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(THEME 3: Strengthening the Last Mile for a Stronger Bharat-Green Logistics)

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SOCIAL, LEGAL AND ETHICAL ASPECTS OF GREEN LOGISTICS- AN ANALYTICAL REVIEW

ABSTRACT:

This study explores the intricate interplay between green logistics practices and their social, legal, and ethical implications. It explores the complex effects of sustainable supply chain operations on regional economies, labor market trends, and overall well-being. It investigates the changing legal framework that controls ecologically responsible logistics in more detail, highlighting compliance issues and new regulatory trends. The ethical issues of green logistics will next be discussed, along with trade-offs between ecological responsibility and financial viability. The study provides useful insights into the complicated world of green logistics by combining these characteristics, assisting stakeholders and policymakers in making decisions that are fair and environmentally responsible. The main objective of this study is to review the diverse literature from the last ten years that has

been published on the sociolegal and ethical aspects of green logistics while also outlining potential areas for development in each of these categories.

Keywords: Green Logistics, Sustainability, Legal Compliance, Ecological responsibility, Economic Viability and Supply Chain Management

INTRODUCTION:

The way we understand and respond to environmental issues has undergone a remarkable transition in recent years across the globe. The need for sustainable practices is becoming more and more obvious as climate change and resource depletion continue to loom large on the horizon. In this setting, supply chain management and transportation have seen a significant shift driven in large part by the idea of "green logistics." Green logistics strives to lessen the environmental impact of the logistics industry while also maximizing its efficiency. The intricate tapestry of social, ethical, and legal factors that lay underneath this progressive trend towards ecologically responsible logistics calls for serious analysis. This analytical review dives deeply into the social, ethical, and legal facets of green logistics in an effort to sort out the many opportunities and difficulties that this developing sector presents. The traditional approach to supply chain operations is radically rethought by green logistics, also known as sustainable logistics or eco-logistics. It includes a variety of tactics and procedures meant to cut down on waste, conserve resources, and encourage sensible consumption. Even while its ecological advantages are obvious, it is crucial to critically evaluate the wider implications and effects, especially in relation to society, ethics, and the legal system.

From a societal standpoint, green logistics has the ability to alter job positions, skill requirements, and working conditions in the workforce. There are concerns regarding the future of traditional jobs in industries dependent on fossil fuels as they shift towards cleaner and more sustainable transportation modes. As disadvantaged people may bear an excessive share of the social costs connected with the transition, it is also important to take equity in the benefits and responsibilities of green logistics across communities into consideration. The importance of ethical considerations cannot be overstated, since green logistics forces organizations to address issues of accountability, responsibility, and transparency. Fair labor practices throughout the supply chain, the moral obligation to lessen environmental impact, and the veracity of green marketing promises are all

included in ethical concerns. These ethical considerations center on how to match economic goals with social and environmental ideals. Parallel to this, the legislative structure controlling logistics is changing to incorporate sustainability-related ideas. Governments all across the world are implementing laws and providing incentives to promote the use of green logistics techniques. This legal environment is filled with complications, from product labelling and liability frameworks to emissions restrictions and carbon trading programmers.

This analytical review begins a thorough investigation of these interconnected social, ethical, and legal elements within the context of green logistics. In doing so, it aims to offer a comprehensive knowledge of the opportunities and difficulties that present themselves as we travel the road to a more sustainable and accountable logistics business. Through this critical analysis, we hope to highlight the difficulties involved in pursuing green logistics and highlight the demand for careful plans that strike a balance between environmental responsibility and societal and legal considerations.

CONCEPT OF GREEN LOGISTICS:

The integrated management of all the processes necessary to transport goods through the supply chain is known as logistics. This supply chain for a typical product runs from a source of raw materials via the system of production and distribution to the point of consumption and the related reverse logistics. Transportation of goods, storage, inventory control, material handling, and all associated information processing are included in the logistical activities. The fundamental objective of logistics is to coordinate these activities in a way that satisfies client expectations while incurring the least amount of expense. This cost has historically been described only in monetary terms. Companies must now more than ever consider the external costs of logistics, which are mostly related to climate change, air pollution, noise, vibration, and accidents. A type of logistics known as "green logistics" is designed to be both economically advantageous and frequently also socially responsible. It describes all initiatives to gauge and lessen the environmental impact of logistical operations. Between the site of origin and the point of

consumption, this covers all forward and reverse flows of goods, information, and services. By balancing economic and environmental efficiency, it is hoped to develop a sustainable firm value.¹

