MOVING TOWARDS SOCIALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

Dr. Ela Goyal

SIES College of Management Studies, Nerul,
Navi Mumbai - 400706
elagoyal@gmail.com

+91-9819743391

ABSTRACT

Educational Institutions have a vital role to play shaping the future of our environment. Education should provide opportunities for students to become environmentally conscious citizens. Promoting culture towards paperless education, reducing carbon footprints, implementing rain water harvesting, having courses on social and environmental awareness, letting students manage the resources and environment of the institution, are some of the few steps that a B-school can take to not just become environmentally conscious themselves, but also impart socially and environmentally responsible management education to students. In this study, an attempt has been made to study the perception of management students and teachers to determine their awareness and sensitivity towards environmental issues and what can they do to help the cause. Also, as a solution, use of emerging technologies such as Learning Management Systems and Mobile Learning is being suggested. The study would be a step to move towards Green Education.

Keywords: Green Education, Environment, Management, Learning Management Systems, M-learning.

INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions are analogous to residential societies encompassing within their campus borders, a set of diverse operations and activities that can impact the environment. These can include classrooms, laboratories, cafeterias, hostels, power plants, transportation, sports facilities, construction and demolition, grounds maintenance, drinking water supply, wastewater treatment etc. Many of these are regulated and have increasingly high operational costs. Paperless initiatives for example have been driven by the ROI of cost savings in paper and supplies, storage costs, and labor. With the dramatic reduction in electronic storage costs and network costs, the tangible savings are even greater than before. It presents great opportunities for pollution prevention and the conservation of natural resources that yields significant cost savings. In developed countries, environment savings provide intangible benefits such as public relations, student recruitment and legal compliance.

Over the past decade, the higher education sector in regions such as Western Europe and USA, have taken a more responsible approach to managing environmental performance improvement. One such major initiative has been embarked upon in UK called 'Eco Campus'. It is a UK based national Environmental Management System (EMS) and award scheme for the higher education sector. An EMS is a structured framework for the assessment and management of an organization/ institutions environmental impacts and for the incremental improvement of environmental performance. The scheme allows universities to be recognized for addressing key issues of environmental sustainability, including carbon reduction. The Eco Campus project was initially set up and funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England in 2005 (HEFCE) and is now a collaborative project between Nottingham Trent University (NTU) and Loreus Ltd (EMS, software development & training consultancy). The Scheme offers the complete package for carbon and EMS support in the HE sector, where participants are walked through the process of designing, implementing and auditing a fully operational EMS. The scheme also includes a number of workshops in key areas of environmental management such as environmental law, auditing and sustainable procurement. A similar ranking system has been introduced by the Universitas Indonesia (UI). UI's- Green Metric University Sustainability

Ranking (Green Metric) is a world university ranking for universities to assess and compare campus sustainability efforts and was launched in 2010. Its ranking system allows universities in both the developed and developing world to compare their efforts towards campus sustainability and environment friendly university management. UI's initiative can be seen as leading and innovative because it is part of the trend for global competition among higher education institutions and because it is the first sustainability ranking that makes it possible for universities in developing countries to match how green they are against universities in developed countries.

The initiative has been well received both by the academic community and by universities world-wide. In the first year, 95 universities took part and 178 universities in 42 countries in the second year. Apart from the US, the UK, Japan, and countries in Europe, the rankings also include universities as far afield as Palestinian, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Romania and South Africa. As per the Overall 2011 rankings for 178 universities, University of Nottingham (UK) tops with a total score of 8033 points followed by Northeastern University (US) with a total score of 7981 points. India's premier IIT-Chennai ranks 42nd in the list with 6577 points while Manipal University ranks 77th with 5549 points and IIT-Mumbai is placed at 106th position with 5080 points. While it is very encouraging to see that these Indian educational institutions have taken up the environments' cause; however it forms a very curious case to gauge and understand environment sensitivity amongst students at the higher education level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies were conducted to examine the question of socially and environmentally responsible management education. Though business students may need training in social, environmental and moral reasoning more than most other students, as they face these challenges and dilemmas in managing, they do not always receive such education, and if they do it is usually not mandatory. Furthermore, a study of top business schools in the United States found that business school education not only fails to improve the moral character of students, but may also potentially weaken it (Segon & Booth, 2009). In 2003, Matten and Moon (2004) studied the social and environmental education – including teaching and research – in Europe. They found

