



## EVENT GREENING PRACTICES

**Ms. Sakshi  
Wadhwa**

Assistant Professor, Department of Resource Management and Design Application,  
Lady Irwin College, University of Delhi, Sikandra Road, New Delhi-110001, India

**ABSTRACT** Event management as an industry is expanding rapidly and building considerable global presence. With such advancement, this sector can have a significant impact on the environment keeping in mind the enormous logistics involved. From generating carbon emissions to producing humungous amounts of waste, this industry has altered the environment considerably. This calls for a comprehensive understanding of its operations and consequently, building a sustainable framework for all of its functions. This paper therefore aims at providing a structure for incorporating sustainable practices while organizing events. It also focuses on educating and creating awareness among masses about the necessity of event greening in current times.

**KEYWORDS :** Event Management, Event Greening, Event Greening Indicators, Sustainable practices

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of Event Management

Events form an integral part of everyone's life and vary in their purpose, scale and functionality. Events can have significant negative consequences for the environment and thus, it has become necessary to study event management operations and incorporate sustainable practices in them.

According to an EY (Ernst and Young) – EEMA (Event and Entertainment Management Association) report titled 'Making experiences in India: The events and activations industry'(2015), the events industry has grown at 15% annually from INR 2,800 crore in 2011-12 to INR 4,258 crore in 2014-15. The size of the organized events industry is estimated at around INR 4258 crore and accounts for 47% of the total industry. The unorganized sector is also estimated to be large since there is no entry barrier to initiating operations as an event management service provider.

### 1.2 Event Greening

United Nations Environment Programme (2012) has defined a sustainable event as 'one designed, organized and implemented in a way that minimizes potential negative impacts and leaves a beneficial legacy for the host community and all involved'. Sustainable event management focuses on limiting negative impacts on global climate through a decrease in consumption of non-renewable resources and reduction in quantity of waste generated.

#### 1.2.1 Benefits of event greening

Event managers all across the world work in resource-intensive economies and hence, every domain of event management offers enormous scope for incorporating sustainable event practices. Event greening should begin at the inception of the project and all stakeholders should participate in its successful implementation. Steadfast Greening (2010) & United Nations Environment Programme (2012) have enumerated the following benefits of sustainable event management:

- **Financial Benefits:** Adopting resource conservation and waste management policies results in lowered costs and an increase in return on investment.
- **Positive status in the market:** Event greening contributes to a noticeable validation of an event management company's commitment to sustainability thereby creating a progressive image of the company in the market.
- **Environmental innovation opportunities:** Sustainable event management offers large prospects to use innovative technologies and techniques in the field of event greening.
- **Public sensitization:** Use of sustainable event practices creates awareness among the stakeholders as well as the community regarding its positive contribution in keeping the environment clean.
- **Community benefits:** Event greening offers immense scope in its implementation and in doing so, can benefit the local community by providing job opportunities, expanding supply and use of locally available materials and promoting overall social improvement.
- **Industry revolution:** Integrating sustainable event practices in

the existing event operations will eventually pave way for a sustainable event model comprising event greening standards. It will also introduce environmentally responsible behavioral changes in the working system of all event management companies across the world.

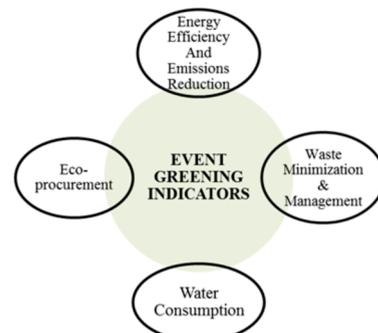
#### 1.2.2 Need for Event Greening

From times immemorial, 'efficiency' has been understood in the context of labor input and financial costs. Few attempts have been made to incorporate the 'way' goods and services are used and delivered under 'efficiency'. However, the imbalance in resource use and resulting output has created a need for evaluating efficiency of existing systems (Department for Environment, 2007).

Every event involves an assembly of a number of participants who contribute deleteriously to the environment through the inconsiderate use of materials, energy, water and generation of waste. Such impacts when projected ahead are a cause of local air and water pollution and have a significant role to play in climate change through greenhouse gas emissions. By consolidating sustainable practices into an event's blueprint and final implementation, event organizers have the opportunity to curtail potential negative impacts and inspire a positive change towards building a sustainable industry (United Nations Environment Programme, 2012). Keeping in mind the current trends of growth in the revenue and consequently in inputs of event management companies across India, event greening has become the need of the hour.