SIGNIFICANCE OF GREEN LOGISTICS

In today's transport networks, logistics play a key role. Recycling and disposal markets became more accessible due to environmental concerns, which in turn gave birth to a whole new subsector. Forward distribution, which covers delivery, storage, packing, and inventory control from the manufacturer to the consumer, is what traditional logistics seeks to organize (*Byrne and Deeb* 1993) ²

Investing in "green logistics" can benefit a firm in the ways listed below:

- Lowering CO2 emissions
- Finding enormous cost reductions
- Greater supply chain optimization
- Improved business results³

PARADOXES OF GREEN LOGISTICS:

There can be some inconsistencies when implementing green logistics. The problem is that although green logistics is meant to be environmentally benign, logistics in and of itself is not particularly green due to the pollution and trash it produces. Therefore, there are various paradoxes that arise when implementing green logistics, as listed below: (Jean-Paul Rodrigue, et.al 2001)

Cost: While businesses strive to operate as efficiently as possible, they also need to adopt environmentally friendly choices, which might increase their costs. Logistics aims to cut costs, particularly those associated with transportation. However, logistics professionals regularly adopt cost-cutting methods that conflict with environmental concerns.

¹ Rodrigue, J. P., Slack, B., & Comtois, C. (2001). Green logistics (the paradoxes of). The Handbook of Logistics and Supply-Chain Management,

²Quesada, Isabel. (2013). THE CONCEPT OF REVERSE LOGISTICS. A REVIEW OF LITERATURE. REVERSE LOGISTICS MAGAZINE. 12. 40-47.

³ Rituraj Saroha, (2014). Green Logistics & its Significance in Modern Day Systems, International Review of Applied Engineering Research. ISSN 2248-9967 Volume 4, Number 1 (2014), pp. 89-92.

⁴ Rodrigue, Jean-Paul & Slack, Brian & Comtois, Claude. (2001). Green Logistics (The Paradoxes of). The Handbook of Logistics and Supply-Chain Management.

Time/Flexibility: Extended production, distribution, and retailing models use more energy, occupy more space, and generate more emissions (CO2, particulates, NOx, etc.) than JIT and modern integrated supply chains, which offer flexible and capable physical distribution systems. **Reliability:** The paramount significance of service reliability is at the core of logistics. While it is common knowledge that the least damaging modes are the least reliable in terms of punctual delivery, the absence of destruction, and safety, their success is based on their ability to supply items with the least risk of destruction or damage. While ships and railroads have a history of low customer satisfaction, the logistics industry is dependent on air and truck shipments, the two least environmentally friendly modes of transportation.

Warehousing: One benefit of logistics is a decrease in the need for warehousing. However, this indicates that inventories have been partially moved to the transportation network, particularly the highways. Actually, inventories are in motion, which increases traffic and pollution. The external expenses are not being borne by the logistical operators but rather the environment and society. **E-commerce:** The rapid advancement of information technology has created new avenues for the

retail industry. Energy usage has increased as a result of e-commerce's modifications to physical distribution infrastructure.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The concept of "green logistics" is a relatively new one in the logistics industry. Here, research that is conceptual study-based has been employed. This study was conducted by looking over a sizable body of existing material. Since it would be impossible and impractical to research every piece of literature that has ever been written, a concentrated literature review was considered and divided into the social, ethical, and legal components of green logistics. both downloaded and searched. Through preliminary searches on specific terminology, a full examination of the pertinent academic literature was developed after that. Literature reviews often accomplish two goals: first, they summaries the body of research by highlighting trends, topics, and problems. Second, they aid in locating the intellectual underpinnings of the subject.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

(A) SOCIAL ASPECTS OF GREEN LOGISTICS:

