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Harmonizing Green Education and Green Management for Holistic Sustainability

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Abstract:

Environment education is slowly making a permanent place in the academic curriculum worldwide. It has revitalized a way of creating a better understanding of the intricate balance between humans and environment. The eco-educated millennial generation is opening new horizons for achieving individual and organizational sustainability indices post advent of this green educational upsurge. People are beginning to realize that the solution to deteriorating environment lies in the conversion and usage of garbage as resource based on the green strategies like reduce, recycle, reuse, recondition, remanufacture and repair. A constant urge for translating these 6 'R' green strategies for eliminating hazardous impact of carbon footprints surmounts the organizations and individuals likewise. Ways in which these strategies have to be put into practice for achieving holistic sustainability in terms of employment generation, monetary gains, new industry evolution, ecological fit, and positive image building forms the essence of the paper. Conceptual framework analysis approach has been employed to deduce vital prescripts from authentic, exhaustive and reliable social sciences and environment related secondary data repositories. Intellectual weaving of individual frame concepts is then done to observe benefits at diadic levels- individuals and organizations. Giving new dimensions to mother earth via strong managerial approach coupled with green education would assist in leaving resources for our future generations to reap.

Keywords: Carbon footprint, Eco-educated millennial generation, Green education, Green strategies

1. Introduction

Ecological issues such as global warming, toxic waste disposal, resource depletion, and landfill management are items of public as well as legislative concern which have prompted organizations to interject pro-ecological values into their system of corporate heuristics. This interjection of green values could only be facilitated if environment education is implemented at all stages of learning. Due to challenges of global warming, nations and people these days have all time high concern for environmental protection and a new format of business has emerged as Green Business. This eco-efficiency is usually calculated as the economic value added by a firm in relation to its aggregated ecological impact (Schaltegger, S. & Sturm, A. 1998). Educational institutions have not been far touched from this. Realizing the essence of green education, reading modules have been incorporated in school and college course work. These reading modules, however, lack a practical translation because it is hardly presented before the students as a tool for sustainable future. However, as Dyllick and Hockerts (2002) point out the business case alone will not be sufficient to realize sustainable development. They point towards eco-effectiveness, socio-effectiveness, sufficiency, and eco-equity as four criteria that need to be met if sustainable development is to be reached. This could only be achieved if environment education provides double cushioning in facilitating sensitivity towards judicious usage of natural resources right from school life. Eco- friendly attitude should be a life style rather than a mandate. It should be incorporated at grass root level. Poor countries for their part usually lack the physical infrastructure, ideas and human capacity to integrate sustainability into their development planning. Sustainable development has continued to evolve as that of protecting the world's resources while its true agenda is to control the world's resources. Realizing this importance, these days one of the key business strategies ensuring sustainable development has taken the shape of Green Marketing. Green marketing concept emerges from societal marketing (Kotler, 1999). Green marketing is an attempt to characterize a product as being environmental friendly (eco friendly). It holds the view that marketing which is a part of business not only has to satisfy customers in particular, but also has to take into account the interests of society in general. Therefore eco-education should form the working basis of these marketers and help them develop a green scientific temper and thinking pattern. This has already helped to increase the recent trend towards the "greening" of the companies. Moreover, we will see that this kind of thinking distinguishes the enterprises that will prosper in the dynamic, global marketplace of the 21st century (Menon and Menon, 1997).