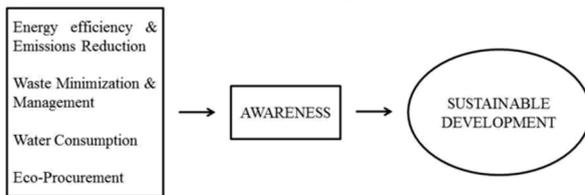
## 2. DISCUSSION

The genesis of sustainable design in event management is a result of a shift in the mindsets of people towards building an ecologically stable world. However, it remains to be a major challenge in India. The first step in event greening is to validate the need for an event before its planning and execution. It is important to look for alternative designs that can obtain the same result. For instance, a college may hold two events consecutively in order to share its resources or may even plan two small events on the same day to reduce the need for travel and other resources. In case an alternative design is impractical and an event needs to be organized, a number of factors can be kept in mind to ensure green event implementation (Fig 1).



**Fig 1: Event Greening Indicators**

As seen above, event greening encompasses four major indicators namely energy efficiency and emissions reduction, waste minimization and management, water consumption and eco-procurement. The following structure (Fig 2) gives a true representation of sustainable event management:



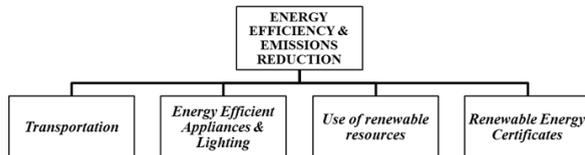
**Fig 2: Proposed Conceptual Framework**

## 2.1 Indicators of event greening

### 2.1.1 Energy Efficiency & Emissions Reduction

Global energy use has increased by 70% since 1900's and most of the energy needs are met through use of non-renewable resources. This in turn has led to an increase in the levels of air-polluting emissions, particularly greenhouse gases and become a primary cause for climate change. To bring about a change in the current system of resource use, the two main aspects that need to be encouraged during event greening are **promotion of energy efficiency** and **use of renewable energy** (Steadfast Greening, 2010).

The following section (Fig 3) provides a framework for integrating energy efficiency and decreasing harmful emissions while planning for various events.



**Fig 3: Conceptual framework for energy efficiency and emissions reduction in event management**

An event's primary energy usage comes from using energy to run lighting, heating and/or cooling at venue locations and using fuel to transport goods, services and people to and from the event (Ministry for the Environment, 2010).

#### • Transportation

Numerous measures can be undertaken to promote green transportation during events as follows:

Choose venue locations that minimize local and long-distance travel for participants by constructing an inventory of the distances of the participants (United Nations Environment Programme, 2012). Alternately, promote use of green transport modes such as buses, trains, shuttles, carpooling etc. Furthermore, energy expenditure and pollution can be mitigated by selecting transport service providers that offer vehicles with alternative fuels and technologies (Steadfast Greening, 2010).

Offsetting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions allows event management companies to neutralise the adverse effect of transportation on the environment. This may be done by investing in clean energy projects or planting more trees.

Transportation of food and other materials to the event can be minimised by favoring local organic food and using locally available materials.

A suitable alternative to transportation is to conduct virtual meetings wherever possible. (McDonough, 1992).

Disincentives could be provided to participants travelling by private vehicles by charging high parking fees or prohibiting parking near the venue (Ministry for the Environment, 2010). Alternatively, incentives could be provided to participants using green transport modes. (Steadfast Greening, 2010).

#### • Energy efficient appliances and lighting

As mentioned before, much of the country's electricity is still generated using non-renewables. Using star-rated and energy efficient

appliances and lighting can help in reducing overall carbon footprint. Wherever possible, make use of natural light and ventilation to reduce use of artificial lighting, air-conditioning and heating at venues (Steadfast Greening, 2010).

#### • Use of renewable resources

Event management companies can opt for renewable sources of energy to meet some part of their energy demand since such resources are still largely untapped. Using biodiesel as a fuel substitute for generators or using solar energy to power electric equipment, small refrigerators, tent lighting, projectors, PA systems etc. are some examples that can go a long way in making an event sustainable.

