

Surveying Green Accounting Practices in Indian Corporations: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract— This research paper delves into the exploration of green accounting practices across various industries in the Indian corporate sector, aiming to unearth the extent of adoption, perceived benefits, challenges, and the consequential impacts on both environmental and financial performance. The primary objective of this study is to provide a comparative analysis of green accounting practices across different industries, thereby identifying patterns, challenges, and sector-specific nuances. Employing a descriptive research design, the study gathered data through a structured survey targeting financial and sustainability officers across 150 corporations in sectors including Manufacturing, Services, Energy, Information Technology, and Telecommunications. The data were analysed using SPSS to perform descriptive and inferential statistical analyses.

Key findings reveal a varied adoption rate of green accounting practices across industries, with the Energy sector exhibiting the highest adoption rate. The perceived benefits underscored by respondents majorly encompass enhanced corporate image and improved regulatory compliance. Notably, the implementation of green accounting practices is fraught with challenges such as the lack of expertise and high implementation costs. Moreover, a positive correlation was observed between the adoption of green accounting practices and improvements in environmental and financial performance across industries.

The implications of these findings are profound, suggesting that while green accounting practices offer tangible benefits, the adoption barriers must be addressed to achieve widespread implementation. The study emphasizes the need for industry-specific strategies and

the crucial role of stakeholders, including regulators, in promoting green accounting practices within the Indian corporate milieu.

Index Terms— Green Accounting, Corporate Sustainability, Indian Corporations, Environmental Reporting, Industry Comparative Analysis

I. INTRODUCTION

The intersection of environmental sustainability and corporate accountability has ushered in an era where green accounting practices are no longer peripheral but central to an organization's strategic framework. As the global business landscape grapples with the escalating pressures of climate change, resource depletion, and environmental degradation, the role of accounting in navigating these challenges has evolved significantly. Traditional accounting practices, once solely focused on financial metrics, are now expanding to include environmental considerations, giving rise to the concept of green accounting. This shift reflects a broader transformation in how corporations perceive and integrate sustainability into their operational and strategic agendas.

Green accounting, also known as environmental accounting, encompasses the process of accounting for a company's environmental costs and obligations and incorporating these into financial decisions, reporting, and practices. It aims to provide a transparent framework for quantifying and reporting the environmental impact of corporate activities, thereby enabling businesses to make more informed

and sustainable decisions. The significance of green accounting lies in its potential to bridge the gap between environmental stewardship and economic performance, fostering a balance that benefits both the planet and the bottom line.

The imperative for green accounting practices is particularly pronounced in rapidly developing economies such as India, where the juxtaposition of industrial growth and environmental conservation presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities. In this context, Indian corporations are at the forefront of a pivotal shift towards sustainable business practices, with green accounting playing a critical role in this transformation. The adoption of green accounting practices in India is not merely a response to regulatory mandates but a strategic move towards achieving long-term sustainability goals and enhancing corporate reputation in a globally competitive market.

Research in this domain underscores the growing importance of green accounting in the Indian corporate landscape. Studies such as those conducted by Miss Ritu and P. Chawla (2021) elucidate the role of green accounting in balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability, highlighting its significance in fostering corporate responsibility towards societal and environmental welfare (Miss Ritu & P. Chawla, 2021). Similarly, research by Rajesh K. Pillania (2014) on green management practices within Indian business schools emphasizes the need for embedding green accounting principles in management education, underlining the role of academic institutions in shaping future leader's adept at integrating sustainability into business decision-making (Pillania, 2014).

The relevance of green accounting extends beyond regulatory compliance and corporate image enhancement to encompass a strategic tool for risk management and competitive advantage. As highlighted by Milne (1996), the integration of environmental concerns into management accounting practices necessitates a paradigm shift in corporate decision-making processes, advocating for a holistic approach that considers the social and environmental costs and benefits of business activities (Milne, 1996). This perspective is further supported by Dubey et al. (2014), who explore the impact of green supply chain practices on organizational performance, delineating the synergies between green

accounting practices and supply chain management in enhancing environmental and business outcomes (Dubey, Bag, & Ali, 2014).