2. Literature Review

The adoption of a green marketing orientation by a firm is principally a response to the increased pressures by society for business to meet its comprehensive ethical and moral responsibilities, while adhering to the marketing concept's basic tenants as suggested by Mc-Carthy and Perreault (1984) of meeting customer needs at a profit. An eco-marketing orientation, adapting McNamara's (1972) frame work for measuring an organization's degree of marketing orientation, may be measured by some combination of structural and behavioral indicators. These indicators may include: (1) employee, supplier, community, and customer eco-education programs; (2) toll free social concern and ecotoll lines; (3) a designated ecological and social concern marketing staff; (4) cradle to grave planned product eco-lifecycles; (5) explicitly considering ecological and social concerns in all strategic and tactical planning; and (6) a systematic environmental scanning procedure explicit in all business decision making. Here also eco-education programs have been highlighted as most significant. This ideology should be inculcated in budding minds from eco-education modules developed during childhood. A growing number of companies are making a paradigm shift in values - from anthropocentric to biocentric (which means from company centric to eco centric) not only because it is the right thing to do environmentally, but it synergistically benefits the bottom line. Ciba Geigy, Coca Cola, ConAgra, Dow, Du Pont, Dwight-Church, Electrolux, S.C.Johnson, Kroeger, McDonald's, Mitsubishi, Norsk Hydro, Nippon Steel, Pacific Gas and Electric, Procter & Gamble, 3M, and Westinghouse are just a few of the companies that have experienced the benefits of a biocentric economic philosophy (Kleiner,1991; Porter,1991).

Marketers, because of their catalytic position can and should take a leadership position; not only with their companies' profit, but to preserve the earth and its biosphere. We need to reorder our values to a paradigm that recognizes the partnership of humankind and Earth. If humans are to have harmony with over the earth, its resources, and its biosphere, then we should have the foresight to appreciate its underpinning character. We need each other, not only for survival but also for continued growth-economically, socially, mentally, biocentrically, and spiritually (Ginsberg and Bloom, 2004). These issues are of increasing importance to the global community, with some of the more advanced nations even incorporating ecological regulations as an integral component of antitrust legislation (Polonsky, 1991). This could be achieved by 6 'R' greening strategies of recycle, repair, recondition, remanufacture, reduce and reuse. Suggestive technical approaches for manufacturers based on identified 6 'R' greening strategies include: plan for recyclability, both in design and material choice; eliminate excessive packaging; have more reusable or refillable packages; use creative thinking to find less wasteful solutions to theft prevention and shelf marketing; substitute non-toxic pigments and stabilizers; design plastics for return and refill; concentrate on the best and most efficient methods for minimizing the generation of waste. These actions require cooperation among businesses, stockholders, government, employees, the general public, consumers and others. They also involve changes in lifestyles and values. Therefore, intertwining eco-education modules with contemporary teaching at home and school will translate employees of tomorrow into eco-educated millennial employees aiming at sustainability.

A 2008 survey by the National Geographic Society and GlobScan on consumer choice and the environment reported on current behavior in fourteen countries (including Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Mexico, Russia, the UK and the US). The study found signs that consumer in all countries "feel empowered when it comes to the environment and are taking some action in their daily lives to reduce consumption and waste." Such survey analysis should be presented as green education modules so that individual remains sensitized. A global Synovate survey conducted in 2007 in association with Aegis, and repeated in 2008 in association with BBC World, also found that consumers in most countries are becoming more aware and willing to act on environmental concerns.

