

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO THE SOCIETY: ASIAN PAINTS' SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES FOR WATER CONSERVATION

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Abstract: With the fast-paced changes taking place around the globe, nations have to be prepared to face adversities arising due to climate change. The deepest fears of course, are of Water Shortage. Sustainable initiatives in time will go a long way to help communities prepare for the difficult times ahead. The present article presents the initiatives taken by Asian Paints to help with Water conservation.

Index Terms: Sustainability, Water Conservation, Social Responsibility.

I. INTRODUCTION

'Our constant endeavour is to manage and reduce our environmental and social footprint, even as we expand our operations'

-K.B.S Anand, Managing Director and CEO, Asian Paints.

Founded in 1942, Asian Paints today is India's leading and Asia's fourth largest paint company, with a turnover of Rs. 158.5 billion. They operate in 19 countries and have 26 paint manufacturing facilities in the world, servicing consumers in over 65 countries. The company has come a long way since its small beginnings in 1942. It was set up as a partnership firm by four friends who were willing to take on the world's biggest, most famous paint companies operating in India at that time. Over the course of 25 years, Asian Paints became a corporate force and India's leading paint company. Driven by its strong consumer-focus and innovative spirit, the company has been the market leader in paints since 1967. Today, it is double the size of any other paint company in India. Asian Paints manufactures a wide range of paints for decorative and industrial use.

Background

'Sustainability is ingrained in the way we do business' proclaims the company website. Their CSR approach focuses on the development of communities around the vicinity of their plants at the same time developing innovative programs that leverage their capabilities as a paint manufacturer and home improvement service provider to enhance livelihoods of underserved communities through vocational training and skills development. The company CSR policy has identified four major areas of action:

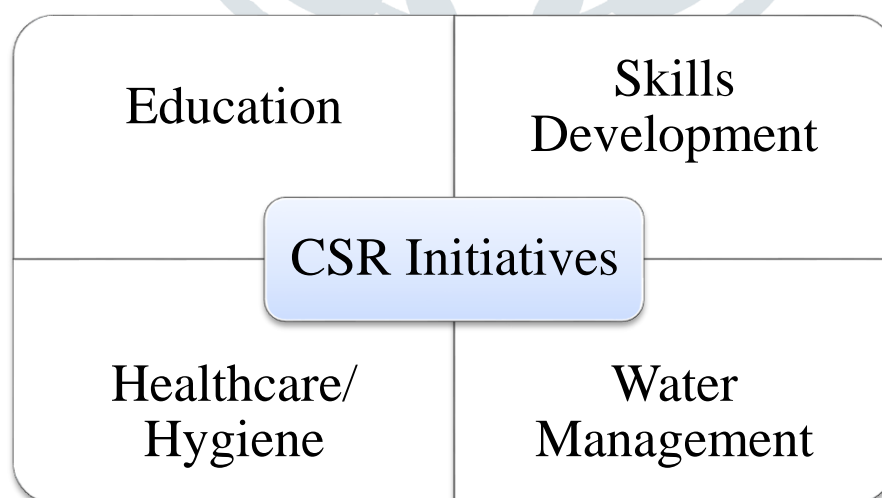


Exhibit 1

A focused corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy has helped the company make a difference to the lives of people across 100 villages in the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Gujarat, Telangana, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. Their concerted efforts with NGOs, public and private sector bodies have enabled them to create value through their CSR initiatives which have been acknowledged and rewarded nationally and globally.

Award	Category	Description
CII-ITC Sustainability Award	Environment Management	The award recognizes organizations that have employed innovative approaches, including policies and practices, to reduce their environmental impact and achieved exemplary results.
Golden Peacock Award	Sustainability practices	The Golden Peacock award, instituted by the Institute of Directors (IOD) in 1991 is regarded as a benchmark of corporate Excellence worldwide.
CII National Award	Excellence in Water Management	Asian Paints Patancheru plant at Telangana, India wins CII National Award for Excellence in Water Management
FICCI Sustainability Award 2016	'Best Green Product - Woodtech Giene Polish'	Geine polish has 70% lower VOCs and free of all hazardous chemicals such as APEO, CMR, heavy metals, etc. compared to solvent based shellac.
FICCI Sustainability Award 2015	Best Green Product – Royale Aspira	the only architectural paint in India having GS-11 certification. Aspira offers several environmental benefits such as lower VOC, better indoor air quality, free of toxic materials and lower carbon footprint.

Exhibit 2

Water Conservation Efforts

Water is one of the fast depleting natural resources. One needn't look to the entire world to establish the paucity faced by thousands. In our own cities, and especially villages acute water shortage makes people live in deplorable circumstances. Livelihoods, food security and local socio-economic development are linked to the availability of adequate amounts of clean water. In the Indian context, the problem of water scarcity is further complicated by population growth, urbanization and industrialization. Asian Paints believe it is their responsibility to judiciously use and help conserve this precious resource. Their approach includes providing support and infrastructure at each stage of water conservation, water preservation, water re-charge and waste water treatment.

