



Redefining the FUTURE OF WELLNESS IN INDIA



Sustainability as a strategy moves from intent to systems that ensure credibility, growth, and longevity. In conversation with **Priyanka Parshurami, Reena Seth, Founder and Chief Wellness Strategist, Gaiia**, details a systems-led perspective on what sustainability truly means and why it's a non-negotiable for modern wellness businesses.

As India's hair, beauty, and wellness industry continues its rapid expansion, sustainability is no longer a peripheral conversation but central to how the sector will evolve, endure, and earn trust.

For Reena Seth, Founder and Chief Wellness Strategist, Gaiia, sustainability within the wellness ecosystem goes far beyond environmentally friendly gestures or symbolic responsibility. "It means designing wellbeing systems that create long-term value without creating long-term depletion," she explains. True sustainability, she believes, lies in how wellness is structured, delivered, and sustained over time, not in isolated actions or short-term initiatives.

BEYOND GREEN GESTURES

From a systems standpoint, sustainable wellness must balance four critical elements: human health, environmental limits, professional wellbeing, and economic viability. A wellness experience cannot be considered sustainable if it enhances individual wellbeing while exhausting natural resources, workforce capacity, or

community ecosystems. When sustainability is embedded into the experience of design, operations, education, and standards, it becomes foundational rather than aspirational.

This perspective is particularly relevant in the Indian context, where the hair, beauty, and wellness industry is scaling within an already strained environmental and social landscape. Seth is clear that sustainability is no longer optional. "The industry directly impacts water usage, chemical exposure, waste generation, and workforce wellbeing. Growth without responsibility creates vulnerability rather than resilience," she warns.

WHEN INTENT ISN'T ENOUGH: THE EXECUTION GAP

India's wellness economy is expanding rapidly, but consumer expectations are evolving just as quickly. Today's clients are more informed, global collaborations are more selective, and credibility is increasingly tied to how responsibly a business operates, not merely to the services it offers. "Sustainability has shifted from a branding choice to a prerequisite for relevance and long-term leadership," she asserts.

SPA AND WELLNESS

Despite growing awareness, a significant gap persists between intent and actual practice. According to Seth, the most common issue is the absence of systems. “Many businesses express genuine intent but lack frameworks, metrics, or accountability mechanisms. Sustainability is often reduced to visible gestures such as selective product

“ **SUSTAINABILITY IN WELLNESS** *is not about good intentions; it is about SYSTEMS THAT protect people, planet, and profession OVER TIME.* ”
 — Reena Seth

swaps, while core operations remain unchanged.”

Another critical gap lies in capability. Teams are rarely trained to understand or execute sustainable practices consistently, leading to fragmented implementation. Without structure, education, and measurement, sustainability remains an aspiration rather than an operational reality.

SUSTAINABILITY AS SMART OPERATIONS, NOT ADDED COST

Contrary to popular belief, integrating sustainability does not necessarily mean increasing operational costs. “Sustainable practices become costly only when they are treated as add-ons,” Seth explains. “When approached as operational intelligence, sustainability can reduce inefficiencies instead of adding expense.”

Measuring water and product usage, standardising service protocols, simplifying menus, reducing waste, and training teams to work with intention can improve consistency, quality, and margins.

GLOBAL STANDARDS, LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY

From a global perspective, Seth points to a clear shift that Indian wellness professionals must pay attention to: sustainability is moving away from voluntary claims towards defined standards and accountability. “Internationally, the focus is now on structured frameworks, professional education and certification, ingredient transparency, reduced reliance on disposables, and measurable impact reporting,” she says.

Global conversations are no longer about whether sustainability matters but about how effectively it is implemented. “India could align early and lead with credibility, rather than being forced to respond under external pressure later,” she advises.



TRUST IS THE NEW CURRENCY

Consumer behaviour plays a decisive role in this shift. Conscious consumption is reshaping sustainable growth by redefining trust. As consumers become more aware, they look beyond surface-level messaging and seek clarity on how businesses operate, source, and deliver experiences.

“Brands that operate with transparency and integrity build deeper, long-term loyalty,” Seth explains. “Sustainable growth emerges when consumer awareness and business practices align. This fosters relationships rooted in trust, not transactions.”

MEASURED MANAGEMENT

One immediate action every wellness professional should adopt is measurement. “Begin by measuring one operational element: water usage, product consumption, or waste generation,” she advises. “Measurement creates awareness, awareness informs decision-making, and without data, sustainability remains conceptual.” This single step establishes accountability and lays the foundation for meaningful, long-term improvement.

As the Indian wellness industry stands at a critical inflection point, Reena Seth’s insights underline a simple yet powerful truth: sustainability is no longer a moral add-on but a strategic imperative. Businesses that embrace it with structure, discipline, and clarity will not only endure but also lead the future of wellness with credibility and purpose. **PBJ**



- Sustainability must be embedded into operations, education, and standards, not treated as a side initiative.
- Structured systems and team capability are essential to move from intent to execution.
- Measurement is the first step towards accountability and long-term sustainable growth.