

## **Aspects of Green Environment**

**M. Sakthiniveda, PG Scholar**

### **Abstract**

Slowly but surely, the world today is realizing why green management matters, and why it is imperative to take a green approach to business and management. The authors wished to investigate as to how educated Indians are trying to counter the growing environmental issues that progress brings in its wake. 500 educated consumers from all walks of life were selected by the random stratified method. A structured questionnaire was administered together with a personal interview to gather primary data. Results showed that most people were aware of sustainability and global warming mainly through social networking sites. Majority of the respondents kept an eye on their water and electricity consumption. It was heartening to note that not a single Puneite consumed non-vegetarian food on all seven days of the week. Most respondents went in for cfl bulbs that resulted in a saving of both electricity and money.

**Key Words:** Awareness and use of 'green' products, Global warming, Energy saving

### **Introduction**

If you look up in the dictionary the meaning of the word **environment**, it will state something like this:

"An environment is all of the conditions, circumstances, etc. that surround and influence life on earth, including atmospheric conditions, food chains, and the water cycle."

Thus, the environment is our surrounding that includes living as well as non-living things. The non-living components like land, water, air, temperature etc. influence how animals,

plants and we as human beings live in a particular area. Living creatures too are dependent on each other for food, shelter etc. For example, a polar bear lives in extreme cold conditions and eats mostly seal and fish, while a camel survives on thorny bushes and can bear extreme heat. If any of the environmental elements change, it automatically becomes harder and sometimes fatal for living organisms like these to survive.

## **Environmental Components**

The major components that form a particular natural green environment are,

### **Land**

The upper crust or the surface of the earth, on which we tread, is visibly different from the inner core of the earth. It has been formed by the cooling of molten rocks and the process continues with each natural change (earthquakes, volcanoes, shifting of the tectonic plates, etc.). The soil conditions of a particular area do not change overnight. It is the amount of nutrients present in the soil, the minerals found, the presence and the nature of rocks that eventually make up the land, the kinds of trees, and animals surviving in the area.

Trees, plants and even grass play an important role (and have for many years) in maintaining the fertility of the soil and by stopping top soil erosion by firmly holding it with their roots.

### **Water**

Approximately 71% of the earth's surface is covered with water, with the largest bodies of water being the ocean and the smallest being the tiny neighborhood ponds and lakes. All water present on the surface of the earth goes through a process of evaporation, condensation, formation of clouds and then the final downpour in the form of rain which then percolates under the ground to form ground water. This continuous water cycle is the harbinger of seasonal changes, climate changes, soil fertility, and aridity.

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There is also another continuous process that involves rivers and streams flowing to the sea, forming the oceans we have come to know and love. These processes result in the movement of soil and sediment, formation of rocks, dispelling of plant seeds, and giving rise to different environmental conditions for different life forms.

## **Atmosphere, Climate and Weather**



There is a thin layer of different gases enveloping the earth that help in sustaining life. This mixture of gases is known as the atmosphere which consists of 78% nitrogen, 21% oxygen, 1% argon and other inert gases like carbon dioxide and water vapor. The ozone layer, the outermost layer of the atmosphere, helps in reflecting harmful ultraviolet rays from the sun from reaching the earth. As the atmospheric pressure varies at different altitudes, so do the life forms that reside there.

The climate of a place is meteorological conditions over a period of time, like a few months or even a year. The climate depends on conditions such as the temperature, the rainfall, humidity etc. Weather on the other hand, is a day to day variation in these conditions. For example, one day, it can be sunny and cold or cloudy, misty and warm. Near the equator, the

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temperature is very similar every day, so much that there is no prominent difference between season changes and climate changes. Weather and climate seem to be one and the same in these areas.

## Food Chains



No animal can live entirely on its own. For food, an animal must eat either plants or other animals. For example, a tiny amoeba feeds on plants and then gets caught, only to be eaten by a creature like a water flea. This flea is eaten by a newt which then becomes food for a hungry water beetle. A fish catches the beetle and later the fish is maybe caught by an egret. This then, would be an example of the food chain. The food chain is present universally, anywhere from a small pond to a huge rainforest. The food chain is a system where plants and animals of an area dependent on each other to survive. Also, a food chain almost always begins with an animal eating a plant, and surely this proves the importance of the word "green" when speaking of environment.

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In conclusion, there are a number of physiological, abiotic and biotic conditions that combine together to form an environment of an area, and it is this combination that leads to the adaptation and survival of plant and animal species in various regions of the world. That being said, a green environment is all around us.

