

# Unilever Sustainability Plan

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## ABSTRACT

Unilever is a multinational consumer good company with wide range of products. In 2010, Unilever opted for Unilever Sustainability Living Plan (USLP). The Plan comprises of three categories – enhancing livelihood, well-being, reducing environmental impact. But we will focus on Environmental impact. The research paper comprises of how effective the plan is and what measures can be taken to improve it.

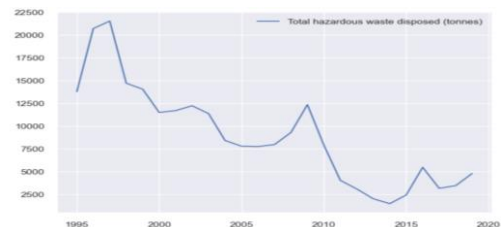
## INTRODUCTION

A sustainability strategy details how the company aims to achieve economic, environmental, and social sustainability goals. The idea of enhancing industrial growth by sustainability plans is on the trend in the industrial market. Unilever is one of the leading businesses with sustainable development objectives. It is one of the big manufacturers that is committed to boosting development through social and environmental growth. Unilever has a sustainability strategy called the Unilever Sustainability Living Plan (USLP). Unilever aims to take the initiative through its Unilever Sustainable Living Plan (USLP), to help a billion people take action to improve their health and well-being, to reduce the environmental effects of its goods and enhancement of livelihood. The Unilever Sustainable Living Plan (USLP) is a blueprint for achieving success in the industry while detaching its impact on the environment from financial development and expanding its positive impact on society. Since the announcement of the 2010 Unilever Sustainable Living Initiative, Unilever has had a 'zero waste mind-set'. But the real question is whether these strategies are successful or not. Our study focuses on whether the Unilever Sustainability Living Plan is successful. The study will examine the recovery of zero waste by Unilever using the amount of waste during processing. The research would expose the facts

as to whether the sustainability targets had a real effect on the environment or whether it was a marketing tactic to boost sales.

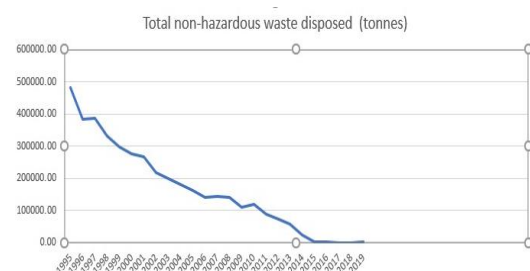
## METHODOLOGY:

The study focuses on Exploratory Data Analysis and correlation to obtain the results. The amount of waste disposed by the company affects the level of environment degradation caused due to Unilever. We analysed the total waste disposed including hazardous and non-hazardous waste to check if Unilever Sustainability plan is effective in reducing its effect on the environment. The research also studies on the relation of waste disposed to chemical oxygen demand level. This helps in examining if the reduction in waste disposed will reduce the required levels of Chemical Oxygen demand and requirement of the COD test or not.



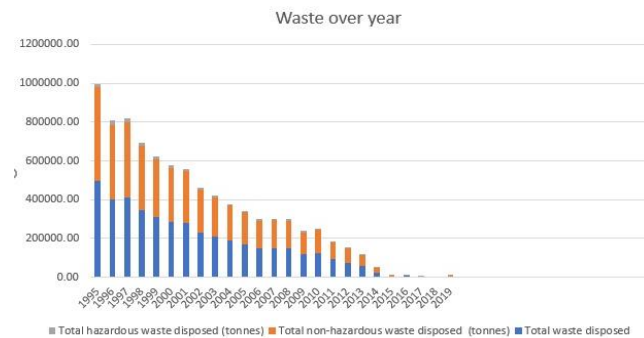
Total Hazardous waste disposed over the years

This graph shows the change in the level of the total hazardous waste disposed by the company during the period 1995 to 2019. The amount of hazardous waste disposed increased between 1995 and 1996. Then the company witnessed a decrease till 2007. It again increased in 2008 but after 2009 it showed a significant decrease again due to the launch of USLP.



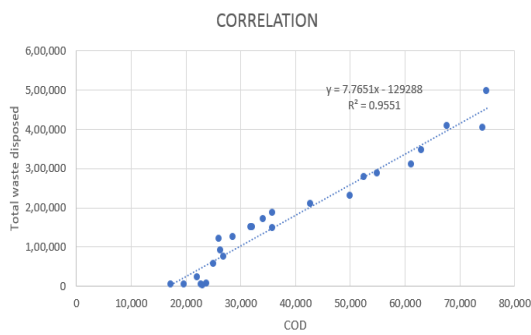
Total Non-Hazardous waste disposed over the years

This graph shows the change in the level of the total non-hazardous waste disposed by Unilever during the period 1995 to 2019. There was a steady decrease in the level of total non-hazardous waste as the graph depicts.



Total waste disposed and Total Non-Hazardous Waste disposed over the years

By observing the graph, we can see that there was a decrease in the amount of total waste including the hazardous and non-hazardous waste. The amount reduced to minimal by 2019.



Relation between Total Waste Disposed and Chemical Oxygen Demand

The graph depicts the relationship between the total amount of waste disposed and the Chemical Oxygen Demand of the waste. Chemical Oxygen Demand is amount of oxygen used to chemically oxidize organic water contaminants to inorganic final products. The total waste disposed by the company has a linear relationship with the Chemical oxygen demand of the waste materials.

## RESULT:

The study shows that the Unilever Living Sustainability Plan did help to reduce the levels of waste disposed (hazardous and non-hazardous) to a great extent. The amount of waste disposed has a linear relationship with the chemical oxygen demand level of the waste materials. With the amount of waste disposed reduces it will help in

decreasing the COD levels and thus lessening the requirement of the COD test and reducing its impact on the environment.



This image is the Unilever Footprint of 2010 showing the proportion of greenhouse gas emissions at different stages of the product lifecycle.



The above image is the Unilever footprint of 2012 highlighting the amount of Greenhouse gases emitted during the process at different stage.

We observe that Unilever was not able to reduce its levels of greenhouse gas emissions at any stage in these two footprints. Although they were able to reduce GHG emissions by 1 percent at the raw materials stage, those levels increased by 1 percent at the manufacturing stage.

In 2010, Unilever was focusing on reducing their GHG emissions by 15% by 2012. But they were not able to reduce their GHG levels as desired. The greenhouse gas footprint of the making and use of our products has reduced by around 6% per consumer use in 2012.

The one problem Unilever face with waste is sachet waste, which are small. They are trying to use technology to resolve this. Many of their packaging ends in Ocean, landfill which hinders their 100% sustainability plan. The waste that accumulates in ocean, landfill not only hinders sustainability but also effects ecosystem there. Aquatic life is affected, land fertility is degraded, and other problems take place.

In 1995, a total of 497930 tonnes of waste was disposed, if we consider that 0.02% ends up in ocean then around 98 tonnes are enough to hinder and ruin the ecosystem. Right now, we have not considered the effect on landfills.

The waste has decreased overtime, but now it is time to deal with the waste that was dumped in

previous year and help to reduce proportion of hazardous waste.

The one thing that USLP comprised of is they want 100% of their packing to be reusable, recyclable, or compostable by 2025. In a survey done by Unilever they realised that sustainability is difficult without involvement of consumers. About 20-25% consumers want sustainability, but they lack proper knowledge.

Measures that can be taken to achieve 100% sustainability.

- Awareness Campaigns
- Try to reuse the waste that was dumped in ocean, landfills. The plastic that ends up in ocean gains strength overtime, which nowadays is used to make roads.
- Clean water bodies

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