



**From Waste Paper to Recycled Paper:
Towards an Eco-Friendly Work Environment
By Ms. Chandni Khanduj**

Ms Chandini Khanduja has done her BA (hons) in political science from Delhi university and has been working in the field of environment. She runs the 'rethink, reuse and recycle paper' programme at 'Kriti' and has a keen interest in waste paper management.

In today's crisis of natural resources and their management, the ways through which the existing resources can be put to maximum use have to be explored. This in itself is a good argument to take up the case of recycled paper. The study thus explores and identifies ways to optimally use, reuse and recycle paper in daily work life and thus promote the concept of eco-friendly offices and work practices. A total of 23 organisations with a mix of government, corporate, NGOs and international organisations from Delhi were involved in the study.

Delhi which has a large number of offices ranging from multinationals to small businesses uses large amounts of paper every day for various purposes. It was felt that with the advent of computers, this scenario will change and the use of paper would be reduced. But this has remained a dream and a large quantity of paper used in these offices finds its way into the wastepaper basket. It is often pointed out that paper, unlike plastic, is environment friendly and biodegradable but paper cannot be made without felling trees. Thus by reverse logic, every scrap of paper wasted has a direct impact on environment.

In fact the study can be divided into two distinct parts. The first part deals with understanding the processes and practices which lead to wastepaper generation and its disposal, while the second part looks at the availability and accessibility of paper recycle units in and around Delhi and understanding their economy. In fact, the study drives home the point that patterns of paper use and reuse are individual based and not necessarily determined by any prescribed organisational policy.

The report looks in detail at waste paper management and the role of the informal sector. It also looks at various other aspects like the non existence of a policy framework of the government on recycling waste paper. The study looks at handmade paper as the sustainable technology option and the various paper recycling processes and programmes in existence.

The first step towards paper recycling is to rethink of paper as a resource. The second step is to reduce its consumption, the third is to reuse it to the fullest extent and the fourth involves its proper disposal for recycling. Guidelines have been given on how a paper recycling policy can be framed at the workplace, at home, at organisational levels and government levels. The study is expected to encourage and inspire a lot of institutions in following Eco-friendly systems for waste paper management.

The study concludes with suggestions on how cities should go about to work on a plan for urban governance. Perhaps the biggest realization of this study is that these initiatives would have to be reinvented in every city. The study lists some points which are crucial for the successful implementation of such systems like strong political support, customisation of approach to agencies, capacity building, financial strength, leadership and public support for the success of such initiatives.