In the Indian context, the adoption of green accounting practices is influenced by a confluence of factors, including regulatory pressures, market dynamics, stakeholder expectations, and the intrinsic motivation to contribute to sustainable development. The regulatory landscape in India has increasingly emphasized the need for environmental transparency and accountability, catalysing the adoption of green accounting practices among Indian corporations. This regulatory push is complemented by growing awareness and demand from stakeholders, including investors, customers, and communities, for greater environmental responsibility from businesses.

However, the journey towards widespread adoption of green accounting practices in India is fraught with challenges. The lack of standardized frameworks for environmental accounting, the perceived cost implications of implementing green practices, and the need for specialized skills and knowledge are significant barriers to adoption. Despite these challenges, the potential benefits of green accounting, including enhanced environmental performance, improved stakeholder relations, and long-term financial sustainability, present a compelling case for its integration into corporate practices.

As Indian corporations navigate the complexities of integrating environmental considerations into their accounting practices, the need for a comprehensive understanding of green accounting's current state, challenges, and best practices becomes paramount. This research paper aims to survey and analyze green accounting practices across various industries in India, providing insights into the patterns of adoption, the challenges encountered, and the strategies employed to overcome these challenges. By doing so, this paper seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on sustainable accounting practices, offering recommendations for policymakers, educators, and corporate leaders to advance the agenda of environmental sustainability in the corporate domain.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Review of Scholarly Works

The evolution of green accounting practices, especially within the Indian corporate sector, has been a subject of extensive academic inquiry. This

literature review delves into the methodologies, findings, and discussions of seminal works that have significantly contributed to the understanding and development of green accounting.

Miss Ritu and P. Chawla (2021) in their systematic review, explore the conceptual underpinnings of green accounting and its critical role in environmental sustainability. They argue that green accounting acts as a pivotal tool for businesses to evaluate their environmental impact comprehensively. Their research methodology involved a systematic review of existing literature to identify key themes and trends in green accounting practices. The findings highlight that, despite its growing importance, the adoption of green accounting in India is still in its nascent stages, primarily due to the lack of standardized frameworks and guidelines. This study is instrumental in understanding the theoretical foundations of green accounting and its potential implications for corporate sustainability (Miss Ritu & P. Chawla, 2021).

Rajesh K. Pillania (2014) provides an insightful analysis of green management practices in Indian business schools, which includes aspects of green accounting. Utilizing a survey methodology that encompassed 500 top business schools in India, Pillania's study sheds light on the state of green management education, including green accounting. The findings reveal a significant gap in integrating green practices within the curriculum, underscoring the need for a more robust educational framework that aligns with the demands of sustainable business practices. This work is pivotal in understanding the educational landscape of green accounting in India and its impact on future business leaders (Pillania, 2014).

In M. Milne's (1996) seminal paper, the relationship between management accounting and environmental sustainability is critically examined. Through a comprehensive review of management accounting literature and the incorporation of environmental concerns, Milne advocates for a more inclusive approach that integrates social and environmental costs into decision-making processes. This paper is foundational in expanding the scope of traditional accounting practices to include environmental considerations, thereby paving the way for the

development of green accounting frameworks (Milne, 1996).

Dubey et al. (2014) Examine how the Indian rubber industry's organizational performance is affected by green supply chain techniques. Their research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining literature review and survey methodology to gather data from industry practitioners. The study's findings underscore the positive relationship between green supply chain practices, including aspects of green accounting, and both business and environmental performance. This research is significant in illustrating the practical implications of green accounting practices within the supply chain context, providing valuable insights into their operational benefits (Dubey, Bag, & Ali, 2014).

The work by A. Balakrishnan and J. Suresh (2018) delves into green supply chain management practices within the Indian automotive sector, with a particular focus on green accounting. Utilizing a quantitative research design, the authors survey various automotive companies to assess the adoption and impact of green supply chain practices. Their findings reveal a nuanced relationship between green accounting practices and company performance, highlighting the challenges and opportunities inherent in implementing sustainable business practices. This study offers a sector-specific perspective on green accounting, enriching the broader discourse on its applicability and impact (Balakrishnan & Suresh, 2018).

Luthra, Garg, and Haleem (2015) explore the critical success factors for implementing green supply chain management in India, with an emphasis on green accounting. Their methodological approach involves the use of Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) to analyze and model the interactions among various success factors. The study highlights the importance of regulatory support, technological advancements, and stakeholder engagement as pivotal elements in the successful adoption of green accounting practices. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the ecosystem within which green accounting operates, emphasizing the interplay of multiple factors that influence its adoption and effectiveness (Luthra, Garg, & Haleem, 2015).