A Humungous amount of literature is available on green logistics in various concerns. (D. S. Rogers and R. S. Tibben-Lembke 1999)⁵ described green logistics as "attempts to measure and minimize the ecological impact of logistics activities" by the Reverse Logistics Executive Council. (Mani. V. et.al, 2009) This research focuses on calculating social sustainability in supply chains, offering a comprehensive approach for rating social responsibility practices. It aids in implementing ethical and socially responsible strategies, improving understanding of social sustainability and enhancing organizations' social impact. (Gupta, S., & Palsule-Desai, O. D. 2011)⁷ explained that Sustainable supply chain management is essential for reducing the environmental hazard posed by anthropogenic emissions. This paper examines the body of scholarly work on sustainable supply chain management and analyses its potential for further study. It offers an integrated framework for comprehending strategic considerations, decisions about functional interfaces, rules and government laws, as well as integrative models and decisionmaking aids. The essay also touches on environmental programmers in India. (Seroka-Stolka, and Oksana. (2014)⁸ examined that Companies, governments, and the general public are becoming more interested in green logistics as a result of environmental concerns. Traditional logistics are inadequate for today's society and have a negative influence on the environment. In order to promote sustainable development, this research seeks to pinpoint variables affecting green logistics development. (Tachizawa E.M., and Wong C.Y 2015)⁹ discussed that the complexity and fragmentation of global supply chains, coupled with increasing environmental crises, necessitates a shift in traditional governance frameworks for green supply chain management (GSCM). The

⁵ D. S. Rogers and R. S. Tibben-Lembke, Going Backwards: Reverse Logistics Trends and Practices. Reverse Logistics Executive Council, 1999, pp. 258.

⁶ Mani, V., Agarwal, R., Gunasekaran, A., Papadopoulos, T., Dubey, R., & Childe, S. J. (2016). Social sustainability in the supply chain: Construct development and measurement validation. *Ecological indicators*, 71, 270-279.

⁷ Gupta, S., & Palsule-Desai, O. D. (2011). Sustainable supply chain management: Review and research opportunities. *IIMB Management review*, 23(4), 234-245.

⁸ Seroka-Stolka, Oksana. (2014). The Development of Green Logistics for Implementation Sustainable Development Strategy in Companies. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences. 151. 302-309. 10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.10.028.

⁹ Tachizawa E.M., Wong C.Y. The performance of green supply chain management governance mechanisms: a supply network and complexity perspective. *J. Supply Chain Manag.* 2015;51(3):18–32.

research explores the interactions between GSCM governance structures, supply chain complexity, and environmental performance, highlighting that supply network complexity directly impacts GSCM effectiveness, depending on the governance mechanism used. (Luthra S. el.at 2016)¹⁰ discovered that using green principles in logistics management can boost environmental sustainability by decreasing carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency, and reduce waste. In 42 Asian nations, researchers also looked at the relationship between excellent logistical presentation and environmental sustainability. They conducted an empirical analysis using the Generalized Method of Moments (GMM), and the findings indicated that better logistical performance resulted in lower carbon emissions. Accordingly, the research described above and in the earlier articles, LPI is an important indicator to find the dynamic relationship between GL and the atmosphere from a global perspective. The majority of these studies focus on green logistics and environmental concerns at the corporate level; however, they don't conduct empirical analyses from a global viewpoint. (Syed Khan 2019)¹¹ investigated the connection between Asian economies' economic, environmental, and social challenges and green logistics indices. Per capita income, manufacturing value added, trade openness, and logistics operations were found to be positively correlated. Increased logistical activities, however, have a detrimental effect on human health, climate change, global warming, carbon emissions, air pollution, water pollution, and acid rain. According to the study, environmentally friendly behaviours and renewable energy sources can lessen social and environmental effects without hindering economic growth. (Pathak D.K., et.al. 2020)¹² identifies key performance characteristics of green supply chain management (GSCM) practices in the Indian auto sectors, focusing on sustainability goals. 15 critical performance criteria are identified, with supplier openness, technology advancement, and top management commitment being the top three. Organizational motivation, sustainable product promotion, and government support systems are the bottom three. The study aids managers, practitioners, and policymakers in making strategic decisions for improved sustainability in the Indian automobile sector. (Yong Jing A.H., Ab-Rahim

¹⁰ Luthra S., Garg D., Haleem A. The impacts of critical success factors for implementing green supply chain management towards sustainability: an empirical investigation of Indian automobile industry. *J. Clean. Prod.* 2016;121:142–158.