that 47% of their respondents offered subjects in these areas, or related fields as optional subjects and 38% embedded the concepts in existing subjects. A more recent study by Nicholson and DeMoss (2009) showed that from the perspective of curriculum coordinators, there was a significant gap between current and normative levels of instruction on social, ethical and environmental responsibility in business school curricula. Social and environmental responsibility was rated lower than ethics by all department coordinators (Nicholson & DeMoss, 2009). They argued that regardless of what is happening in the top 25 MBA programs, there is a trend toward less social education overall. For organisations to embrace ethically, socially and environmentally responsible thinking, its provision needs to be 'proactive', with fundamental programmes taught by committed and engaged business schools.

The past fifteen years have witnessed an important change in the way managers address the social and environmental impact of their companies. In the 1990s not many executives would accept the responsibility for the social and environmental impact of their companies beyond legal compliance or avoiding adverse effects on their own value chain. Today this has changed dramatically for many industries in many parts of the world. Thousands of companies publish annual reports detailing their social and environmental contributions, and tens of thousands of firms have subscribed or been certified as compliant with a range of independent voluntary standards, including the UN Global Compact (Visser, Matten, Pohl, & Tolhurst, 2007). Simon Zadek (2004) of Accountability (an NGO promoting business accountability for sustainable development) has documented how companies often move in stages from initially ignoring and denying their social and environmental responsibilities, to a phase of reputation management—which sees social and environmental matters in terms of costs and risks—to a third stage, where engaging with stakeholders on social and environmental issues is regarded as a mechanism for business innovation, to a final stage where executives recognize the limits to voluntary action, and actively engage with other organizations, including governments and competitors, to influence the overall business environment in order to make responsible conduct more financially viable and achieve better collective outcomes.

The frameworks, facts and tools that are taught in business school not only impact the technical training of students, but also their values (Ghoshal, 2005). A study by the Aspen Institute

comparing students' beliefs before and after an MBA (2001) showed that the business curriculum does in fact shape students values and beliefs. In 2007, United Nations-supported Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) was launched to inspire and champion responsible management education, research and thought leadership globally. The Principles of Responsible Management Education propose a shift in the way they look at businesses and their managers, their role in society, and the values that ought to drive in their behavior. The World Resources Institute in partnership with the Aspen Institute published the "Beyond Grey Pinstripes" survey, ranking full-time MBA programs based on the integration of social, ethical, and environmental content into the curricula and faculty research (Aspen, 2003). Business schools accreditation bodies such as EQUIS, AACSB and AMBA have recently begun to address ethics, environmental and CSR aspects as well. Even students in business schools around the globe have founded their own organisation, Net Impact, to enhance social and environment responsibility amongst MBA graduates. In Europe, the Ethics Education Task Force (EETF) changed its accreditation requirement for the presence of ethics education within the MBA curriculum. The European Business Ethics Network (EBEN) hosts annual research conferences on business ethics; and The European Foundation for Management Development has taken on the key issues of global responsibility (Gardiner & Lacy, 2005).

