

# ROLE OF HR FOR ECO-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

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## ABSTRACT

The paper on the given topic focuses on the issue of role of HR Department of the organization in conserving environment. Few examples have been discussed which are in the direction of saving and maintaining the natural environment. Few more ideas and ways have been discussed in this paper which can help HR Department of the company to be environmental-friendly. And that how different activities can be included in the list of its CSR activities to help save environment. The important point has been reinforced in this paper that HR departments of business organizations should feel responsibility and come forward to take initiatives for saving the natural resources, nurturing the environment and helping creating eco-friendly image for the organization.

**Key Words:** Eco-friendly, Nurture, CSR activities, Natural resources, Environment.

## Introduction

Few decades earlier, environmental HRM was not a topic which was given due attention for discussion. But ignoring this important topic by the society at large for long, has lead us to this situation that today, we find this topic important enough to discuss in this National Conference. Top management of the business organizations is discussing this topic at different forum. The topic of environmental conservation is a matter of great concern for Heads of the States/ Nations, and they are investing time, energy & resources to discuss and find solution for the issue.

## Objectives of this paper:

1. To discuss the issues related to environmental HRM
2. To discuss some of the examples in the direction of environmental HRM and that how the HR department of the company/ organization can have role to nurture, sustain & conserve the environment.
3. To share the need for environmental HRM

## Methodology:

This paper has been written with the help of secondary data and based on the knowledge gathered in informal discussion with the academic fraternity and the thinkers & decision makers in the business organizations. Following are some of the ways by which HR Departments of the organizations can contribute in nurturing & conserving the environment:

## Effluent treatment / Pollution free unit:

HR Department should feel the responsibility to ensure that effluent is treated properly before going out of the plant, So that it does not damage the environment in the vicinity. Company should also ensure that the emissions from the unit do not pollute the air beyond the permissible limit.

**Minimum use of paper:**

More use of paper would mean untimely death of more trees. We are in the modern era of internet & e-mails. But many a times we find that we are still using the traditional modes of communication. Memos and letters are still sent through printed papers. My appeal is that now we should take concerted efforts to reap the benefits unless it is unavoidable. Memos, letters, other internal communications can be sent through e-mails.

**Lighting in the office using sun light:****Architectural design**

Recently, I had visited a hotel-Green park hotel at Baner, Pune. The huge place for lunch is covered by glass from two sides, thus allowing sunlight in the day time to such an extent that not a single bulb was required to be used. I admired the architectural design of the hotel. One can very easily calculate the cost saving for non use of electricity, day after day in this kind of hotel, or for that matter, any work place. Not only the cost saving for the organization, company can also contribute by consuming less energy resources, thus easing out the situation where some of the cities are going without power for 6 to 8 hours per day.

**Use of LEDs**

The replacements of incandescent bulbs with low-energy lights, which don't get hot during use, is leading to innovations in lighting designs and use less than 20% of energy of incandescent bulbs and also last 10 times longer. But still we find that LEDs are not used in the organization to the extent that it should be.

**Smoking free premises:**

HR departments of the companies can strictly enforce 'No -Smoking Zone' rule on the premises.

**Environment saving CSR activities of the organizations:**

Apart from all the activities that companies are undertaking under CSR like, opening schools, colleges, hospital etc., the time has come that companies can also think about following activities also, which are eco-friendly:

We need to arrange for toilets in the villages. This will help reduce open defecation, and hence help to maintain clean environment. By arranging for solar heaters in villages. This will help reduce the cutting of trees for energy, apart from saving electricity to heat water. Tirupati Temple houses the largest solar cooker in the world. At Tirupati Temple, it helps prepare 30,000 meals daily. It took about 2 & half year to install. 35 kg of rice cooked in 15 minutes. Dal for 1000 people is cooked in 30 minutes use of solar cooker leads to no smoke, no fuel cost, ensures hygiene (ref: TOI Chennai, Aug 13).