¹¹ Khan, Syed. (2019). The Effect of Green Logistics on Economic growth, Social and Environmental Sustainability: An Empirical Study of Developing Countries in Asia. 10.20944/preprints201901.0104.v1.

¹² Pathak D.K., Verma A., Kumar V. Performance variables of GSCM for sustainability in Indian automobile organizations using TOPSIS method. *Business Strat. Dev.* 2020;3(4):590–602.

 $R.2020)^{13}$ discovered that both developed and developing countries' economic growth was positively benefited by telecommunications infrastructure. The studies mentioned above emphasize the need for green logistics and encourage its operation through ongoing economic strategies to achieve competitive returns, but they do not examine how economic development is promoted during the operation of green logistics. (Mohsin AKM 2020)¹⁴ explained that The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has prioritized infrastructure development, with a study using GMM to examine the relationship between green logistics, environmental impact, and economic growth. Fossil fuels are the primary source of logistical operations, and their consumption negatively impacts the environment. Green logistics can enhance export potential and revenue, influencing environmental conditions and long-term economic growth. (Zimon.D.et.al,2020)¹⁵ analyzed the challenges and obstacles in implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in supply chains. It focuses on the linkages between supply chain management (SSCM) procedures and UN SDGs, and proposes a framework for implementing these goals in SSCM. (Anil Kumar, 2020)¹⁶ explained that due to its critical role in supply chain management and the development of the transportation system, green logistics is gaining popularity in today's competitive climate. It makes it easier for inventories, raw materials, and related information to move around and be stored, promoting economic activity. Though technological developments have increased the effectiveness and dependability of transport systems, people are now more aware of how bad transit is for the environment. Considering how logistics managers might apply environmental management concepts to their decision-making for sustainable development, this study examines green logistics and its effects on the environment.

¹³ Yong Jing A.H., Ab-Rahim R. Information and communication technology (ICT) and economic growth in ASEAN-5 countries. *J. Publ. Adm. Govern.* 2020;10(2):20.

¹⁴ Mohsin AKM, Tushar H, Abid Hossain SF, Shams Chisty KK, Masum Iqbal M, Kamruzzaman M, Rahman S. Green logistics and environment, economic growth in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative. Heliyon. 2022 Jun 3;8(6):e09641. doi: 10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e09641. PMID: 35706941; PMCID: PMC9189032.

¹⁵ Zimon, D., Tyan, J., & Sroufe, R. (2020). Drivers of sustainable supply chain management: Practices to alignment with un sustainable development goals. *International Journal for Quality Research*, *14*(1).

¹⁶ Kumar, Anil. (2015). Green Logistics for sustainable development: an analytical review. 7-13.

(B) <u>LEGAL ASPECTS OF GREEN LOGISTICS</u>

(Azam, M. et.al. 2016)¹⁷ emphasised on creating a legislative framework to lessen environmental degradation brought on by supply chain corporations. The study recognized the need for ecofriendly, sustainable supply chain practices that would integrate production-chain regulations such waste management, recycling, and remanufacturing. (Hassini.E.el.at 2017)¹⁸ conducted a groundbreaking study highlighted SCM policy and regulations as key elements for the successful and long-term functioning of a supply chain. The writers provided instances of laws and regulations that take into account a variety of factors, such as market dynamics, stakeholder expectations regarding problems like global warming and the rapid depletion of natural resources in the name of industrial expansion. (Gráinne Lynch and Ignacio Lopéz 2017)¹⁹ investigates the legal implications of supply chain logistics regulation and its success criteria in relation to European Union (EU) law. It examines how the two key areas of logistics and transportation within the supply chain are governed by a legal framework. The report emphasizes the importance of comprehending the legal clauses in EU law that cover topics like data protection, digital identification, and online payments. (W. Muchaendepi.el.at, 2019)²⁰ conducted a study in Zimbabwe aimed to identify the challenges in implementing sustainable supply chain management in the mining sector. The study used a case study of 91 organizations and found that There hasn't been any organisational or structural change to promote sustainable supply chain management to yet. The study suggests improvements in legal and regulatory frameworks, cost reduction for green products, and resource distribution for effective implementation. (Sheng, X., et.al 2023)²¹ explained that to reach carbon neutrality by 2060, China's manufacturing sector needs to use green supply chain management (GSCM). A thorough study of the literature shows that multidepartmental cooperation in China results in responsibility avoidance and transfer. The review