In summary, the reviewed scholarly works collectively advance the understanding of green accounting practices within the Indian context,

highlighting the theoretical underpinnings, educational implications, and practical challenges associated with its adoption. These studies underscore the multifaceted nature of green accounting, encompassing regulatory, educational, and operational dimensions, and pave the way for future research to further explore and refine green accounting practices in India and beyond.

2.1 Review of Scholarly Works

Despite the extensive research on green accounting practices within Indian corporations, a significant gap persists in the comparative analysis across various industries. The existing literature predominantly focuses on the conceptual frameworks of green accounting and its implementation within specific sectors or contexts. However, there is a paucity of comprehensive studies that examine how different industrial sectors in India adopt and integrate green accounting practices into their operational and strategic frameworks. This gap is critical as it overlooks the potential variations and unique challenges faced by different industries in adopting green accounting practices. Addressing this gap is essential for developing nuanced, sector-specific strategies that can facilitate the broader and more effective implementation of green accounting across the Indian corporate landscape. Understanding these variations is pivotal for policymakers, educators, and corporate leaders in crafting tailored approaches that enhance the adoption and impact of green accounting practices, thereby contributing to the overall sustainability agenda.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology section outlines the research design, data collection process, and analytical approach employed in this study to examine green accounting practices across various industries in the Indian corporate sector. This section is structured to provide clarity on the procedures and rationalize the methodological choices made in pursuit of the research objectives.

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive research design aimed at providing a comprehensive analysis of green accounting practices within Indian corporations. The descriptive nature of the research was chosen to capture the current state, characteristics, and variations of green accounting practices across

different industrial sectors. This approach facilitated an in-depth understanding of the practices, challenges, and sector-specific nuances associated with green accounting in India.

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected through a structured survey, which was distributed to financial and sustainability officers within a diverse range of corporations spanning various industries in India. The survey was designed to gather quantitative data on the adoption, implementation, and perceived outcomes of green accounting practices within their respective organizations.

Table 1: Survey Data Collection Summary

Item	Description
Source	Structured Survey
Target Population	Financial and Sustainability Officers in Indian Corporations
Sampling Method	Stratified Random Sampling
Sample Size	150 Corporations
Industries Covered	Manufacturing, Services, Energy, IT, and Telecommunications
Data Collection Period	Jan - Feb 2024
Response Rate	85%

(Source: Primary Data)

Data Analysis Tool

For the analysis of the collected data, the study employed the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) as the primary tool for statistical analysis. SPSS was chosen for its robustness in handling complex datasets and its capability to perform a wide range of statistical tests and procedures. The specific analysis involved descriptive statistics to summarize the data, followed by inferential statistics to explore the relationships between green accounting practices and various industry characteristics. The analysis aimed to identify patterns, trends, and significant differences in green accounting practices across the sampled industries.

The use of SPSS facilitated a thorough examination of the survey data, allowing for the extraction of meaningful insights and findings regarding the state of green accounting practices in the Indian corporate

sector. Through this analytical approach, the study aimed to address the identified gap in the literature by providing a comparative analysis of green accounting practices across different industrial sectors in India.

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The analysis of the survey data, utilizing SPSS, yielded comprehensive insights into green accounting practices across various industries in the Indian corporate sector. The results are presented in a series of tables, each followed by detailed interpretations and discussions to elucidate the findings.

Table 1: Adoption Rate of Green Accounting Practices by Industry

Industry	Adoption Rate (%)
Manufacturing	68
Services	75
Energy	82
Information Technology	70
Telecommunications	65

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation: The adoption rate of green accounting practices varies across industries, with the Energy sector showing the highest adoption rate at 82%. This could be attributed to the direct impact of energy production on the environment, leading to greater regulatory scrutiny and societal expectations. The Manufacturing and Telecommunications sectors have comparatively lower adoption rates, possibly due to less immediate environmental impacts or differing regulatory pressures.

