



Integrating Organized Retail through Media for a Sustainable Social Development –A Qualitative study

KEYWORDS

Media, Social Media, Environment , Sustainability, Retail, Carbon Foot print

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ABSTRACT Administration of Retail shopping malls/outlets that have a clear goal of enhancing the city by establishing and building relational, commercial and free-time connection as well between people, shopkeepers and organizations is the key aspect of today's social development. The need here is a holistic approach in managing the centre/outlet where one guarantees its owner not only the financial management of the outlet, but also the management of all the social and environmental issues that affect its performance, the visitors' satisfaction and the harmonious coexistence with all stakeholders in a sustainable way. In order to achieve this, increasing awareness, measuring and improving the environmental and social aspects that comprise the management of the Retail shopping outlets are of paramount importance. Although initial literature review has brought out that such development can be achieved through various levels, the most important among them stipulates usage of social and related media effectively in communicating and interpreting the retailer's vision. The paper makes an attempt to understand integration of media in enhancing the health of the citizens, environment and overall social development.

Introduction

At the recent GLOBE conference held in Vancouver, BC on Social Media and Corporate Social Responsibility, Social Media was confirmed as an essential tool to leverage sustainability on the environmental and its spread to wider audiences. Media in general plays a vital role in environmental up gradation and sustainable social development. We have identified two important themes with a focus on justifying various levels on Social Development. Firstly it is the various new media which are depicted and portrayed as a control mechanism of environmental issues in particular and the entire society in general. Secondly, on the mushrooming Organized Retail outlets and what are their role in building a sustainable environment and its application through media to propagate the availability of ways and means of protecting environment and application of the same over the larger society. The conceptualizing of this paper is based on the premise of these two themes and how these two themes get integrated in order to achieve the desired goal .

Conceptual Formation for Integration

The conceptual formation of this paper revolves on the theme that is appended below.

- (a) Role of Media and Retail Sector in the control environmental degradation towards the sustainable social development in and around the milieu.

Review of Literature Development

Rogers and Shoemaker in their book (1971) defined development as : "a type of social change in which new ideas are introduced into a social system in order to produce higher per capita income and levels of living through more modern production methods and improved social organization. Development is modernization at the social systems level."

Dissanayake (1981) defines development as the process of social change which has as its goal the improvement in the quality of life of all or the majority of the people without doing violence to the natural and cultural environment in which they exist and which seeks to involve the generality of the people as closely as possible in this enterprise, making them

the masters of their own destiny.

Mass Media and Social Change

The mass media have caused fundamental changes in human communication. When Gutenberg introduced movable type in the 15th century, people began shifting from largely intuitive interpersonal communication to reading, which required a different kind of concentration as pointed out by the renowned communication theorist Marshall McLuhan,. The result, according to McLuhan, was less spontaneous communication, alienation among individuals and a fragmented society. An alternate view, more charitable to the media , is that great works trickle down to mass audiences through media popularization.

Organized Retail and Social Development

Although it is learnt that several studies have analyzed the impact of modern retail investments on the social infrastructure of a community, both from an empirical and a theoretical point of view, the impact of modern retail capital on social capital is still not conspicuous. According to FAO Investment Centre / EBRD Cooperation programme Report Series N. 16 JUNE 2011, some studies have pointed at the negative impact of modern retail investments and the associated decline in small local shops on the social infrastructure of certain regions.. However, there is also a positive effect of modern retail investments on social capital as lower prices and more convenient shopping in modern retailers lead to an increase in the money and time available for social capital producing products/ activities.

Retail Outlet perspective on environmental protection towards Sustainable Development

(i) Operational Footprint

For Retailers, reducing direct environmental impacts like energy and water usage , waste generation and land use provide opportunities to streamline business operations and save costs. Developing strategic and operational plans to address the environmental footprint of retail involves understanding impacts, prioritizing responses, tracking progress and identifying innovative ways to improve retail's operational footprint. Most immediately tangible for this are the facility operations that organizations control directly and can influ-

ence reducing energy and water consumption, minimizing Green House Gas (GHG) emissions, and increasing recycling rates to reduce waste.

