Pseudo Environmentalism And Personal Reflection

We feel it, we see it, we read about it. Earth is in trouble and we have got 12 years we set our home on an irreversible journey of severe global warming (Watts, 2018). Everything that ranges from agriculture to our homes and even human lives would then be in jeopardy and something has to be done before damage can no longer be repaired. Although, awareness of our environment has led to more action is being taken, why is this issue still growing in prevalence? The rest of this essay explores pseudo environmentalism and begs us to question our contribution to our home.

66% of consumers would ungrudgingly fork out more for environmentally friendly products (Nielsen Poll, 2015), highlighting people's desire to be environmentally responsible. However, more harm than benefit is caused when many fall victim to greenwashing. Greenwashing is the manipulation of environmentalist sentiments through misleading claims. For instance, H&M's Conscious Collection claims to be manufactured from at least 50% recycled materials when in reality, that number is 0.2% (Hendriksz, 2015). These claims then subtly encourage consumerism which worsens global warming.

Simultaneously, many are under the impression that they are being environmentally friendly when they are motivated by the wrong reasons which lead to a magnified detrimental impact. The recent trend of purchasing metal straws and reusable bags are a prominent example of such behavior. Spurred by the trend, many rushes to buy them in the spirit of reducing the consumption of plastic. These products are then used for a short period of time before convenience takes precedence again. The net impact to the environment is negative since the carbon footprint to make sustainable products is significantly higher. For instance, the reusable bag is to be used 104 times before it breaks even carbon footprint from using plastic bags (Ong, 2018).

The lives of hundreds of millions are at stake (Watts, 2018), and that number could encompass ourselves or our loved ones. Therefore, it is paramount that we question the legitimacy of claims and continue using sustainable products.

Evidently, plenty is being done for our planet. However, we need to channel these efforts into tangible impacts to curb our road to destruction. More should be made aware of this so as to make a difference with the current collective effort. It is not even the next generation we have to do this for but for ours.

Reflection

Whilst writing the opinion piece, it was challenging to remember to weave in the reasons for the importance of the issue instead of merely bombarding statistics and facts of the causes of the issue. Since both are important, organizing and ensuring that both points are addressed sufficiently was hard as it was easy to get swept up in explaining how the cause led to the problem. In fact, a few drafts were written in order to balance and refocus my essay as I attempted to justify the importance of the issue.

In order to make my essay engaging, I decided to use the pronoun ‘we’ to draw the reader into the essay and make a more direct link between the issue and the impact the reader has. I also tried to appeal to their emotions by mentioning the lives of their loved ones being at stake because, in recent times, people are increasingly apathetic to personal consequences but are more sensitive to issues that would impact their loved ones. Since the specific audience are the professors marking the essay, the examples used were chosen because they would be able to witness the effort by a large sample of people (their classes).

Reference List

1. Climate Change Catastrophe: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/08/global-warming-must-not-exceed-15c-warns-landmark-un-report
2. Greenwashing: https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2016/aug/20/greenwashing-environmentalism-lies-companies
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4. H&M’s Conscious Collection: https://fashionunited.uk/news/fashion/is-h-m-really-as-green-as-they-seem-to-be/2015100917940
5. Metal Straws and Reusable bags: http://www.asiaone.com/singapore/metal-straws-and-reusable-bags-may-not-be-eco-friendly-you-think