

## Prescription for Greener Future – Pharma industry driving environmental sustainability

25 July 2023 | Views | By Sanjeev Jain, Jt. Managing Director, Akums Drugs & Pharmaceuticals

**This article explores how the pharmaceutical industry is driving environmental sustainability and the positive outcomes it brings**

In recent years, the call for environmental sustainability has grown louder across various industries. With its significant impact on global health, the pharmaceutical sector has recognised the need to align its practices with environmental conservation. Through innovative measures and a commitment to sustainable development, the industry is playing a vital role in paving the way for a greener future.

### **Reducing Carbon Footprint:**

The pharmaceutical industry has been actively working to reduce its carbon footprint through various initiatives. From manufacturing processes to transportation and packaging, pharmaceutical companies are adopting cleaner technologies and sustainable practices. Many companies have implemented energy-efficient measures in their production facilities, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption. Furthermore, the sector is exploring renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power to meet its energy needs, thereby reducing reliance on fossil fuels.

### **Waste Management and Recycling:**

Proper waste management and recycling are critical for minimizing the environmental impact of pharmaceutical operations. The industry is increasingly investing in advanced waste treatment technologies to ensure the safe disposal of pharmaceutical waste, including expired or unused medications. Moreover, pharmaceutical companies are implementing robust recycling programs to repurpose packaging materials and reduce plastic waste. These efforts not only contribute to environmental sustainability but also help prevent contamination of water sources and ecosystems.

### **Sustainable Supply Chains:**

The pharmaceutical industry recognizes the importance of sustainable supply chains to achieve environmental goals.

Companies are working closely with suppliers to ensure responsible sourcing of raw materials. This includes selecting suppliers that adhere to ethical and sustainable practices, such as sustainable farming and harvesting methods. Additionally, efforts are being made to reduce the carbon footprint associated with transportation and logistics by optimizing routes and exploring greener alternatives like electric vehicles.

#### **Clean Water Management, Water Recycling, and Discharge:**

Through the adoption of water recycling, discharge initiatives, and clean water management practices, the pharmaceutical industry is actively working towards a more sustainable future. Companies are executing water recycling systems to treat and reuse water within their manufacturing processes. This reduces the reliance on freshwater sources and minimizes the overall water footprint. Technologies like advanced filtration, ultrafiltration, and reverse osmosis are used to remove contaminants, allowing the treated water to be reused for non-critical applications such as cleaning or irrigation. These days, Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD) systems are witnessing huge demand in the pharmaceutical industry as they enable companies to minimize wastewater discharge. These systems employ advanced treatment processes, such as evaporation and crystallization, to recover and concentrate dissolved solids, while the purified water is recycled back into the manufacturing process. This way, the pharmaceutical companies can reduce the environmental impact associated with wastewater disposal.

#### **Research and Development for Green Solutions:**

The pharmaceutical industry is investing in research and development to discover innovative green solutions. This involves exploring alternative manufacturing processes that require fewer resources and produce less waste. Companies are also investing in the development of environmentally friendly drug formulations, such as water-soluble medications that minimize the release of harmful substances into the environment. By embracing sustainable practices at the R&D stage, the industry is ensuring a greener future throughout the lifecycle of pharmaceutical products.

#### **Collaborative Partnerships and Advocacy:**

To drive environmental sustainability, the pharmaceutical industry is actively engaging in collaborative partnerships and advocating for sustainable practices. Many companies are joining industry alliances and working closely with environmental organizations to share knowledge and best practices. Furthermore, pharmaceutical companies are engaging with policymakers and regulatory bodies to encourage the adoption of environmentally friendly regulations and standards. By leveraging their influence, the industry is fostering a collective effort to create a greener future. As the industry continues to prioritize environmental conservation, it sets an inspiring example for other sectors and reinforces the notion that environmental sustainability is not just an option but a necessity for the well-being of our planet.

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