Nicholson & DeMoss (2009) asked why business schools do not change their curricula to become more socially responsible and answered that in market-driven MBA programs, curriculum size (i.e. the number of required courses) is cut to make a program more competitive (i.e. allow students to complete the curriculum faster), with the ethics course as one of the casualties. Another reason is that business schools believe that their stakeholders (including students) are indifferent to the subject matter beyond superficial inclusion or review (Nicholson & DeMoss, 2009). In their study, Luthar and Karri (2005) asked students if social and environmental cause is good business and if it yields higher performance and market position for the firm. It was found that students saw a significant disconnect between these and professional performance or rewards (i.e. it does not pay to be good). However, exposure to these in the curriculum had a significant impact on student perceptions of what should be the ideal linkages between organisational ethical practices and business outcomes. Gender based differences were

found with female students having a higher expectation of what should be the ‘‘ethics practices and business outcomes’’ link. Some more recent studies indicate a change occurring in students’ attitudes, particularly among females. Sleeper et al. (2006) found that business students, particularly women, are indeed interested in social and environmental education. A substantial sample of business students reacted very positively to business school education on corporate conduct affecting social and environmental issues. Female students exhibited significantly higher scores, reflecting a stronger tendency among women than men to agree that business schools should address social and environmental issues in their curricula. The authors further found a strong but non-cumulative relationship between donating, volunteering and organisational membership of respondents and their propensity to believe that social and environmental issues are appropriate content for business courses (Sleeper et al., 2006). In 2009, Segon and Booth studied attitudes of part time MBA students on Business Ethics, Social and Environmental Responsibility. The majority of respondents (73.5%) identified these as a fundamental requirement for good business and a civil society.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In this study, an attempt has been made to study the perception of management students and teachers to determine their awareness and sensitivity towards environmental issues and what can they do to help the cause. The study would be useful to any management institution that wants to move towards providing Green Education, which is going to be one of the key factors for sustenance in the coming times.

The objectives of the study are

1. To study the awareness and sensitivity of management students and teachers towards environmental issues and solutions such as carbon footprints, renewable sources of energy, energy and water conservation, recycling, learning management systems etc.
2. To study what the management students and teachers can do to help the cause of the environment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on primary research. A questionnaire based study was conducted in one of the leading management institutes in the metro city of Mumbai. The sample size taken is 120. The questionnaires were distributed to management students and teachers of different specializations like finance, marketing, human resource, biotechnology and pharmaceutical management. SPSS was used for data analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

The statistical analysis of the responses given by the management students and teachers for the questionnaire on awareness and sensitivity towards the environmental issues revealed the following information:

The first section of the questionnaire had questions related to the awareness and sensitivity of the respondents towards environmental issues.

CONDITION OF OUR ENVIRONMENT

The figure (Fig 1) shows that when asked the current condition of the environment, most of the respondents feel that "The environment is in bad shape but a lot of effort might save it".