**Providing Windmills in villages:**

We all know that windmill is an alternative source for producing energy. In today's situation when we are facing electricity shortage & have to put up with 6 to 8 hours power cut per day (this is the situation at many place in Tamilnadu that I have experienced currently in 2015), use of windmills can reduce the difficulties by great extent. At some places, windmills are being used at exemplary level. TOI Dt.29.8.2015 reported that all villages in Gadhinglaj taluka in Kolhapur have plans to overcome power shortage and resultant load shedding by erecting windmills in each village for illuminating street lighting by erecting windmills in each village for illuminating street lights. 11 crore planned project is expected to generate 273 KWh energy. So far Gadhinglaj taluka administration has executed windmill projects in 3 villages of 650 watts capacity each. These villages are Waghrali, Batkanangle, Channekuppi, which have managed to overcome 14 to 15 hrs. Power cuts on daily basis and villagers are happy about this initiative to be independent with regard to energy issue. HR Departments of the companies can take initiative to sponsor windmill projects in & around their units operations. This will help generate energy using the natural resource (wind) without depleting the natural resource. This will in turn help conserve the environment.

**River Cleaning/ Proper utilization of rivers:**

Companies operating in the vicinity of the rivers can initiate the campaign to clean the rivers, like 'Clean Ganga', 'Clean Yamuna' or for that matter cleaning any other river. This will help conserve different species of animals which live in clean water. Some of these species are getting extinct because of polluted water.

#### **Use of river as mode of transportation/ picnic spot:**

River Thames in UK runs across the counties of Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Surrey. People, tourists from across the world visit River Thames, as it is worth visiting. People enjoy fishing, boating etc. in river Thames. It also has website: <http://www.visitthames.co.uk/>

We can also convert our less known rivers into better known rivers. Rivers can be cleaned, place for picnic spots on the banks can be made, beautiful launches with facilities can be allowed to be in service on the rivers. The cost invested to maintain the rivers can be recovered by revenue generated by making it a tourist attraction. Companies can think about it as business proposition also, if not under CSR activity. This will help the HR department of the company to pose an image of environmental-friendly Company. We can also have websites for our rivers like: [www.adyarriver.com](http://www.adyarriver.com) & [www.cooumriver.com](http://www.cooumriver.com) for adyar & cooum Rivers in Chennai. Launches can be allowed to ferry people from one place to another.

#### **Using bicycles within the campus:**

Some companies, which have huge areas/ premises, their employees should desist in using vehicles to move around within the campus. They can rather use bicycles. Using of bicycles will have many uses like: keeping fit, saving of fuel, reduction in pollution etc. Later on, the employees of the company can also use bicycles to move around in the town, subject to usable condition of roads & environment outside in the town. In china, many well to do employees come to office on bicycles, however there, roads are in the better conditions, and separate cycle-lanes are available, apart from less air pollution.

#### **Cleaning of Beaches (in Chennai & elsewhere):**

Just for the sake of examples, let's take the case of cleaning of beaches in Chennai city. There are many companies in Chennai, and we have beautiful beaches in here in Chennai. Many a times, we get new articles, informing us about the pathetic condition of these beaches. It would be useful in HR Departments of the company's take initiatives in the direction of keeping these beaches clean, well maintained and worth visiting. Or at least, the companies can stop dumping the untreated effluent/ Waste material in the sea.

#### **Parking:**

Parking is an essential component of the transportation system and a major component of the urban fabric. The availability and pricing of parking affects how people travel to work, entertainment and shopping activities, how likely people are to use private automobiles or public transportation system. Directly or indirectly, parking policies can have an effect on the quality of life, congestion levels, the environment, attractiveness of urban areas, and financial performance.

#### **HR department in Hospitals: To take initiative for safe disposal of bio-medical waste:**

Education & Sensible people are aware that there is a need for safe disposal & appropriate treatment of bio-medical waste generated in the hospitals. HR Department in hospitals must ensure that this important need is not ignored leading to health hazard & pollution in the environment.

