process



ular fire drills, roll out of Occupational, Health & Safety (OHS) Policy, guidelines, standards & checklist, Reward & Recognition programme for safety champions and facilities, safety audits, and Integration of Crisis Management into the Risk Management Framework of the organization. As a result, no major injuries or fatalities have been reported at the work place.

- e. **WASH** - In line with Aditya Birla Group's signing of the WASH pledge, which is an initiative by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) wherein conglomerates reaffirm their commitment to provide employees with safe and sustainable drinking water and sanitation and hygiene, MF & L has undertaken a baseline assessment and is working towards compliance to the WASH pledge over the next two years.
- f. **Water & Carbon foot printing** - MF&L has initiated work towards understanding its water and carbon footprint and the impact it has on the environment.
- g. In line with MF&L's sustainability practices, the company also released its **Vendor Code of Conduct, Laundry**

ergy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification for the remaining facilities.

Carbon foot printing: MF&L aims to be amongst the premier organisations in the retail sector in terms of lowest greenhouse gas emissions, in line with its commitment to the UK-based Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by global conglomerates. It aims to do this through the following methods:

- Conduct capacity building workshops for the carbon mission team
- Identify opportunities for reduction in carbon foot printing
- Analyse the CDP score and submit carbon foot print data to CDP

Water: It is MF&L's aim to achieve water neutral / positive status for facilities under its direct control. It also aims to extend the mission to its Tier 1 suppliers for water re-use and recycling.

Waste: MF & L has carried out a waste inventory study and is in the process of identifying opportunities to reduce waste across the supply chain.

Stakeholder engagement: As part of its engagement with business stakeholders, MF&L regularly engages in a positive dialogue about its operations, products and services across the value chain. MF&L also tracks global megatrends to determine how such externalities can influence its business success. Activities already conducted in this regard include an internal stakeholder engagement survey and external experts' opinions obtained on various sustainability initiatives.

Future proofing: For any organisation, future proofing one's business is important to prepare for the effects of external sustainability themes on its future. At MF&L, it is done by integrating the response to the opportunities and risks into the organisation's strategic business plans. An example of this is the 'scenario planning activity' which was conducted in association with global consultants. MF&L's activities for future proofing are based on the points below.

fruits, and vegetables to dye and print fabrics. Waste generated from the processing can be used for agricultural purposes as a bio fertilizer. Louis Philippe worked in collaboration with Jayshree Textiles to create this exquisite range of linen shirts and trousers.

Peter England: 'Oxygeans' from Peter England is an eco-friendly line of jeans wear that saves approximately 80 litres of water, per pair through indigenously developed washing methods during its production phase.

Van Heusen: Van Heusen partnered with Huntsman Textile to create a combination of Stain Repellent, Soil Release and Anti-Microbial technology to give birth to something that it calls 'Easy Wash'. This technology:

- utilises 50% less energy
- dries quicker
- works in cold water



- Understanding the factors that will influence the future operating context of its businesses in an environment of scarce resources, higher competition, higher cost of resources and tighter regulation.
- Analysing the evolution of the retail business over the next few years and working backwards on action needed to be taken today.

Following these guidelines will ensure that MF&L's future proofing strategy is robust, stress tested and equipped to respond to changing circumstances, with the use of innovative approaches to take advantage of new opportunities.

Sustainability in the manufacturing process

Making good on its 'Sustainable Business Objectives', MF&L puts them into action in the garment manufacturing process. Some examples of sustainable technology used in the apparel business are outlined below:

Louis Philippe: "Evolve" from Louis Philippe is created with natural herbal and mineral dyes. The dyeing technique involves using 100% biodegradable herbs, plants, minerals,

- requires no washing detergents
- increases life cycle of a garment.

Easy Wash shirts allow removal of 21 types of everyday stains without the need for detergent.

Conclusion

As it progresses in the journey of sustainability, Madura Fashion & Lifestyle (MF&L) is positively transforming all key aspects of its activities like corporate, business, operational, social as well as environmental.

Indeed, in line with the Aditya Birla Group's vision statement, Madura Fashion & Lifestyle successfully endeavours to play a holistic role in the overall development of the communities in which it operates. Its journey of sustainability encompasses not just the well-being of the environment but also the socio-economic welfare of the people whose lives it touches in the course of its activities. This journey truly reflects its leadership role in contributing to the positive transformation of the society while also ensuring that it remains at the forefront in achieving comprehensive business excellence. 