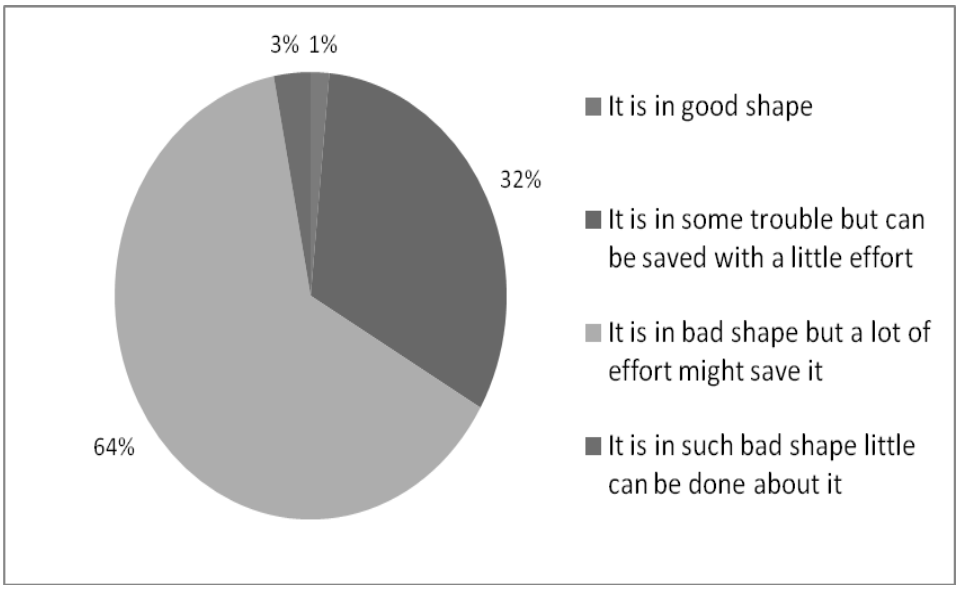

Fig 1: Condition of Environment

DESCRIPTION OF OUR FUTURE

Most of the respondents feel that looking at the environmental conditions; their future is challenging (Fig 2).

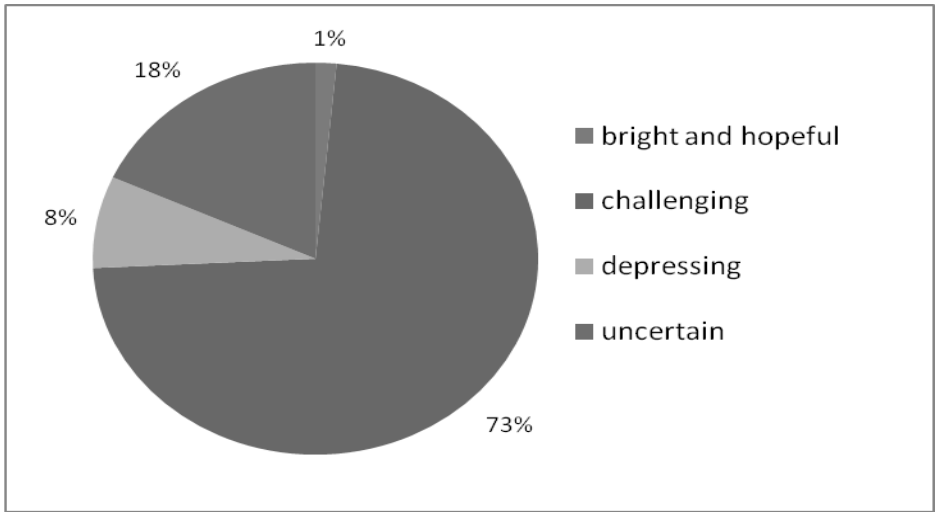

Fig 2: Description of our future

WORST ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM GLOBALLY

According to most of the respondents (Fig 3), global warming is the worst environmental problem.