(ii) Reducing Energy Use

Managing energy starts with an understanding of energy usage, which can involve sophisticated building management systems and energy sub meters, or simple methods like tracking monthly energy bills. Establishing an energy use baseline allows retailers to set reduction goals and to begin developing implementation strategies. Some of the ways where resources are leveraged are incentive programs, integrating GHG emissions tracking into retailers energy measurement and ENERGY STAR Certification tools. One of the prominent retailer in US namely TARGET has committed to earn ENERGY STAR certification for at least 75 % of their US buildings by 2015.

Some of the techniques for an energy efficient retail space include the following

- (a) Setting up Building Automation system that will not only track energy use but also control temperature settings, monitor alarms, and help identify areas for energy savings.
- (b) Retrofitting old heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems with newer, more efficient models to reduce the energy needed to heat and cool retail spaces.
- (c) Installing low energy lighting systems, including Fluorescent and LED lamps, which use about 75 % less energy than the standard incandescent bulbs. Lowe has completed a five year sales floor lighting retrofit in 2010 that put more than three million new energy efficient fluorescent lamps in stores. In addition, Motion sensors have become more common in food refrigeration cases. The Retail Outlet TARGET has installed such Motion sensors in all of its new and remodeled stores.
- (d) Incorporating Day lighting and Sky Lights, which will reduce the need for artificial lighting during daytime operational hours, saving energy and money. World's largest Retailer Wal-Mart has incorporated day lighting in all of their new store designs, and an estimated 250 million kWh a year.
- (e) Installing advanced refrigeration systems for significant savings especially for the retail formats like grocery and Convenience stores, refrigerators and freezers make up a significant portion of total energy use. Equipment with self closing doors and motion – activated lighting and refrigerants with a lower climate impact will reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions

Although it is apparent that for any organization, minimizing energy use as mentioned above is a common first step toward reducing Green House Gas (GHG) emissions, there are two more steps available. They are using renewable energy such as generating energy through windmill, hydropower, biomass etc as the second step and lastly where renewable energy is not provided or is not cost effective, renewable energy credits and carbon offsets can be purchased to further reduce GHG emissions.

(iii) Minimizing Waste

Waste Minimization starts with reduction and reuse where retailers are updating procurement policies to minimize the volume of disposable material entering their facilities and engaging employees to reduce material consumption. It is not only the retailers who are involved in the waste reduction but also the Customers as they are also important allies in reducing waste. Many retailers have introduced reusable shopping bags and some of them also offers incentives to use them. For the materials that cannot be eliminated or reused, retailers can maximize recycling as everything from plastic, aluminum and cardboard to cooking oil can be recycled.

(iv) Carbon Footprint Framework for Retail Store

One of the definitions for Carbon Footprint is "the total set of

greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions caused by an organization, event or product. Carbon Footprint is a lifecycle assessment limited to the indicator of carbon emissions. Therefore the well established standards of the ISO 140064 are also applicable. A significant percentage of the carbon footprint of retailers originates in the stores. Heating, Lighting, air conditioning, ventilation, baking and refrigeration are the main factors for direct energy consumption and therefore of carbon emissions, of a retail outlet/store. Especially for the formats like Supermarkets where around 60 % of the products are food related, the use of refrigerants and their leakages represent important contributions to GHG emissions. Retailers can only have an impact by using a higher share of renewable energy or by reducing their energy consumption. For the heating, retailers often use oil or gas. The carbon emissions of gas are lower than that of oil and less carbon emissions are generated by using combined heat and power plants either in the store or using direct heating. Food retailers can optimally use the waste heat of their refrigeration appliances to heat the store.

Research Methodology

The Research methodology adopted was qualitative with secondary data analysis and discussion with a few experts in the field of Organized Retail and Environment.

Research Type : Qualitative

Research Design : Exploratory

Type of Data : Secondary

Experts discussed : Dr Thomas Mathew, Dean, Research, SFIMAR, Mumbai

Mr. Fernandes, Retail Learning, Retailers Association of India

(rai), Mumbai

Rtn. Mr. Mudrak Lalaji, President, Rotary Club of Borivali, Mumbai

Initiatives of Rotary Club of Borivali

Rotary club of Borivali, Mumbai has been always in the forefront of taking various initiatives in protecting the environment and triggering social development. Some of the recent initiatives that Rotary club of Borivali has done are appended below. These inputs are based on our discussion with Rtn. Mr. Mudrak Lalaji, President, Rotary Club Borivali, Mumbai.