3. Research Methodology

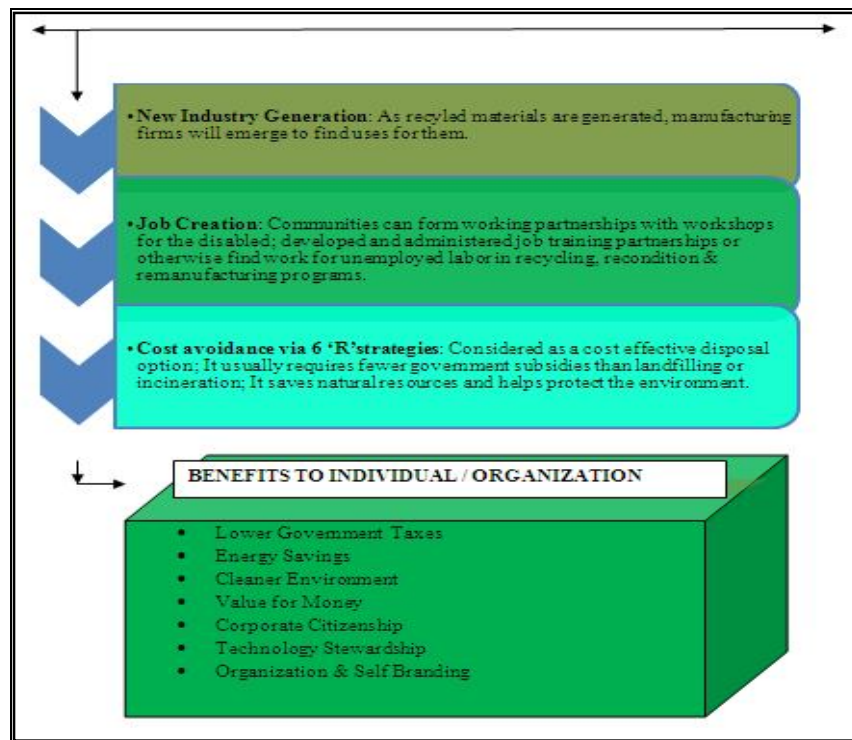
A conceptual framework analysis approach has been employed to deduce vital prescripts from authentic, rich, exhaustive and reliable social sciences and environment related secondary data repositories. Systematic data mining methodology using specific key words is used to filter concepts of eco-education pertaining to individual growth, organizational growth and sustainability. The obtained data is then fragmented into three vital frames namely, green education concepts; industrial changes and organizational / individual benefits. Exploratory research has been used to arrive at multi frame stage. The frames are then conceptualized and related to yield organizational and individual benefits aiming at sustainability. Carbon footprint reduction interventions as a part and parcel of eco-education based on 6 'R' green strategies and its positive impact on organization and individual has been proposed in the form of a model containing the three identified frames.

4. Findings

Based on vast literature review, it is acclaimed that there is scanty organized, official data available on fostering of eco-education with sustainability. Systematic promotion of eco-education, if, conducted and implemented has never been presented in a plausible manner that it could be linked to business unit interventions and individual growth in a holistic fashion. A nexus of essence of ecological education ideology was never encapsulated and related to green strategies for individual and organizational sustainability. An attempt has been made to fill in this gap and propose a vital construct for same. Existing literature usually circumvents the green strategies around 3 'R's of reduce, recycle and reuse. These have been extrapolated from green manufacturer's view point to include recondition, repair and remanufacture. Eco-education themes related to daily life have been considered and linked to the green strategies. The influence is then correlated to the second frame having cascade like influences on new industry generation, job creation and cost reduction as vital spin offs leading to both individual and organizational benefits. See model in figure 1.0.

Green Education Themes	Green strategy
Select Durable Items	Reuse
Use Electric Razors	Reuse
Utilize recyclable batteries	Remanufacture
Use cloth napkins	Reuse
Use refillable & resealable containers	Reuse
Adopt bulk purchases	Reduce
Purchase foods in raw form (unprocessed)	Reduce
Cut back on items that use up non-renewable resources	Reduce
Reduce toxic chemical use	Reduce
Give outgrown clothes to friends or a charity	Reuse
Donate broken appliances to vocational schools	Repair and Reinvent
Utilize both sides of paper	Reduce & Reuse
Use organic waste as humus	Recycle & Reuse
Repair broken furniture	Recondition

Figure 1: Cascade relating green education & strategies with individual and organizational benefits



5. Conclusion

Environment sensitivity created at grass root level via green education modules stems from the 6 'R' green strategies of reduce, recycle, reuse, recondition, repair and remanufacture. Once participation of eco-educated millennial generation is initiated then sustainability would obviously pour in. For employers and practitioners, the construct imparts usefulness of linking departments and employees to sustainability indices via participation in environmental education programmes. For academics, it adds to the existing data with a novel knowledge base on green management and for the society it promises reduced carbon footprints and a healthy future for the generations to come. There are two main types of benefits. First, there are potential cost reductions and room for new industry developments and job creation. Environmental change often boils down to increased resource efficiency, which in turn leads to improvements to the bottom line. Second benefit relates to promise for secured natural resources, customer preferences, lower government taxes, corporate stewardship and enhancing corporate reputation. The nexus created between vital educational themes, greening strategies, impact on industry and value addition to individuals / organizations has been a never attempted endeavour. Its impact on coming generations is expected to be impeccable and it opens doors for conducting further empirical studies in this direction.

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