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IEAS (Field Trip)

Field Trip to Fujieda

On 12th and 13th of June, we spent 2 splendid days in Fujieda with Kinezuka family. There, I observed 2 things in particular; stewardship and marketing.

Stewardship

Right 34 years ago, Mr. Kinezuka started organic tea farming in Fujieda, Shizuoka. Due to the circumstances prevailed that time it would be the most challenging work. But the desire to do something new in business and something different for the preservation of nature overweighed the immediate monetary gain what often referred as 'profit' in business circle. He had commitment, courage, techniques and, most importantly, the vision. 34 Years down from the date he started, his experience postulates an inspiring story in running a farm successfully by equally contributing to nature conservation. In present day, a loss making work may not be so admirable for many young to engage in, but, his synthesis of 'profit with environment conservation' may motives many to lead a role in organic farming that eventually helps nature.

Marketing

Big companies have occupied the large chunk of today's food market share, whereas small scale entrepreneurs are sidelined. Therefore, sales become critical ones, whatever the goodwill or 'greater good' objective of running the farm. Organic farming faces the same challenge all over the world where Wall Mart or 100 yen shop keep on terrifying the organic farmers as well as environmentalists. Darwin's 'survival of the fittest' is still relevant in many fields across the spectrum. And, the same theory is applicable among environmentalist, too.

Kinezuka's has initiated a new solution to reach the market and stand up with own identity of the work. It reaches the customers' door rather than waits them to come in (search for niche market). This awakens the customers by giving them participatory role whether by consuming the products or engaging in the environmental friendly activities. To survive it runs other associated business that benefits the organizational goal (Profit) and objective (nature conservation). What we need to be clear that none of organization which has 'greater good aspects' cannot sustain unless it stands on it own. In such situation, it products as well as ideas and services needs to be marketable. Without appropriate marketing strategy the family business would not come up this long way. Future's environmentalists need to be rather realist than much idealist with 'look and wait approach'.

Summary

The best sentence to summarize the trip can be; Action is important than justification.