#### • Renewable energy certificates

Event management companies can purchase renewable energy certificates (RECs) to sponsor the generation of renewable energy corresponding to the amount of energy required for their events. It is a beneficial method of procuring green energy for events without investing in setups such as solar panels or wind farms (Steadfast Greening, 2010).

#### 2.1.2 Waste Minimization & Management

All events generate a tremendous amount of waste which, in the absence of proper management, harms the environment severely. (Steadfast Greening, 2010).

The key components in waste organization are **waste minimization** through prevention and reduction and **waste management** through reuse, recycle and disposal.

Waste minimization deals with reducing the amount of waste generated at source either by opting for alternative methods in manufacturing, processing, storage and consumption processes that prevent waste generation altogether (waste prevention) or by decreasing the amount of resource and energy used during such processes in order to limit the amount of waste generated (waste reduction). Waste reduction can also be done by using eco-friendly resources and energy. For instance, switching to electronic media and eliminating the need for paper altogether.

Waste management focuses on processing waste after its creation through effective techniques of reuse, recycle and disposal. Waste disposal plays a major role in event greening since waste generation is an inevitable part of event management. It is important to segregate waste at source before looking at effective disposal options. Event management companies can collaborate with numerous organizations working in the area of waste management to ensure proper waste disposal.

#### • Food Waste

Food waste can be prevented and minimized in a number of ways as follows:

**Reduce:** Serving food and condiments in bulk instead of single servings and establishing exact number of participants to avoid wastage can help in reducing overall food waste (City of Vancouver, n.d.)

**Recycle:** Composting of food and other organic waste can help divert such waste from the landfill and contribute to a nutrient rich soil (stopwaste, n.d.)

**Disposal:** Donating leftover food to organizations specializing in distributing edible leftovers to people in need is a good option for optimum food disposal. This will not only help in contributing to a social cause, but also prevent release of additional GHG emissions through decay of food waste at landfills (Steadfast Greening, 2010)

#### • Material Waste

Material waste can be prevented and minimized in a number of ways as follows:

**Reduce:** Reducing unnecessary packaging of materials by buying in bulk or buying only what is required, switching to electronic media, avoiding use of disposable items by using reusable items during the event and using eco-friendly and other materials are some viable options for waste minimization (Tufts University, n.d.). Canvassing of events through registration and communication with participants has immense potential to reduce negative impacts and generate awareness. (United Nations Environment Programme, 2012)

**Reuse:** Materials like banners, stands etc. can be reused in future

events having the same purpose. (United Nations Environment Programme, 2012).

**Recycle:** The range of recycling options may vary between regions and in costs, however, some amount of recycling is manageable at every level of an event (Ministry for the Environment, 2010). A number of materials used at an event can be recycled effectively such as paper, wood, cardboard, plastics & cloth (stopwaste, n.d.).

**Disposal:** After adopting fair practices of reduce, reuse and recycle, event management companies should dispose the leftover waste after proper segregation and through appropriate channels.

### 2.1.3 Water Consumption

Water is fast becoming a scarce resource with only 0.007% available for drinking purposes (Ahmad et al., 2013).

The following measures (United Nations Environment Programme, 2012 and Steadfast Greening, 2010) can be undertaken to ensure judicious use of water during events:

- Select venues that implement water conservation practices and use water-efficient appliances
- Provide a water dispenser with reusable glasses instead of serving bottled water
- Encourage participants to bring their own water

### 2.1.4 Eco-procurement

Purchasing goods and services is a fundamental activity in event planning. Eco-procurement refers to choosing products and services that are eco-friendly (Ahmad et al., 2013). In addition to this, it supports economic development and reduces transportation costs by promoting use of locally available materials and services (Steadfast Greening, 2010). Other benefits include reducing the amount of waste sent to landfills, mitigating GHG emissions and overall non-renewable resource use (Ministry for the Environment, 2010). Eco-procurement can be done through the following methods:

Giving preference to local caterers who use seasonal and organic products will be beneficial for the environment as well as the community (Steadfast Greening, 2010). Similarly, using sustainable materials for the production of event related products such as gifts, bags, banners, decorative items, signage etc. will have a positive impact on the environment (Environment Planning and Climate Protection Department, 2011).