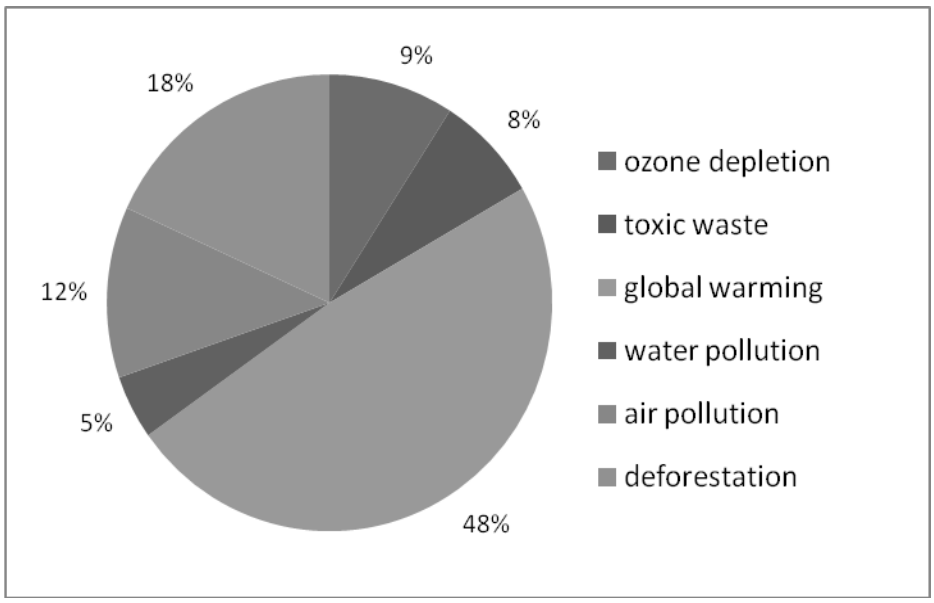

Fig 3: Worst environmental problem

HOPE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

According to the respondents (Fig 4) the single most important thing that will make sure the environment is healthy for future generations are new technologies.

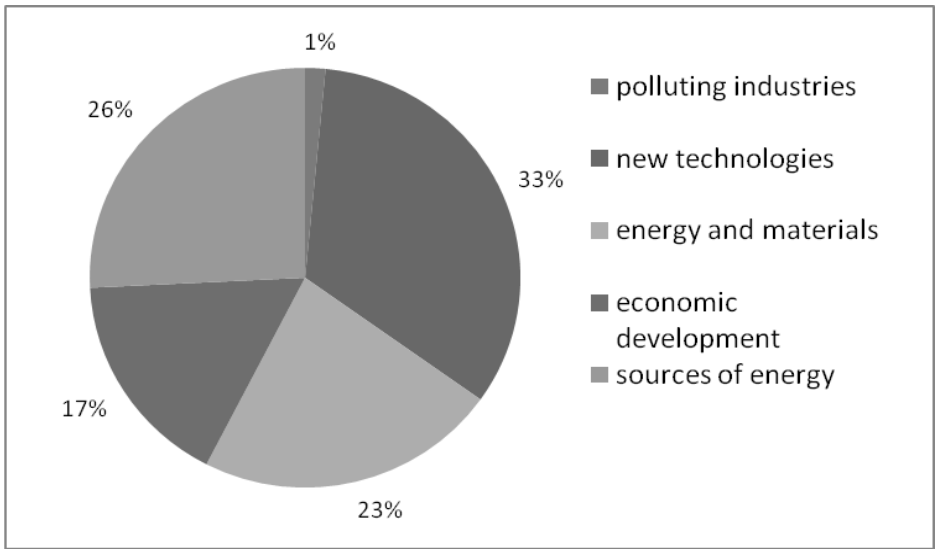

Fig 4: Hope for the future

AWARENESS TOWARDS TECHNIQUES TO CONSERVE ENERGY

The following table (Table 1) shows the awareness of the respondents towards the various techniques for conserving environment. Looking at the results, it can be said that the awareness of the respondents is good towards the various techniques.

Table 1: Awareness of the Respondents towards Techniques to Conserve Energy

How well are you aware about	**Renewable Energy (%)**	**Rainwater Harvesting (%)**	**Carbon Footprints (%)**	**Solar Energy (%)**	**Wind Energy (%)**	**Green Education (%)**	**Learning Mgmnt Systems (%)**
No Idea	2	0	17	1	2	8	31
Some Idea	20	23	***40***	25	20	32	***37***
Fair Idea	***60***	***59***	33	***48***	***51***	***32***	24
A Lot	18	18	10	26	27	28	8

AVAILABILITY OF TECHNIQUES TO CONSERVE ENERGY IN THE RESPONDENT'S INSTITUTES

The following table (Table 2) shows whether the institutes are providing for the various techniques for conserving environment or not. Looking at the results, it can be clearly seen that the institute is not providing for the various techniques for conserving environment.

