

Corporate Water Footprint Assessment: The Case of Tata Steel

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Abstract : Water covers 70 per cent of our planet; however, freshwater is incredibly rare, and scarce has been listed as the highest impact global risk. The problems related to freshwater scarcity multiplies with the human population having more than doubled coupled with climate change, changing water cycles leading to droughts and floods and a rise in water pollution. Businesses, governments, and local communities are constrained by water scarcity and are facing growing challenges to their growth and sustainability. Water foot printing as an indicator for water use was introduced in 2002. Business water footprint measures the total water consumed to produce the goods and services it provides. It is a combination of the water that goes into the production and manufacturing of a product or service and the water used throughout the supply chain, as well as during the use of the product. A case study approach was applied describing the efforts of Tata Steel. It is based on a series of semi-structured in-depth interviews with top executives of the company as well as observation and content analysis of internal and external documents about the company's efforts in sustainable water management. Tata Steel draws water required for industrial use from surface water sources, primarily perennial rivers and streams, internal reservoirs and water from municipal sources. The focus of the present study was to explore Tata Steel's engagement in sustainable water management focusing on water foot printing accounting as a tool to account for water use in the steel supply chain at its Jamshedpur plant. The findings enabled the researchers to conclude that no sources of water are adversely affected by the company's production of steel at Jamshedpur.

Keywords : sustainability, corporate responsibility water management, risk management, business engagement

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