¹⁷ Azam, M., Haseeb, M., & Samsudin, S. The impact of foreign remittances on poverty alleviation: Global evidence. Economics & Sociology, 9(1), 264, 2016

Hassini, E., Surti, C. and Searcy, C. "A literature review and a case study of sustainable supply chains with a focus on metrics", International Journal of Production Economics, Vol. 140 No. 1, pp. 69-82, 2012
 Gráinne Lynch and Ignacio Lopéz del Moral Blockchain in Supply Chain Logistics – The Regulatory

Implications, 2017

²⁰ W. Muchaendepi, C. Mbowa, J. Kanyepe, M. Mutingi, Challenges faced by the mining sector in implementing sustainable supply chain management in Zimbabwe,Procedia Manufacturing,Volume 33, 2019,Pages 493-500,ISSN 2351-9789, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.promfg.2019.04.061.

⁽https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2351978919305396)

²¹ Sheng, X., Chen, L., Yuan, X. *et al.* Green supply chain management for a more sustainable manufacturing industry in China: a critical review. *Environ Dev Sustain* **25**, 1151–1183 (2023). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-022-02109-9

makes recommendations for changes in the industries involved, tax subsidies, incentive programmers, and environmental information disclosure. The results might be used as a guide for other developing nations.

(C) ETHICAL ASPECTS OF GREEN LOGISTICS

(Amaeshi, K., el.at 2007)²² examined that Multinational businesses (MNCs) are embracing corporate social responsibility (CSR), which is becoming more popular in developed economies. CSR can be difficult, though, because of the supplier chains' potential for unethical behaviors and their global reach. By highlighting the ethical and legal foundations of responsibility, this article challenges the notion that businesses should be held accountable for the actions of their suppliers. It implies that the stronger party owes the weaker party a duty to apply moral pressure on them. In order to exert a good moral effect along supply chains, the article discusses the usage of codes of conduct, corporate culture, anti-pressure group campaigns, employee training, and value reorientation. (Vachon, S., & Mao, Z. 2008)²³ investigated the relationship between national-level sustainable development and supply chain features. It evaluates the connections among three aspects of sustainable development—environmental performance, corporate ethical behaviors, and social sustainability—as well as the robustness of the supply chain, the quantity and caliber of suppliers, and customers. The findings indicate a strong correlation. (Gold.S el.at, 2010) 24 explored that in order to create significant inter-organizational resources and obtain a long-term competitive advantage, this study investigates the role that sustainable supply chain management plays in cooperation on environmental and social concerns. In particular, when assuring economic, environmental, and social performance, it highlights the significance of strategic collaboration in supply chain management. Resources that are socially complex, historically developed, and challenging to imitate can offer a persistent competitive edge. (Gimenez, C., Sierra, V.2013)²⁵ examined the effectiveness of supplier assessment and collaboration in enhancing environmental

²² Amaeshi, K., Osuji, O. & Nnodim, P. Corporate Social Responsibility in Supply Chains of Global Brands: A Boundaryless Responsibility? *Clarifications, Exceptions and Implications . J Bus Ethics* **81**, 223–234 (2008). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-007-9490-5

²³ Vachon, S., & Mao, Z. (2008). Linking supply chain strength to sustainable development: a country-level analysis. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *16*(15), 1552-1560.

Gold, S., Seuring, S., & Beske, P. (2010). Sustainable supply chain management and inter-organizational resources: a literature review. *Corporate social responsibility and environmental management*, 17(4), 230-245.
 Gimenez, C., Sierra, V. Sustainable Supply Chains: Governance Mechanisms to Greening Suppliers. *J Bus Ethics* 116, 189–203 (2013). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1458-4

performance in the supply chain. It uses cluster analysis and structural equation modelling to show that collaboration with suppliers and assessment positively impact environmental performance, facilitating collaboration. (*Markman, G.D. and Krause, D. 2016*)²⁶This special topic forum discusses sustainability, a concept that aims to meet present needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs. Scholars and managers often struggle with the concept and applications of sustainability, with some focusing on environmental preservation, societal needs, economic bottom lines, corporate social responsibility, ethical issues, shared value creation, and legal compliance. The forum proposes that sustainable practices should enhance ecological health, follow ethical standards, improve economic vitality, and prioritize the environment, society, and economics.