Water is a critical input in the manufacturing process. The company has shown consciousness of their dependence on water and have strived to optimize their water consumption by implementing a range of water conservation projects, waste water treatment, reusing process water and water recharging initiatives at all their manufacturing facilities.

Their key interventions include:

- Awareness on water conservation in schools and nearby villages
- Installation of roof top rainwater harvesting and recharge systems in village communities and schools
- Promoting integrated watershed development in areas around manufacturing locations
- Water recharge through de-silting of lakes.

These projects have been carried out in collaboration with various NGOs and other volunteer organisations. One such concerted effort has been made in association with Vanrai, their partner NGO in Sustainable Rural Development Project for 8 Villages in Khandala Tehsil in Satara District. Following is a glimpse of work done in the last year:

Villages situated in Khandala Tehsil in Satara District:

Sr. No	Name of the villages	Population
1	Dhangarwadi	1200
2	Pisalwadi	1150
3	Bholi	3200
4	Kesurdi	1800
5	Jagalwadi	0500
6	Limbachi Wadi	0550
7	Ghadgewadi	0600
8	Bawada	3800

These villages are situated in Khandala Tehsil in Satara district. This area is declared as low rain density zone, but unfortunately the entire water flows away due to improper planning, thereby there is scarcity of water in winter and summer. Following main problems were observed in the villages:

1. Scarcity of water in winter and summer
2. Low productivity of agriculture
3. Lack of sanitation, hygiene, health and poor drainage facilities
4. Lack of education facilities

Following steps were taken to remedy the situation:

1. Soil And Water Conservation

Vanarai initiated to organise various watershed activities as dire need was found to increase the ground water level, slower down the velocity of rain fall, conserve soil and water and to support protective irrigation. Following activities were conducted:

Sr. No	Particular	Total Units sanctioned for the year	Work completed
1	Loose Boulder Structure [Jagalwadi (20), Limbachi Wadi (40), Ghadagewadi(25) and Kesurdi (40)]	125	125
2	Continuous Staggered Trenches & Well Recharge. Limbachiwadi :2200, Jagalwadi :2400, Ghadagewadi1650, Kesurdi 1250	7500	7500
3	Cement Nalla Bunds [Kesurdi]	2	2
4	Gabion Bunds Errection (Limbachiwadi :3, Jagalwadi 2, Ghadagewadi : 3, Kesurdi : 4	12	12
5	Roof Top Rain Water Harvesting [Kesurdi, Pisalwadi and Dhangarwadi each 1 school and at Bholi 2 schools]	8	8

Impact- The yearly target was achieved of all the above as envisaged. Last year there was hardly any rainfall. The effect would be known after ensuing monsoon.

Roof Top Rain Water Harvesting - five initiatives were completed in five schools last year. The remaining three were completed in the next year's target.

Sr. No	School Name	Type of Roof	Roof area in Sq. M.	App. Rain Water availability in one season [Lit]	App. Rain Water availability in rainy days [Lit]	Recharge water storage mode	Remarks area covered under this activity
1	Z.P. School Bawada	Flat roof	557	350910	5013	Existing bore well	Full terrace
2	Z.P. School Shikwarwadi	Sloping roof	337	212300	3000	Ground Water	Full terrace
3	Rajendra Viyalay . Bawada	Sloping roof	930	585900	8370	Proposed new bore well	1/2 terrace
	Total		1824	1149110	11873	-	-

Sr. No	Particular	Actual
1	Type of Roof	Sloping roof and flat concrete roof
2	App. seasonal rainfall [Average]	700 mm
3	App. rain fall in one rainy day [Average]	10 mm
	(App. rainwater Availability will depend upon the actual rainfall figure.)	

Water is a critical resource for paint manufacturing including the usage as raw material and operational requirements. The company has limited control on the water consumed as raw material and would find it difficult to minimise the water footprint as it depends upon the product specifications. However, they endeavour to limit the consumption of water in other processes such as steam-boilers, cooling towers, chilling plants, cleaning of process equipment, gardening, domestic purposes, etc. Their specific water consumption has shown a decreasing trend over the last few years:

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Specific non-product fresh water consumption (kl/ kl of product)	0.95	0.69	0.54
Specific total fresh water consumption (kl/ kl of product)	1.32	1.08	0.90

More initiatives like waste water management have enabled the company to achieve zero liquid discharge outside factory premises across all their decorative manufacturing units. They have adopted a two way approach for efficient and effective effluent management; focusing on reducing the trade effluent generated at source and finding ways of reusing the treated effluent.

Conclusion

With various outreach programs, sustainability endeavours and Corporate Social Responsibility projects, the water deficit is presumably still much higher and the water footprint still a large one for the company. But sustained efforts in the direction of water conservation and production of sustainable products and green operations, the company has created a niche in the paint industry. Concerted efforts on the same lines in future would reduce their social and environmental footprint further. Such socially and environmentally aware practices need to be adopted by all businesses if we are to sustain the resources we enjoy for the generations to come.

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