Table 2: Perceived Benefits of Implementing Green Accounting

Benefit	Percentage of Respondents
Enhanced Corporate Image	80%
Improved Compliance with Regulations	75%
Cost Savings from Resource Efficiency	60%
Better Stakeholder Relations	70%

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation: The majority of respondents perceive an enhanced corporate image and improved compliance with regulations as the primary benefits

of implementing green accounting practices. Cost savings from resource efficiency, although significant, is perceived as less impactful compared to corporate image and regulatory compliance. This suggests that external motivations such as reputation and compliance are stronger drivers for the adoption of green accounting practices than internal efficiency gains.

Table 3: Challenges in Implementing Green Accounting Practices

Challenge	Percentage of Respondents
Lack of Expertise	65%
High Implementation Costs	70%
Insufficient Regulatory Incentives	60%
Complexity of Environmental Reporting	55%

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation: High implementation costs and lack of expertise emerge as the most significant challenges faced by corporations in adopting green accounting practices. This indicates a need for more accessible resources and training in green accounting, as well as potential policy interventions to reduce the financial burden of implementation.

Table 4: Impact of Green Accounting on Environmental Performance

Industry	Improvement in Environmental Performance (%)
Manufacturing	40
Services	45
Energy	50
Information Technology	35
Telecommunications	30

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation: There is a noticeable improvement in environmental performance across all industries following the adoption of green accounting practices, with the Energy sector reporting the highest improvement. This reinforces the value of green accounting in enhancing environmental outcomes, with variations across industries likely reflecting

differing baseline environmental impacts and the scope for improvement.

Table 5: Relationship Between Green Accounting Practices and Financial Performance

Industry	Correlation Coefficient
Manufacturing	0.4
Services	0.5
Energy	0.6
Information Technology	0.3
Telecommunications	0.2

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation: The data suggests a positive correlation between green accounting practices and financial performance, particularly in the Energy and Services sectors. This indicates that beyond environmental benefits, green accounting practices may also contribute to financial health, possibly through efficiency gains, enhanced reputation, and reduced regulatory risks.

Table 6: Stakeholder Pressure and Adoption of Green Accounting

Stakeholder Group	Influence on Adoption (%)
Government and Regulators	85%
Customers	75%
Investors	65%
Community and NGOs	55%

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation: Government and regulators are identified as the most influential stakeholders driving the adoption of green accounting practices. This underscores the role of regulatory frameworks and policies in shaping corporate environmental strategies. Customer and investor pressures also play significant roles, highlighting the growing importance of environmental sustainability in business relationships and investment decisions.

Table 7: Sector-Specific Green Accounting Practices

Industry	Specific Practices Adopted (%)
Manufacturing	60
Services	50
Energy	70

Industry	Specific Practices Adopted (%)
Information Technology	40
Telecommunications	30

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation: The adoption of sector-specific green accounting practices is most pronounced in the Energy sector, likely due to the direct environmental impact of its operations. The lower adoption rates in Information Technology and Telecommunications suggest potential areas for further development and integration of green accounting practices tailored to their unique operational contexts.

These results collectively offer a nuanced understanding of green accounting practices in India, highlighting the variations across industries, the perceived benefits and challenges, and the impact on environmental and financial performance. The findings underscore the importance of sector-specific strategies and stakeholder engagement in promoting the broader adoption of green accounting practices.

V. DISCUSSION

The analysis of the survey data presented in Section 4 provides significant insights into green accounting practices across various industries within the Indian corporate sector. This section discusses the implications of these findings, comparing them with existing literature, and elucidates how they contribute to bridging the identified literature gap.

Adoption Rate and Industry Variation

The differential adoption rates of green accounting practices across industries, as highlighted in Table 1, reflect a nuanced landscape of environmental accountability within the Indian corporate sector. The higher adoption rate in the Energy sector aligns with findings by Dubey et al. (2014), who noted the direct environmental impact of energy companies as a catalyst for adopting sustainable practices. The comparatively lower adoption rates in Manufacturing and Telecommunications suggest a potential disconnect between perceived environmental impact and the adoption of green accounting practices, which could be explored further in future research.

Perceived Benefits and External Motivations

The perceived benefits of implementing green accounting practices, predominantly enhanced corporate image and regulatory compliance, as shown in Table 2, resonate with the findings of Miss Ritu and P. Chawla (2021). Their study emphasized the role of green accounting in corporate responsibility towards environmental sustainability. This study extends their findings by quantitatively demonstrating that external motivations such as reputation and compliance are significant drivers for green accounting adoption, suggesting a need for strategies that also highlight internal benefits like cost savings and efficiency gains.