Nature has created so many critical balances across the globe that the abundance or the deficit of any of these elements can prove hazardous to this self-sufficient system. It is therefore important to keep this intertwined bond of life, intact, natural and green.

### **Reduce**

The critical first step of waste prevention has been overshadowed by a focus on recycling. Please help to promote a greater awareness of the importance of the "Reduce" part of the *Reduce-Reuse-Recycle mantra*.

- **Go Zero Waste:** The ultimate goal
- **Simplify:** Simplify your life as much as possible. Only keep belongings that you use/enjoy on a regular basis. By making the effort to reduce what you own, you will naturally purchase less/create less waste in the future
- **Determine Your Impact:** The Eco Footprint, Greendex and Water Footprint calculators give you a great way to determine how you are impacting the environment.
- **Reduce Purchases:** In general, think before you buy any product - do you really need it? How did the production of this product impact the environment and what further impacts will there be with the disposal of the product (and associated packaging materials)? When you are thinking about buying something, try the 30-Day Rule -- wait 30 days after the first time you decide you want a product to really make your decision.
- **Observe an Eco-Sabbath:** For one day, afternoon or hour a week, don't buy anything, don't use machines, don't switch on anything electric, don't cook, don't answer your phone and, in general, don't use any resources.

- **Replace Disposables:** Wherever possible, replace disposable products with reusable ones (i.e., razor, food storage, batteries, ink cartridges (buy refill ink), coffee filters, furnace or air conditioner filters, etc.).
- **Buy Used:** Buy used products whenever possible. Some sources:

## Reuse

The media has done a wonderful job of selling us on the attractiveness and benefits of buying "new", "improved", "special", etc. products. However, we already collectively own so much that we could all survive for quite a while on the existing products - if we just reused them a few times!

- **Garage Sales:** Shop at and hold garage sales - this is a great way to reuse products.
- **Reusables:** Switch from disposable to reusable products: food and beverage containers, cups, plates, writing pens, razors, diapers, towels, shopping bags, etc.
- **Donations:** Donate (and buy used):
  - household items - clothes, furniture, dishes, books, sports equipment, magazines, appliances, electronics, business attire, wedding attire, etc. (to charity)
  - women's business attire (to Dress for Success)
  - computer equipment
  - cell phones, cameras, iPod/MP3 Players, laptops, PDAs (to Recycling for Charities)
  - cell phones and ink cartridges (to Cure Recycling - profits from reuse of items support the CURE Childhood Cancer organization. Free postage. Another place to donate cell phones is Collective Good).
  - building material (to companies who specialize in selling used material). One organization: Habitat for Humanity
  - eyeglasses (to Lions Club, For-Eyes, Pearle, or Lenscrafters)
  - extra hangers (to your local dry cleaners)
  - art materials (to a school or cultural organization)

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- unwanted boxed/bagged/canned food (to homeless shelters, food banks, or soup kitchens) etc.

## Recycle

- **Recycle your Plastic Bottle Tops:** Plastic bottle recycling is transitioning to recycling bottle tops (left on the plastic container)! **Contact your local recycling center first to confirm they are recycling bottle tops.** Better yet, switch to reusable glass or metal drinking bottles and skip the plastic bottles all together.
- **Recycle Bins:** Create designated holding "bins" for each type of recycled product and place in convenient locations in your home/garage
- **Recycling Fact Sheet:** If one isn't available on your local recycling center's website, create a local recycling directory for yourself and interested neighbors. Post it online if possible. The local Yellow Pages, your local recycling center, Internet Consumer Recycling Guide and Recycling Resources are great resources. Here is a great example. Find out where you can recycle the following locally:
  - ✓ glass
  - ✓ paper products
  - ✓ plastic grocery bags (better yet - use cloth bags)
  - ✓ plastic - including 1 - 7 identification codes

## Refuse

- **Refuse Products that Create Waste:** If available, instead of buying processed food, bring your own bags and containers and buy from the bulk and produce sections of the grocery store. Minimize or eliminate other types of purchases that generate waste. The Johnson's are a zero-waste family who offer tips and inspiration for creating a zero-waste household while creating a far more satisfying and affordable lifestyle.
- **Avoid Single Use Products:** Instead, choose (or bring) reusable products or consider doing without. Avoiding **plastic** single use items is especially important because of their

toxic load and, if landfilled, exceptionally long life. These can include food and beverage containers, cups, plates, straws, writing pens, razors, diapers, towels, shopping bags, etc.

