

# Let's Consume with Care

By **Nawneet Vibhaw** Friday, 05 June 2015 09:51



Today is the World Environment Day (WED). The WED page on United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) website reads "Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care."

**- Nawneet Vibhaw**

While increase in consumption is essential for all growing economies including India, we just need to add caution to such consumption. This poses a greater responsibility on each of us including the larger businesses. As citizens too we need to do our bit. We may all feel that car-pooling is a great idea but how many of us actually practice it? Water is soon becoming a scarce resource but do we actually consume it responsibly? Planting trees and conserving forests is essential but we would not regret cutting a few if we were to have best quality wooden furniture for our living room. While we all agree that "someone" needs to do "something" about conserving the environment, we tend to look in a different direction when the finger is pointed towards us.

Delhi as we all know is the most polluted city in the world if recent reports are to be believed. Health ailments including cancer, asthma and other respiratory illnesses are on the rise. Those having a choice have relocated to "cleaner" cities, the expats are moving back to their respective countries and others are simply stuck. Is it the flawed laws, weaker implementation or mere insolence on our part towards nature that has landed us in this mess, which we are trying to clear, courtesy the National Green Tribunal (NGT).

Ironically India is one of those very few progressive nations which have a specialized tribunal to deal with environmental matters. The National Green Tribunal of late has been playing a very proactive role to address issues relating to environment protection which are being brought to its notice. Be it imposing a spot fine of Rs. 5000 on anyone found dumping waste in the river Yamuna and issuing 28 directions for the implementation of the Maily Se Nirmal Yamuna Revitalization Project 2017 or banning diesel vehicles older than 10 years in the National Capital Region of Delhi, the NGT seems to be making all the right noises. The recent imposition of fine on burning waste in NCR Delhi and ban on construction activities in projects where construction and demolition waste is not being treated properly are all reflective of the right intention. However, there is a fair bit of capacity building and supporting infrastructure that needs to be created to ensure that we have effective implementation of what we all feel are excellent ideas and the need of the

hour. Implementing these ideas in a phased manner might be a win-win situation for all of us.

The recent initiatives provide an excellent opportunity for businesses to reinvent themselves and make their activities sustainable and environment-friendly. There seems to be a great demand for products which are environmentally safe and for those who wish to make a statement by both manufacturing and consuming such products as the case may be, even if it comes at a premium, it may just be the right thing to do. The new found focus on environment is creating a wonderful opportunity not just for the manufacturers but also for the consumers to change the way we live. We need to give it a thought and take it in the right spirit.

Environment education may have been made compulsory in schools but let us not leave it at that. Even at home, in offices etc. we need to imbibe these values in our lifestyle. The business houses need not see environmental regulations as a hurdle but instead as an opportunity to mend their ways and improve their businesses. Corporate Social Responsibility is another great opportunity to improve the brand value of the companies. It is here that the role of environmental lawyers also becomes significant as the idea is to move ahead by complying with all the necessary laws and not work our way around it. We need to all come together and make a sustained effort which will help us build a cleaner country and a greener earth to live in and hand over to our future generations.

Be it the judiciary, the government or the business houses, we need to all come together and work in consonance with each other so that there is a genuine attempt to achieve sustainability and a better lifestyle - a world with cleaner air, clearer water, greener land and more responsible human beings. While most of us relish the idea of celebrating such days every year, we need to make a concerted effort to create a world where we need not think about the environment only on specific days but make it a part of our lifestyle to care about the environment in everything that we do, every day. As the UNEP says, we need to indeed Consume with Care!