



VOLUME

5

# Cleaner is cheaper

case studies of  
corporate environmental excellence

Editor R K Narang

Cleaner is cheaper

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*Case studies of corporate environmental excellence*

Volume 5

Editor

**R K Narang**



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# Foreword

The issue of protecting the environment in a timely manner has been attracting the attention of policy-makers, civil society, and business for several decades now, particularly since Rachel Carson published her book *Silent Spring* in 1962. Up to that point, the developed world pursued the relentless goal of rapid growth without any regard to environmental consequences. As a result, the London smog of the 1950s, in which thousands of people died, and the case of large-scale inversion in the atmosphere in Donora, Pennsylvania, stand out as significant examples of the dangers from neglecting the environment.

The year 2007 marks the birth centenary of Rachel Carson, a pioneer and a fearless campaigner who used her knowledge of science to sensitize society in North America on the dangers of unmitigated use of chemicals and pesticides. This was clearly the start of a new era, because following her resolute and persistent advocacy of environmentally clean solutions, North America, followed by Europe, brought about major changes in the quality of water and air, and took in hand major afforestation programmes that corrected the imbalances of the past. By the 1990s, most of North America and Europe had created a clean environment for their citizens; but on the global front, there remains a different story to tell.

The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) has just completed three reports of the Working Groups dealing with the physical-science basis of climate change; impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability; and mitigation. These have created a major stir and have convinced leaders, as well as the public at large, on the cumulative damage created by industrialization over the last century and a half, which has resulted in an unprecedented increase in the concentration of GHGs (greenhouse gases) in the atmosphere leading to climate change and its various impacts, most of which are adverse in nature.

The Kyoto Protocol was designed to address the problem and laid down targets for reducing the emissions of GHGs, but it is now clear that not only were these targets inadequate, even though they represented an important first step, but the exclusion of some countries from the committed action was a major gap in what should have been a truly global effort. Solutions in the future will require government policies and the involvement of civil society, but it is business and industry that would have to really find the solutions that are essential and implement them with a sense of urgency. The impacts of climate change will leave no sector of the economy untouched, and are likely to affect prospects for business in a variety of ways. It would be proved over time that cleaner, in this context as well as on issues related to the local environment and natural resources, is cheaper, if we are to consider the costs of inaction and continuing with practices that are environmentally dirty.

This volume of *Cleaner is cheaper* deals, of course, with some outstanding case studies of companies that have shown responsibility and initiative in conceptualizing and implementing a series of measures in practice of the 'cleaner is cheaper' philosophy. However, it is only a matter of time before

Indian industry would also be required to mount actions for addressing global environmental problems, particularly the mitigation of GHGs to meet the threat of climate change. The philosophy of 'cleaner is cheaper' would then acquire a global relevance and dimension.

As it happens, actions for the mitigation of GHG emissions also have substantial co-benefits at the local level. Hence, the case studies described in this volume would provide a strong basis for exploiting some of these co-benefits for addressing both local environmental problems as well as the threat of climate change at the global level. These examples, therefore, have a larger and longer-term relevance than is apparent.



R K Pachauri  
Director-General, TERI

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