#### **Role of Real Estate Organizations for Eco-Friendly Housing Colonies:**

HR Department of real estate organizations can take initiative to provide eco-friendly housing colonies. Such housing colonies can have enough number of trees planted on the premises; gardens with lot of greenery; solar heaters can be provided catering to the needs of dwelling units. Efforts from real estate organizations in this direction will be very effective. If flat owners or row house owners are left to decide on their own (after purchase of the property) whether to go for these eco-friendly initiatives like installing solar heaters or plantation of trees on the premises etc., then it may not happen very effectively. Indira Colony in Hoshiarpur Punjab is the 1<sup>st</sup> residential colony in the country to get an ISO 14001 certification (ref: TOI Pune Dt.5.8.08). This goal was achieved with the

help from an NGO “Clean and Green Hoshiarpur”. Mr. Deepak Mittal, MD of International Tractors Ltd. Said that this certification heralds a new era in living standards. ISO 14001 is an environmental management benchmark against which organizations are assessed. Megarpatta City Pune in Lima Book of Records (ref: TOI Pune Dt.20.08.15)

It has India’s biggest residential solar system that holds the promise of saving 95 lac units of power & 8890 tonnes of carbon emission per year. It commissioned 4700 Solar collectors in residential section of magarpatta City Township, comprising 122 aptmt bldgs, 85 row houses, 26 bungalows.

#### **Mission, Vision, Values, Strategy of the company:**

HR department is expected to play important role in defining mission, vision, values, and strategies for the company. Whenever the HR department is getting a chance, it is advisable to incorporate the environment-friendly policies in the company. HR department has to take a lead to develop innovative strategies for sustainable economic growth and at the same time staying eco-friendly.

#### **Reuse of water:**

Companies can think of using recycled water for plants, for its gardens.

#### **Car pooling:**

Employees can use car pooling concept as far as possible and avoid using the car for conveyance of single person. This will save fuel energy, reduce pollution, reduce congestion on the roads.

#### **Tree plantation:**

Tree plantation for more greenery, more oxygen & of course for more fruits. Employees of the organizations can undertake tree plantation campaigns more frequently rather than celebrating it as ‘Once-in-a-while’ ritual.

#### **Use of nuclear energy:**

Last few months developments in stages helped India to be in a position to commence nuclear trade. On 1<sup>st</sup> August 2008, IAEA approved the safeguards agreements with India. On 6<sup>th</sup> September 2008, the 45 Member Nuclear Supply Group (NSG) granted the waiver to India allowing it to access civilian nuclear technology and fuel from other countries. With this, India became the only country with nuclear weapons which is not a party to NPT (nuclear proliferation treaty), but is still allowed to carry out nuclear commerce with rest of the world.

It is said that use of nuclear energy for civil requirements will help reduce pollution. Let’s wait for the steps to be implemented in India to make sure that use of nuclear energy brings in prosperity, keeping a clean & green environment in the country.

#### **Global warming:**

##### **Aviation industry is a major contributor to global warming:**

As per one report, the average plane release close to one ton of carbon dioxide for each passenger it carries from London to New York (Air distance between London & New York is 3458 statute miles). IATA, the International Air Transport Association, predicts another 700 million passengers will take to the skies by 2016. Conservationists point out that the impact on global warming is more since the planes travel at very high altitudes.

##### **Sulphur gas as solution:**

Prof. Tim Flannery, a well known expert & scientist in global warming in Australia, proposed that if sulphur gas can be pumped & kept in earth’s stratosphere, it may keep out Sun’s rays, and hence help reduce global warming.

News: Japanese company Genepax creates eco-friendly car that uses water as fuel: Japanese company, Genepax has claimed (ref: <http://www.genepax.co.jp/en/>) that it has created new eco-friendly car that can run on water. The company says that propriety unit, a type of membrane electrode assembly (MEA), breaks water apart into

hydrogen and oxygen using a chemical reaction, which provides fuel for a hydrogen fuel cell to run the car. Let's wait for this car to be available in the market.

### Conclusion:

Economic growth is necessary & welcome, but in the process man should not be greedy enough to ignore the environmental concerns. Future of the whole mankind is at stake, if we choose to ignore the importance of the topic. Time has come that we understand the seriousness of the issue. Business organizations have for long used (& sometimes misused) the natural resources and damaged the environment of this beautiful earth. Now the time has come that business organizations pay special attention and undo the damage that has been done in the past. HR departments & professionals have to take the initiative on behalf of the organizations Nature has created different types of animals, species (including human being) and wanted that all exist together in peace & harmony. Lets restore the balance and give due attention to environmental HRM.

This Mother Earth has always given a lot to the mankind; has taken care of us. The time has come that, now we all together, take good care of this mother Earth and the Environment. Let's make this earth beautiful and worth living-in for our generations to come.

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