- **Refuse Give Aways:** When a business or individual offers you a free give away that you don't need, politely refuse. This can be anything from a straw in a restaurant to promotional gifts to paper handouts. This not only saves the company or individual money, but it keeps resources from being consumed unnecessarily (even if it is recyclable).

## Rot

- **Worm Composting:** Learn about worm composting (vermiculture) at Earthworm FAQ.
- **Composting:** Start a compost pile with yard trimmings and food scraps. Learn more at Wikipedia's Compost page.
- **Grass cycling:** Leave grass clippings on the lawn as fertilizer and to reduce the amount of yard trimmings disposed in landfills.
- **Mulching:** Mulching mowers are available which will convert cut grass into a natural fertilizer.

## Conserve Energy

Please do not wait to start conserving as much energy as you can to reduce your climate change emissions! And please ask your elected representatives to push for strong legislation to move toward overall reduced energy usage and increased alternative energy production.

- **Set Goals:** To reduce your energy consumption:
  - Set specific energy reduction goals (for electricity, gas, and gallons of fuel consumed in your car(s)) -- for example, commit to using 20% less per month

## Your Food

Switching to a animal-free vegan diet is a powerful way to help protect our environment, help ensure everyone has enough to eat and get healthy. The United Nations report *Livestock's Long Shadow—Environmental Issues and Options* concludes that the livestock sector (primarily

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cows, chickens, and pigs) emerges as one of the top two or three most significant contributors to our most serious environmental problems, at every scale from local to global. It is one of the largest sources of greenhouse gases - responsible for 18% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions as measured in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents. By comparison, all transportation emits 13.5% of the CO<sub>2</sub>. It produces 65% of human-related nitrous oxide (which has 296 times the climate change potential of CO<sub>2</sub>) and 37% of all human-induced methane

It also generates 64% of the ammonia, which contributes to acid rain and acidification of ecosystems. In addition, the enormous amounts of grain required to feed livestock reduces the amount of food available for the world's hungry. Buying organic, locally grown food also reduces climate change emissions and helps protect the environment.

### **Out in Nature**

- **Trash:** When you are out hiking, pick up trash along the way.
- **Hiking Tips:** Leave No Trace, Outdoor Ethics - provides tips for campers, climbers, and hikers.
- **Restoration:** Organize a community group to clean up a local stream, highway, park, or beach. For opportunities to do restoration work for a local organization, check out VolunteerMatch. The American Hiking Society coordinates week long volunteer vacations to help restore trails.
- **Tree-Planting:** Form a tree-planting group with family and/or friends: commit to planting and maintaining an agreed-upon number of trees over your life times. Plan regular gatherings for tree-planting and watering. Log your commitments in the United Nations Billion Tree Campaign.
- **Parks:** Visit and help support local parks. In the U.S., reserve a campsite at a National Park through the U.S. Recreation.gov or Reserve America (includes some state parks).
- **Frogs:** In the USA, help to track frog and toad populations through Frog watch USA.
- **Birds:** In North America, help to track bird populations through Project Feeder Watch.

## Create a Backyard Wildlife Habitat

As people take over more and more of the land, we need to provide food, water, and shelter to the animals that are now relying on us for their survival.

- **Backyard Wildlife Habitat:** A backyard wildlife habitat or "naturescape" can be created in your own backyard. A miniature version can even be created on your patio or deck. Basic elements include fresh water (i.e., a bird bath and, if in a yard, water low to the ground); plants and feeders that provide nourishment for birds, insects, etc.; and rocks, trees, bushes and/or bird houses for shelter and nesting. Purchase plants that are native to your area. The National Wildlife Federation has an excellent program: **The Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program** which provides some helpful, detailed examples.

## Conclusion

In the past, the major need of people in this world was arable land. Man did not have to think about animate things. However, now the adverse effects on forests through over-population and the development of various chemical elements in the atmosphere have led to irregular rainfall and global warming. This global warming has brought changes in climate, including making perennial snow mountains melt, thereby adversely affecting not only human beings but also other living species. This dangerous situation is being taken very seriously by the world. In the past the perennial snow mountains of Tibet had very thick snow. Older people say that these mountains were covered with thick snow when they were young and that the snows are getting sparser which may be an indication of the end of the world. It is a fact that climate change is a slow process taking thousands of years to realize its effect. Living beings and plant life on this planet also undergo change accordingly. Man's physical structure too changes from generation to generation along with the change in climatic conditions.

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