

# Clean industry, green future: How material handling can help build a safer, cleaner world

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## IMPACT FEATURE

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**W**hat makes a company a thought leader?

More than anything else, it happens when a company becomes an institution, setting standards within the industry. The fact that Godrej has done this is undeniable. Among its many achievements, it was the first Indian company to manufacture

refrigerators. It manufactured ballot boxes for the first election in Independent India, and produced the first indigenously designed typewriter. Godrej brought to India the first word processors, fax machines and dot matrix printers. Striving consistently to predict consumers' needs and provide accordingly, Godrej has been dedicated to undertaking initiatives intended to change lives in fundamentally futuristic ways.

Godrej has, since inception, been known for its emphasis on building sustainable industry. Putting the planet and people before all else has, consistently, been its guiding ethos in all decision-making. As early as the 1940s, with sustainability nowhere in the industry lexicon, Godrej initiated conservation of mangroves on the western bank of the Thane creek. Through its various trusts, Godrej continues to protect the mangroves, a treasure trove of ecological diversity essential to the health of the environment and citizens of Mumbai.

### **Material handling: The next frontier for green technology**

The Godrej ethos has been drawn into a rarely mentioned but pivotal avenue the Material Handling Equipment (MHE) industry. With India's exponential growth in manufacturing (as reflected in May-June 2018), the need for reorienting MHE has become exigent.

Movement of material from the supplier to the factory to the warehouse to the consumer requires speed, efficacy, and resistance to damage. The demand for MHE is soaring, but diesel-powered equipment consumes more fuel and adds to carbon emissions: a major concern for a world increasingly threatened by climate change.

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Having already established itself as India's largest forklift truck (FLT) manufacturer, [Godrej Material Handling](#) has been providing material handling solutions to myriad industries since 1963. Its focus on sustainable alternatives has resulted in the development of an [AC motor powered electric forklift truck \(FLT\)](#) the first of its kind in India.

The electric forklift operates with minimum negative impact on the environment. Especially suitable for enclosed environments like factories and warehouses, its capacity extends up to 5 tonnes at 500mm load center, lifting heights up to 12.5 meters, currently, the highest in India. Alongside its sustainable nature, electric FLTs involve a lower cost of ownership. While the initial purchase cost may seem higher, there are long term economic advantages gained from ease of operation and minimal operational costs.

By combining the quiet efficiency of electrically-powered operations with round-the-clock, powerful delivery, electric FLTs can change the MHE landscape by instituting new standards for safety, efficiency, and ecological viability. Additionally, Godrej is working to

enhance FLT's with newer capabilities by leveraging the Internet of Things. It aims to offer predictive maintenance by remotely monitoring the machines and keeping customers informed, ensuring minimum down time.

Going environment friendly has found industry-wide camaraderie in sectors such as food & beverage, pharma, and modern retail with companies almost exclusively purchasing and using electric material handling equipment.

### The human difference made by going green

Needless to say, forklift trucks make life easier for factory and warehouse workers. Instead of having to lift arbitrarily heavy loads (as often happens in India due to lack of comprehensive labor laws), they can work with ease and some measure of comfort. However, fumes emanated by diesel-powered forklift trucks used in enclosed areas like factories and warehouses can prove to be quite detrimental to workers' health. Using the electric FLT neutralizes this, boosting the well-being of all employees operating within such manufacturing and storage spaces.

Undeniably, there exists prejudice, misconception and resistance around adoption of greener industry practices. Factory owners hesitate over questions of finding employees with the requisite skill, as well as the costs of running battery-powered devices. To bridge these gaps, Godrej runs numerous training centers imparting skills necessary to operate electric FLT's. It has instituted buy back options for those seeking to surrender diesel FLT's for electric. To ease the concerns of prospective users, Godrej has been pursuing various initiatives to raise awareness and convey what has long been established by research and real-world observation going green is good for business.

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### Future-First: The future is green

Building capabilities conducive to greener industry was not an overnight task. It took decades of gathering extensive knowledge, manpower and for Godrej to transform its environment-friendly philosophy into reality. Since MHE is an indispensable aspect of any industry, converting such equipment to sustainable options would go a long way towards reducing emissions and making the manufacturing space ecologically viable. The electric FLT is an example of the fact that it is possible to foster economic growth without exploiting or harming the environment. By pursuing such growth so that it enables holistic improvement of human life, Godrej is beginning to carve a path towards a world in which it is entirely possible to have it all.