

Green Recovery for the Global Pandemic

Sustainability Management Perspective and COVID 19 Crisis



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The world has been achieved a significant growth in the aspect of economics in recent decades mainly with industrialization. Accordingly, an increasing impact on the environment has been made by human activities and environmental concern has become a globally emerged trend in the world even prior to the COVID 19 pandemic. The concept of sustainability emerged with that concern and the general and widely using definition of sustainability is “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (Hakovirta & Denuwara, 2020). In the year 2015, the United Nations (UN) set out 17 Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) addressing the challenges of the world and the people in it face, on a daily basis with the purpose of achieving a better and more sustainable future for all of us.

Sustainability is mainly comprised with three pillars named

economic, environmental, and social which are also named as profits, planet, and people. Even though public health is not directly identified as a pillar of sustainability, it can be considered as part of social sustainability. Moreover, a direct linkage between sustainable development and human health can be seen, when considering the past events and existing frameworks (Anastas, 2013). Further, the World Health Organization (WHO) clarifies that the health perspective on sustainable development as human health cannot be maintained without ecologically sustainable development which can be further described as both social (as in social capital) and physical (as in natural capital) dimensions (Schirnding & Mulholland, 2002).

Further, Zoonoses which are recently emerged or re-emerged, such as Ebola, bird flu, Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS), sudden acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and also

coronavirus (COVID 19) are all linked with human activities. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the main drivers of zoonotic diseases can be identified as changes in the environment, usually the result of human activities, ranging from land-use change to changing climate, changes in animals or human hosts, environmental changes such as modifying wildlife population structure, deforestation reducing biodiversity (Kappelle, 2020). Even though it is difficult to predict that when the next outbreak will come, growing evidences emphasized that the epidemic diseases may become more frequent due to climate change. Therefore, it can be concluded that deviating from the sustainability path makes the public health emergency of international concern such as COVID 19.

Pandemic has been hugely affecting the economic growth and the entire world is gearing up for an extended and difficult recession mainly due to lockdown.

Many businesses have been falling due to this reason and it is predicted that 40% out of them will not be reopened after the recovery. But, there is a fairly advanced trend of steering the business processes toward digital transformation options and also embracing the technologically assisted on-demand workforce arc-

hitectures and platforms with the remote working arrangements. Accordingly, entrepreneurs have invested in modern technologies and new software, video conferencing tools for Video calls and webinars, virtual events, mobile commerce, and no-touch alternate payment options based on IT, cloud, and cybersecurity trends for supporting, monitoring, and employee engagement applications for the fully remote workforce and for digitalizing business processes have emerged during the pandemic.


Accordingly, going green is a remarkable implementation that can be globally seen in the entire world during the pandemic. Mainly, working from home offers lots of positive impacts in

reducing air pollution, climate change, energy use, and accordingly Green House Gas (GHG) emissions. Reducing non-essential travel due to movement restrictions and significant slowdowns quickly reduce the considerable amount of GHG emissions. When comparing with this time period of last year, levels of air pollution in New York city have been reduced by nearly 50% just because of the measures taken to control the virus.

Reduction of water pollution can be seen in different parts of the world due to the decline of dumping domestic and industrial wastes into rivers without treating in developing countries. Furthermore, in the global context, we will be able to meet the Paris Agreement's target of limiting

the aspect of the environment by global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels by 2030 with a significant change of traveling and drastically reduce the carbon footprint.

Accordingly, the world can achieve sustainability needs by reducing GHG emissions, energy usage, wastewater, and air pollution by the digital transformation of the entire world. Especially, companies can consider sustainability as a social responsibility and accelerate and amplify their positive impacts towards sustainability with the lessons learned from COVID 19 pandemic, focusing on long term environmental, social, and human impacts rather than on short-term financial gains.



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