Table 2: Availability of Techniques to Conserve Energy in the Respondents' Institute

Does your institution provide for	**Renewable Energy**	**Rainwater Harvesting**	**Carbon Footprints**	**Solar Energy**	**Wind Energy**	**Green Education**	**Learning Management Systems**
No %	87	90	91	90	92	75	72

RECYCLING TENDENCY

The respondents were asked about what all things do they recycle at their institute. The below table (Table 3) shows that the percentage of respondents recycling the various waste materials is very less and there is a major need of promoting recycling.

Table 3: Recycling Tendency of the Respondents

Do you regularly recycle these in your institute?	**Yes %**
Newspapers	44
Bottles/Cans	13
Mixed Paper	7
Cardboard	2
E-waste	10

CONSERVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The respondents were asked about the various activities they do to ensure they conserver energy, water and paper. From the results (table 4), it can be seen that the respondents are quite sensitive towards electricity and water conservation, but not so much concerned about conserving paper.

Table 4: Activities the Respondents do to Conserve the Environment

Do you regularly do the following:	**Yes %**
Limit shower time in gym	8
Turn off lights when not in use	82
Turn off electronics when not in use	62
Turn off the water taps tightly	72
Use CFLs instead of incandescent bulbs	23
Switch off ACs when leaving the room	64
Use double sided copies	32
Use re-usable plates, cups, utensils	18
Carry reusable coffee mug	8

IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CAUSE

The respondents were asked to rate the following statements on importance as per the following scale 1 – Not at all Important, 2 Not very important, 3 – Somewhat Important, 4 – Very Important. The statements are related to the social and environmental cause. The following table (Table 5) shows the mean value of responses obtained from all the respondents. It can be seen that the social and environmental causes are important for the respondents.

Table 5: Respondents' Opinion towards the Importance of Social and Environmental Cause

Statements	Mean
Being successful in my studies and work	3.7
Living a happy and comfortable life	3.66
Being able to do what I want	3.6
Making the world a better place	3.58
Use of pollution-free sources of energy	3.58
Helping the community and people in need	3.56
Environmental concerns and climate change	3.55
My institution goes the electronic way for communication and knowledge management	3.47
My institute purchases recycled and recyclable products	3.43
My institute considers renewable energy sources for its energy need	3.42
Making a lot of money	3.4
My institution's buildings be designed to conserve water and energy	3.32
Energy consumption	3.31
My institution reduces paper wastage	3.31
To recycle the products I use	3.3
Philanthropy and donating to Charity for an environmental cause	3.27
Living according to religious faith	2.95
My institution is committed to the "Principles of Responsible Management Education"	2.26

70% of the respondents said that they will get involved in environmental projects if they are started at their institute and also are willing to work towards adopting technology so that they could promote paperless culture at their institute. More than 50 % respondents are willing to take the responsibility of a project where renewable source of energy is used to provide power at their institute if started though only 25 % are willing to pay extra fees for such a project starting at their campus.

INSTITUTIONS RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS SOCIALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

The respondents were asked how well their institute prepares them towards the various social and environmental issues. They were asked to rate the following parameters on the following scale 1 – Not much, 2- Somewhat, 3 – Good, 4 – Very Much.

Also they were asked if they would want more content to be added by their institute for the social and environmental cause in their academic syllabus on the same scale.

The following table (Table 6) shows the mean value of responses obtained from all the respondents. It can be seen that even though the respondents feel that the institute is somewhat preparing them towards the social and environmental causes, they would want more of the same in their academic content.

Table 6: Respondents' Opinion towards the Institution's Responsibility

	How well does your academic institution prepare you (Mean)	**Your institute should add more content towards (Mean)**
Responsibility	2.44	2.28
Decision	2.72	2.31
environmental issues	2.43	2.36
environment friendly	2.39	2.39
Conservation of water	2.28	2.43
Waste disposal	2.19	2.41
Conservation of energy	2.28	2.40
Reuse and Recycle	2.29	2.52
Use of technology	2.57	2.38

CHANGE IN THE CURRICULUM TOWARDS PROVIDING SOCIALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

The respondents were asked what all changes can be done to their curriculum so that it could be aligned more towards providing socially and environmentally responsible management education.