### 2.2 Awareness

Creating a green culture often involves encouraging and motivating people to adopt sustainable practices in all spheres of their lives. Event management companies network with numerous people (participants, sponsors, vendors, venue owners etc.) in order to manage their events and this serves as a grand opportunity to inspire a positive change and create a legacy that will last long after the culmination of an event. Repeated efforts of event management companies to host sustainable events and generate cognizance about sustainable practices will eventually facilitate permanent behavior changes in people and lead to sustainable development.

## CONCLUSION

The events industry is expanding rapidly and increasing its contribution to the GDP annually. In such a scenario, it has become imperative to organize events responsibly and sustainably in order to minimize potential negative impacts on the environment. Sustainable event management (event greening) can be accomplished by incorporating sustainable design and methods in the areas of energy utilization, waste management, procurement of goods and services and water consumption. That being said, generating awareness among the masses about the need and significance of event greening plays an even larger role in ensuring a permanent shift in the mind-sets and behaviors of the society towards leading a sustainable lifestyle.

The status of event management as an industry is largely informal and inconsistent owing to lack of a structured academic front and absence of mandates such as certification and licensing for practicing in this sector. Furthermore, the concept of sustainability is relatively new and although some event management companies are making conscious efforts to modify their business models in view of sustainable practices, majority are still struggling to stabilize themselves in the marketplace.

Thus, the best way forward is to establish a formal body that defines the scope of competencies necessary to practice in this industry, incorporates event greening practices in the existing framework of event management operations and links this sustainable business model across all companies and the community.

## REFERENCES

1. Ahmad, N. L., Rashid, W. E. W., & et al. (2013). Green Event Management and Initiatives for Sustainable Business Growth. 4(5). Retrieved September 23, 2017 from <http://www.ijtef.org/papers/311-B00052.pdf>
2. City of Vancouver. (n.d.). Green Events Planning Guide. Retrieved September 23, 2017 from <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/green-events-planning-guide.pdf>
3. Department for Environment, F. and R. A. (DEFRA). (2007). The Sustainable Exhibition Industry Project. Retrieved September 21, 2017 from [http://www.ebc.info.co.uk/Website\\_files/SeXI\\_Q4\\_riv4.pdf](http://www.ebc.info.co.uk/Website_files/SeXI_Q4_riv4.pdf)
4. Environment Planning and Climate Protection Department, Et. M. (2011). Green Event Guideline. Durban. Retrieved August 29, 2017 from [http://www.durban.gov.za/City\\_Services/development\\_planning\\_management/environmental\\_planning\\_climate\\_protection/Publications/Documents/GreenEvent\\_A5\\_complete.pdf](http://www.durban.gov.za/City_Services/development_planning_management/environmental_planning_climate_protection/Publications/Documents/GreenEvent_A5_complete.pdf)
5. McDonough, W. (1992). The Hannover Principles Design for Sustainability. Retrieved September 21, 2017 from <http://www.mcdonough.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Hannover-Principles-1992.pdf>
6. Ministry for the Environment. (2010). Major Event Greening Guide. Retrieved September 21, 2017 from [www.mfe.govt.nz](http://www.mfe.govt.nz)
7. Steadfast Greening. (2010). Smart Events Handbook. Cape Town: City of Cape Town. Retrieved August 29, 2017 from [https://www.cticc.co.za/sites/default/files/u123/Cape\\_Town\\_Smart\\_Events\\_Handbook.pdf](https://www.cticc.co.za/sites/default/files/u123/Cape_Town_Smart_Events_Handbook.pdf)
8. Stopwaste. (n.d.). Special Event Best Practices Guide. Retrieved October 3, 2017 from <http://www.stopwaste.org/sites/default/files/Documents/special-events-swp.pdf>
9. Tufts University. (n.d.). Green Event Resources. Retrieved September 23, 2017 from <http://sustainability.tufts.edu/wp-content/uploads/Green-Event-Resources.pdf>
10. United Nations Environment Programme. (2012). Sustainable Events Guide. Nairobi, Kenya: UNEP. Retrieved September 2, 2017 from [http://www.ecoprocura.eu/fileadmin/editor\\_files/Sustainable\\_Events\\_Guide\\_May\\_30\\_2012\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.ecoprocura.eu/fileadmin/editor_files/Sustainable_Events_Guide_May_30_2012_FINAL.pdf)