

A Study on Green Marketing: Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract: *American Marketing Association, defines Green marketing as “marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe. A holistic and responsible strategic management process that identifies, anticipates, satisfies and fulfils stakeholder needs, for a reasonable reward, that does not adversely affect human or natural environmental well-being.” Green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process, as well as modifying advertising. Thus “Green marketing” refers to holistic marketing concept wherein the production, marketing consumption and disposal of products and services happen in a manner that is less detrimental to the environment with growing awareness about the implications of global warming, non-biodegradable solid waste, harmful impact of pollutants etc., both marketers and consumers are becoming increasingly sensitive to the need to switch in to green products and services.*

Keywords: Green Marketing, environment safety, awareness, impact of pollutants

1. Introduction

The products, which are manufactured through a process or adopting technology which causes no environmental hazards, are called as green products. Promotion of green technology and green products is necessary for conservation of natural resources and sustainable development. Green products are defined by following measures:

- Products those are originally grown, recyclable, reusable and biodegradable.
- Products with natural ingredients, containing recycled contents, non-toxic chemical and content under approved chemicals.
- Products that do not harm or pollute the environment and that will not be tested on animals.
- Products that have eco-friendly packaging that are reusable, refillable containers etc.

As human wants are unlimited are resources capable of satisfying those wants are scarce, it is important for the marketers to utilize the resources effectively and efficiently without wasting it and at the same time to achieve the organization's objective. So green marketing is the need of the hour. There is growing interest among the consumers over the globe regarding protection of environment. Worldwide evidence indicates that now, people are concerned about the environment like never before and are changing their behavior and attitude towards nature. As a result of this, green marketing has emerged, which speaks for growing market for sustainable and socially responsible products and services. In common parlance a majority of people believe that green marketing refers solely to the promotion or Advertising of products with environmental characteristics. Terms like phosphate free, recyclable, refillable, ozone friendly and environmental friendly are some of the concepts, which consumers most often associate with green marketing. While these terms of green marketing claims the concept of environmental friendly marketing, in general green marketing is a much broader concept, one that can be applied to consumer goods, industrial goods and even services. Thus green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the

production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising.

Many analysts are predicting that 21st century will be a make-or-break-it year for many green businesses, as increasing competition in the green sector drives some businesses to new heights of innovation and service, while other businesses lag behind. Trends may come and go, and of course, it is impossible for any green business to stay on top of all of them, nor is it worth while to try. However, keeping track of green business trends is a great way to ensure that business stays fresh, flexible, and creative in the face of new challenges and opportunities, the surest way to green business success in 21st century. Utilising natural resources for the production also calls for the ethical responsibility of giving something back to nature. Implementing green marketing is not going to be an easy job. The firm has to face many problems while trading products of green marketing.

2. Need of the Study

Green marketing has now evolved as one of the major area of interest for marketers as it may provide competitive advantages. However it requires investment in terms of technology enhancement, process modification, communicating benefits to customers etc. Many of the companies in India have started marketing themselves as green organizations due to certain government regulations and shift in the preference of the consumers worldwide. However, not much research with respect to green marketing has been done in India and there is question about the awareness of green products among consumers. The attitude of Indian consumers towards green products and the relationship between the attitude and behavior is also questionable. As green marketing is different from the marketing in traditional way, marketers need to know the factors that persuade the consumer to buy the green products.

3. Review of Literature

Oyewole, P. (2001). Identifies a conceptual link among green marketing, environmental justice, and industrial ecology. It argues for greater awareness of environmental justice in the practice for green marketing. A research agenda is finally suggested to determine consumers' awareness of environmental justice, and their willingness to bear the costs associated with it.

Karna, J., Hansen, E. & Juslin, H. (2003) interpret that proactive marketers are the most Genuine group in implementing environmental marketing voluntarily and seeking competitive advantage through environmental friendliness. The results also give evidence that green values, environmental marketing strategies, structures and functions are logically connected to each other as hypothesized according to the model of environmental marketing used to guide this study.

Sanjay K. Jain & Gurmeet Kaur (2004) in their study highlights that 'environmentalism' has emerged as a worldwide phenomenon. Business firms too have risen to the occasion and have started responding to environmental challenges by practicing green marketing strategies. Green consumerism has played a catalytic role in ushering corporate environmentalism and making business firms green marketing oriented. Based on the data collected through a field survey, the paper makes an assessment of the extent of environmental awareness, attitudes and behavior prevalent among consumers in India.

Donaldson (2005) in his study realized in the Great Britain initially concluded that in general the ecological attitude of consumers changed positively. This study reported the strong faith of consumers in the known commercial brands and in the feeble behavior referring to the "green" claims, which was the main cause behind the consuming failure to interpret their Concerns beyond the environment in their behavior.

Objectives of the study

- 1) To investigate the level of awareness of Indian consumers about green products and practices.
- 2) To identify the brands, consumer association with green marketing practices.
- 3) To investigate the preferences of Indian consumers about green products.
- 4) To offer suggestion for policy implication of green marketing.