The following table (Table 7) shows the various ways and the percentage of respondents agreeing to it. It can be seen that adding more projects and internships towards the techniques such as rainwater harvesting, solar heaters, e-waste management, learning management systems corporate social responsibility tops the respondents' choice.

Table 7: Respondents' Opinion towards the Institution's Responsibility

Suggestions/Options	Yes %
Bring in experts and leaders as guest speakers on these topics	27
Encourage professors to introduce more applicable case studies in classes	23
Integrate social and environmental themes into the core curriculum	32
Provide students with internships related to corporate social responsibility / sustainability	29
Start projects in the institution such as rainwater harvesting/solar heaters/e-waste management/learning management systems and let students manage them	31
Increase the number of electives that focus on social and environmental theme	11

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summarizing the results of the study, the following can be concluded:

1. The respondents feel that the environment is indeed in a bad shape and their future is challenging, but a lot of effort might save it.
2. According to the respondents, the single most important thing that will make sure the environment is healthy for future generations are new technologies.

3. The awareness of the respondents towards the various techniques for conserving environment is good but the institutes are not providing for any such techniques for conserving environment in the institute itself.
4. The respondents are quite sensitive towards electricity and water conservation, but not so much concerned about conserving paper. The social and environmental causes are important for the respondents.
5. Even though the respondents feel that the institute is somewhat preparing them towards the social and environmental cause, they would want more of the same in their academic content. Adding more projects and internships towards the techniques such as rainwater harvesting, solar heaters, e-waste management, learning management systems, corporate social responsibility tops the respondents' choice to be the key change they want in their academic curriculum that can prepare them better to be more environmentally and socially responsible citizens.

Thus, looking at the results it can be said that the management students and teachers are open to environmental and social cause being promoted by their institutes. More of such activities and projects such as solar panels, rainwater harvesting, carbon foot prints, learning management systems, paperless education etc should be initiated by the institutes. The students and teachers are willing to take up the responsibility of managing and participating in such projects. All in all for a healthier environment and better education system, technology holds the key for the developing and growing nations, like India.

REFERENCES

Aspen (2003). Beyond Grey Pinstripes 2003: Preparing MBAs for Social and Environmental Stewardship. Retrieved on 20 Aug 2013 (The Aspen Institute and the World Resource Institute, www.BeyondGreyPinstripes.org).

Gardiner, L. & Lacy, P., (2005), Lead, respond, partner or ignore: the role of business schools on corporate responsibility, *Corporate Governance, 5*(2), 174-185.

Ghoshal, S., (2005), Bad management theories are destroying good management practices, *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, (4), 75-91.

Luthar, H. K., & Karri, R., (2005), Exposure to ethics education and the perception of linkage between organizational ethical behavior and business outcomes, *Journal of Business Ethics, 61*, 353–368.

Matten, D., & Moon, J., (2004), Corporate Social Responsibility education in Europe, *Journal of Business Ethics,* 54, 323–337.

Nicholson, C. Y. & DeMoss, M., (2009), Teaching ethics and social responsibility: An evaluation of undergraduate business education at the discipline level, *Journal of Education for Business, 84*(4), 213-218.

Segon, M., & Booth, C., 2009, Business ethics and CSR as part of MBA curricula: An analysis of student preference. *International Review of Business Research Papers, 5*(3), 72-81.

Sleeper, B. J., Schneider, K. C., Weber, P. S., & Weber, J. E., (2006), Scale and study of student attitudes toward business education's role in addressing social issues, *Journal of Business Ethics,* 68, 381–391.

Visser, W., Matten, D., Pohl, M. & Tolhurst, N., (2007), The A to Z of CSR: A Complete Reference Guide to Concepts, Codes and Organizations, Wiley, UK

Zadek, S. (2004). The path to corporate responsibility. Harvard Business Review, December.