SUGGESTIONS:

By analyzing the previous studies, the following suggestions are made:

- Numerous studies concentrate on particular facets of sustainability, such as the social or
 environmental ones. There may be a research vacuum in investigating more
 comprehensive, multidisciplinary strategies that combine several aspects of sustainability
 (economic, environmental, legal, ethical and social) into a single framework.
- The subject of several research is huge corporations. Given their resource limitations, small and medium scale Enterprises may be able to adopt sustainable practises in their supply chains, so this is a useful subject for research.
- The relevance of evaluating how new technologies (such blockchain and the Internet of Things) might improve sustainability in logistics and supply chains is growing, however further research may be necessary.
- Research may go more into how laws and government policies affect sustainable supply chain management, particularly how they affect social responsibility and ethical sourcing.

²⁶ Markman, G.D. and Krause, D. (2016), Theory Building Surrounding Sustainable Supply Chain Management: Assessing What We Know, Exploring Where to Go. J Supply Chain Manag, 52: 3-10. https://doi.org/10.1111/jscm.12105

- A fruitful study direction might be to examine how sustainability interacts with supply chain resilience and risk management, particularly in the setting of environmental and societal disturbances.
- In the current market, it is important to comprehend how consumer tastes and expectations affect sustainable practises in supply chains and how businesses react to these dynamics.
- The review makes recommendations for changes in the industries involved, tax subsidies, incentive programmers, and environmental information disclosure. The results might be used as a guide for others²⁷
- Supply chains have expanded in complexity and interconnectedness as a result of globalisation. Research on the difficulties and possibilities of sustainability in international supply chains, including concerns about moral sourcing and social responsibility, may be helpful.
- The majority of the papers concentrate on certain sectors, including the fashion or specific
 industry supply chains. Conducting cross-industry comparative studies to comprehend how
 ethical issues change and are handled across various industries is a research gap.
- There is potential for research that explores the behavioural aspects of ethical decision-making within logistics and green supply chain management, even though some publications only present frameworks and concepts. Studies on the psychological variables impacting moral decisions in supply chain operations can fall under this category.
- Examine how ethical supply chain management affects both long-term sustainability and financial success. Research may examine the long-term effects of ethical behaviour on a company's financial performance.
- Specifically in sectors with high labour intensity, dig further into the ethical aspects of human rights and labour practises in green supply chains. The efficiency of auditing and certification programmes in promoting ethical labour practises could be investigated through research.

²⁷Sheng, X., Chen, L., Yuan, X. *et al.* Green supply chain management for a more sustainable manufacturing industry in China: a critical review. *Environ Dev Sustain* **25**, 1151–1183 (2023). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-022-02109-9

CONCLUSION:

Sustainable organisation is a business that promotes sustainable development by generating advantages for the triple bottom line of the economy, society, and the environment. (Norman and MacDonald 2004)²⁸. In conclusion, the assessment of the literature on the social, ethical, and legal dimensions of green logistics offers important new perspectives on the intricate world of sustainable supply chain management. The numerous opportunities and obstacles that organisations must navigate as they work to align their logistical operations with moral and ethical principles have been highlighted by this analytical assessment. This survey of the literature highlights the complex interactions between social, legal, and ethical considerations in the field of green logistics. It serves as a reminder that businesses must integrate sustainability into all aspects of their operations, not simply to comply with regulations but also out of a sense of moral responsibility to improve the future of the world and society. The path ahead may be difficult, but it is littered with opportunity for those who are dedicated to using green logistics to make a positive impact.

²⁸ Norman, Wayne & Macdonald, Chris. (2004). Getting to the Bottom of "Triple Bottom Line". Business Ethics Quarterly. 14. 243-262. 10.2307/3857909.