Challenges in Implementation

The challenges identified in Table 3, particularly the lack of expertise and high implementation costs, echo the concerns raised by Milne (1996) regarding the integration of environmental considerations into management accounting. This study's findings further emphasize the practical barriers to adopting green accounting practices, underscoring the need for targeted policy interventions and educational programs to build capacity and reduce financial barriers.

Environmental and Financial Performance

The improvement in environmental performance and the positive correlation with financial performance, as shown in Tables 4 and 5, provide empirical support to the theoretical propositions by Balakrishnan and Suresh (2018). Their study suggested a nuanced relationship between green practices and company performance, which this research substantiates by demonstrating sector-specific variations in this relationship. The findings highlight the dual benefits of green accounting practices, not only in enhancing environmental outcomes but also in contributing to financial health.

Stakeholder Influence

The significant influence of government and regulators on the adoption of green accounting practices, as depicted in Table 6, aligns with the literature emphasizing the role of regulatory frameworks in shaping corporate environmental strategies (Luthra, Garg, & Haleem, 2015). This study adds to the discourse by quantifying the influence of different stakeholder groups, suggesting that while regulatory pressures are paramount, customer and investor pressures also play critical

roles, indicative of the broader socio-economic ecosystem driving corporate sustainability.

Sector-Specific Practices

The varied adoption of sector-specific green accounting practices, as seen in Table 7, points to an important area for future research and policy development. This finding suggests that while generic green accounting frameworks provide a foundational basis, there is significant scope for developing and implementing practices tailored to the unique operational contexts of different industries.

Overall, the findings of this study offer a comprehensive overview of green accounting practices within the Indian corporate sector, filling the identified literature gap by providing a comparative analysis across different industries. The results underscore the complexity of adopting green accounting practices, influenced by a myriad of factors including industry characteristics, perceived benefits and challenges, stakeholder pressures, and the interplay between environmental and financial performance. This discussion not only extends the existing body of knowledge on green accounting but also highlights practical implications for policymakers, educators, and corporate leaders aiming to advance the sustainability agenda in the corporate domain.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study embarked on a comprehensive exploration of green accounting practices across various industries within the Indian corporate sector, revealing nuanced insights into their adoption rates, perceived benefits, challenges, and impacts on environmental and financial performance. A key finding from the study is the variation in the adoption rates of green accounting practices across different industries, with the Energy sector leading, which can be attributed to its direct environmental impact and regulatory scrutiny. This underscores the sector-specific challenges and opportunities in adopting green accounting practices, highlighting the need for tailored strategies to enhance their implementation.

Perceived benefits such as enhanced corporate image and improved compliance with regulations emerged as significant drivers for the adoption of

green accounting practices. However, the findings also pointed to substantial challenges, notably the lack of expertise and high implementation costs, which hinder broader adoption. These challenges emphasize the critical need for capacity building and policy interventions aimed at reducing the barriers to green accounting practices.

The study also unveiled a positive correlation between the adoption of green accounting practices and improvements in environmental performance across all surveyed industries, with a notable impact on financial performance as well. This dual benefit reinforces the value proposition of green accounting not just for environmental stewardship but also for financial viability, suggesting that sustainable practices can indeed align with corporate profitability.

Furthermore, the influence of various stakeholder groups, particularly government and regulators, in driving the adoption of green accounting practices highlights the significant role of regulatory frameworks and policies in shaping corporate sustainability strategies. The findings suggest that while regulatory pressures are paramount, the growing influence of customers and investors points to a broader socio-economic shift towards sustainability.

The sector-specific adoption of green accounting practices suggests a potential avenue for future research and policy formulation, emphasizing the importance of industry-tailored green accounting frameworks that account for unique operational contexts.

In conclusion, this research contributes to the body of knowledge on green accounting by providing a detailed analysis of its current state across the Indian corporate sector. The findings have broad implications, suggesting that while there are significant benefits and a positive trajectory towards the adoption of green accounting practices, there are also notable challenges that need to be addressed. The study underscores the importance of a collaborative effort among policymakers, educators, and corporate leaders to foster an environment that supports the widespread adoption of green accounting practices, ultimately contributing to the global sustainability agenda.

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