4. Research Methodology

- **Type of Research:** It is an exploratory research carried out to ascertain the consumer taste and preference about green product quality, price and level of satisfaction and future plans about their purchases.
- **Sample size:** 50 respondents were interviewed about green marketing.
- **Study area:** The study is carried out in Bangalore city.
- **Primary data:** Collected through structured questionnaire.

- **Secondary data:** Obtained from various sources i.e. South Asian journal, Marketing management by Philip Kotler, Electronic Green journal and Internet.

Socio-economic profile of the respondents

Gender of the respondents

Respondents	No of respondents	Percentage
Male	30	60%
Female	20	40%
Total	50	100%

Source: Primary Data

Age of the Respondents

Age group of respondents	No of respondents	Percentage
Under 16	5	10%
16-20	10	20%
21-30	15	30%
31-40	12	24%
Above 41	8	16%
Total	50	100%

Source: Primary Data

Awareness sources about green marketing

Sources	No of respondent	Percentage
a) Television	5	10%
b) Newspaper	10	20%
c) Friends/Family	6	12%
d) Internet	5	10%
e) Television and Newspaper	8	16%
f) Newspaper and Internet	16	32%
Total	50	100%

Source: Primary Data

Preference for green products

Preference	No of respondents	Percentage
a) Often	13	26%
b) Sometime	14	28%
c) Rare	16	32%
d) Never	7	14%
Total	50	100%

Source: Primary Data

Satisfaction with quality and price of green marketing products

Response	No of respondent	Percentage
a) Yes	38	76%
b) No	12	24%
Total	50	100%

Source: Primary Data

Willingness to continue with Eco-Friendly products

Response	No of respondents	Percentage
a. Yes	22	44%
b. No	28	56%
Total	50	100%

Source: Primary Data

5. Inference

Marketers also have the responsibility to make the consumers understand the need for and benefits of green products as compared to non-green ones. In green

marketing, consumers are willing to pay more to maintain a cleaner and greener environment. Finally, consumers, industrial buyers and suppliers need to pressurize to minimize the negative effects on the environment-friendly. Green marketing assumes even more importance and relevance in developing countries like India. While governmental regulation is designed to give consumers the opportunity to make better decisions or to motivate them to be more environmentally responsible, there is difficulty in establishing policies that will address all environmental issues. For example, guidelines developed to control environmental marketing address only a very narrow set of issues, i.e., the truthfulness of environmental marketing claims. If governments want to modify consumer behavior they need to establish a different set of regulations. Thus governmental attempts to protect the environment may result in a proliferation of regulations and guidelines, with no one central controlling body.

6. Findings of the Study

- Most of consumers are aware about eco-friendly products and services and they want to use all that but they want all these products on their budget.
- Eco-friendly products are comparatively quite expensive to normal product.
- Out of the total respondents 30 were male and 20 were female.
- 37% of the respondents were under the age group of 21-30.
- Most of the respondents were working professionals.
- There are many sources for creating awareness about environmental friendly products. Television, Newspaper, Internet, personal interactions are the most important one. Out of all these, newspaper appears to be the important source of creating awareness about green marketing.
- Awareness about green marketing is picking up now a days, as people are using more and more environmental friendly products.
- Most of the respondents prefer to buy green products, despite the fact that they are little expensive.
- Surprisingly 68% of the respondents replied they want to buy green products but, cost effectiveness is very important to them. Hence they haven't prioritized.
- The Green marketing channels doesn't create the necessary awareness about the products.
- Government regulation compels the organizations in going for environmental friendly products.
- Competitive pressure also forces them to think about green products.
- Green marketing certainly helps in creating a healthy environment.

7. Suggestion

Green or eco-friendly product contains good quality but they are more expensive than regular products. Therefore companies, producing eco-friendly products should try to reduce cost. Government and business concerns should have work together for creating awareness among consumers. Firms marketing goods with environmental characteristics will have a competitive advantage over firms marketing

non-environmentally responsible alternatives. In couple of cases firms have jumped on the green bandwagon without considering the accuracy of their behavior, their claims or the effectiveness of their products. This lack of consideration of the true "greenness" of activities may result in firms making false or misleading green marketing claims.

8. Conclusion

It is the right time to select and to adopt Green Marketing, not only locally but globally. It will result with drastic change in the world of business if all nations will make strict rules and guidelines. Green marketing is essential to save world from pollution. From the business point of view because a clever marketer is one who not only convinces the consumer, but also involves the consumer in marketing his product. Green marketing should not be considered as just one more approach to marketing, but has to be pursued with much greater vigor, as it has an environmental and social dimension to it. With the threat of global warming looming large, it is extremely important that green marketing becomes the norm rather than an exception or just a fad. Recycling of paper, metals, plastics, etc., in a safe and environmentally harmless manner should become much more systematized and universal. Information dissemination is the need of the hour. The user, must be told the virtues of the product. More emphasis must be given in this direction.

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