(a) Say No to Plastic Initiative

This initiative was carried out in association with Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Borivali where every Sunday, a team of Rotary Club Borivali ensures every visitor who visits the park carries only Cloth/paper bag.

(b) Planting of Trees

Rotary Club Borivali associated with Abhimaan Club of St Francis Institute of Management and Research, Borivali in planting trees at designated places such as Borivali BMC garden and in the premises of St Francis Institute of Management by procuring the samplings from BMC at a very nominal rate of Rs 1/- per sampling.

(c) Identification of Check dam

Rotary Club, Borivali carried out the identification of places near the agricultural/farming area where a "Check Dam" can be constructed to store the rain water for the usage during non seasonal time by the farmers. This project was undertaken under the aegis of Brihanmumbai Municipality Corporation (BMC).

Based on the review of the literature and discussion with a couple of experts, a few important findings have been put forth which we feel worth taking up on a larger scale with the

aim of brining sustainable social development.

- (a) Media plays a very crucial in creating a strong impact on the mass and making them responsible in the building of a sustainable development of the society they live.
- (b) The Center for Science and Environment is doing an excellent job in the field of Environment protection through various activities such as publishing a fortnightly magazine with an exclusive objective of enhancing the developmental issues, activation of various issues like rain water harvesting, Environment education, Industry and Environment Interface and many more
- (c) The issue related to Reduction in the Carbon emission through the concept of Carbon Footprint requires wider and extended research. Especially considering Indian context and consumers, the research is more challenging and beneficial from every stakeholder perspective.
- (d) Although , only a couple of big organized Retailers have initiated the process of the greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction, a greater scope is in the avail as the percentage of share of Organized Retail in this sector in India is miniscule and the growth is phenomenally increasing.
- (e) In the above context, integrating Media, Retail sector and Social Development makes certainly sense for the country to march ahead and able to see face to face with already developed countries.

Suggestions

A few Suggestions are appended below.

- (a) An exclusive Social Development Forum (www.hi5milieu.com) can be created making every retailer and citizen a part of this forum by invitation. This forum can act as platform to integrate the media and the retail outlets and can be utilized to propagate the contributions made by the promoter's of the retail outlet to the world with the intention of bringing sustainability. This can also be linked to the popular social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Yahoo, etc. This will ensure youth involvement and bring in more dynamics in the structure. A forum

url has been designed as www.hi5milieu.com which will come into operation shortly.

- (b) From the Organized Retail outlet perspective, although the recently come up Malls do have stringent Indian government norms to be followed such as installation of Water Recycling system, setting up of Solar Panels etc, still much need to be done in the other Retail formats. Some of the modern techniques adopted globally are trans-critical refrigeration system and CO cascade refrigeration systems for freezing foodstuffs. Experts are of the opinion that these systems will minimize the GHG emissions to a great extent.
- (c) Creating Blogging site and exclusive pages in the Face book and Twitter accounts which can also be linked to the website as mentioned earlier.

Limitations of the Study

The study has only explored the possibilities of the integration of Social Media for the sustainable development of the society/community as it was exploratory in nature.

Future Scope of Research

A descriptive and a causal research study upon which one can conclude and formulate a Measurement tool for Measuring Carbon Footprint can be undertaken.

Conclusion

Amalgamating Media especially social media with Retailers through environmental issues will certainly bear fruit as the population is more educated, knowledgeable and reasoned.. All our effort should be oriented towards making good of the situation for the betterment of the larger society. It is indeed apt to recall the quote of our Father of Nation Mahatma Gandhi who said **"Be the Change You want to see in the world"** Bringing in Social change is a real challenge. It is the responsibility of everyone be it the Corporate, the Employer, the Employee or a common man/woman. So let us all come together and bring the **Change**. Such changes are possible as the platform identified is the Retail outlets and Malls as the footfall/gatherings of the public at these touch points are phenomenal.

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