

**GREEN MARKETING: A STUDY OF CONSUMER'S PERCEPTION TOWARDS ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY PRODUCTS****Fasla N.P***

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Keywords: Green Marketing, importance, challenges.**Abstract**

In the modern era of globalization, it has become a challenge to keep the customers as well as consumers in fold and even keep our natural environment safe and that is the biggest need of the time. Consumers are also aware of the environmental issues like; global warming and the impact of environmental pollution. Consumers and manufacturers have directed their attention toward environment friendly products that are presumed to be "green" or environment friendly like low power consuming (energy-efficient) electrical appliances, organic foods, lead free paints, recyclable paper, and phosphate free detergents. Indian marketers are also realizing the importance of the green marketing concept. This paper describes the importance of green marketing and challenges and remedies of green marketing.

Introduction

Green Marketing" refers to holistic marketing concept wherein the production, marketing Consumption an 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 for switch in to green products and services. While the shift to "green" may appear to be expensive in the short term, it will definitely prove to be indispensable and advantageous, cost-wise too, in the long run.

Green marketing is also termed as environmental marketing or ecological marketing. According to American Marketing Association, marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe is called as Green Marketing. Thus wide range of activities are covered under green marketing, which includes modifying the product, making changes in the production process and packaging, as well as modifying advertising or removing any activity that impacts the environment in negative way. Today, the Earth faces more environmental issues than ever before, hence it is imperative for companies to make and market themselves as environment friendly. Green marketing is emerging as a popular promotional strategy owing to increased consumer awareness and concerns.

Pride and Ferrell (1993) Green marketing, also alternatively known as environmental marketing and sustainable marketing, refers to an organization's efforts at designing, promoting, pricing and distributing products that will not harm the environment.

Polonsky (1994) defines green marketing as .all activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchanges intended to satisfy human needs or wants, such that the satisfaction of these needs and wants occurs, with minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment.

Objectives Of The Study

- To evaluate the green products and its characteristics.
- To identify the importance of green marketing.
- To identify the remedial measures to solve challenges.

Scope Of The Study

The present study confined to the study on consumer perception towards green marketing, Palakkad district and data was collected from 80 customers in palakkad district.



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Data Collection

To achieve the aforesaid data is gathered from Primary and Secondary sources. Primary data is collected from Questionnaires administered to various respondents. Secondary data is gathered from various published reports, Journals; Research Articles Etc

Review Of Previous Studies

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.

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.

Alsmadi (2007) investigating the environmental behaviour of Jordanian consumers reveals a high level of environmental conscience. Unfortunately however this positive tendency and preference in the "green" products does not appear to have any effect on the final decision, obviously because these consumers have a stronger faith in the traditional products and a small confidence in the green statements. The above obstacles are further strengthened by the lack of environmental conscience by a lot of enterprises and the existence of a large scale of prices for the same product, many of which included an impetuous estimate of environmental responsibility. The same phenomenon has been presented in other researches too (Ottman, 2004; Donaldson, 2005; Cleveland et al, 2005).

Brahma, M. & Dande, R. (2008), The Economic Times, Mumbai, had an article which stated that, Green Ventures India is a subsidiary of New York based asset management firm Green

Ventures International. The latter recently announced a \$300 million India focused fund aimed at renewable energy products and supporting trading in carbon credits.

Green Products and Its Characteristics

The products those are manufactured through green technology and that caused no environmental hazards are called green products. Promotion of green technology and green products is necessary for conservation of natural resources and sustainable development. We can define green products by following measures:

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

Importance Of Green Marketing

Green marketing offers business bottom line incentives and top line growth possibilities. While modification of business or production processes may involve start-up costs, it will save money in the long term. For example the cost of installing solar energy is an investment in future energy cost savings. Companies that develop new and improved products and services with environmental impacts in mind give themselves access to new markets, substantially increase profits and enjoy competitive advantages over those marketing non-environmentally responsible alternatives.



There are several suggested reasons for firms increased use of Green Marketing. They are as follows:

- Organizations perceive environmental marketing to be an opportunity that can be used to achieve its objectives.
- Organizations believe they have a moral obligation to be more socially responsible.
- Governmental bodies are forcing firms to become more responsible.
- Competitors' environmental activities pressure firms to change their environmental marketing activities.
- Cost factors associated with waste disposal, or reductions in material usage forces firms to modify their behavior.

Challenges in green marketing

- **Need for Standardization**

It is found that only 5% of the marketing messages from “Green” campaigns are entirely true and there is a lack of standardization to authenticate these claims. There is no standardization to authenticate these claims. There is no standardization currently in place to certify a product as organic. Unless some regulatory bodies are involved in providing the certifications there will not be any verifiable means. A standard quality control board needs to be in place for such labeling and licensing.

- **New Concept**

Indian literate and urban consumer is getting more aware about the merits of Green products. But it is still a new concept for the masses. The consumer needs to be educated and made aware of the environmental threats. The new green movements need to reach the masses and that will take a lot of time and effort. By India's ayurvedic heritage, Indian consumers do appreciate the importance of using natural and herbal beauty products. Indian consumer is exposed to healthy living life styles such as yoga and natural food consumption. In those aspects the consumer is already aware and will be inclined to accept the green products.

- **Patience and Perseverance**

The investors and corporate need to view the environment as a major long-term investment opportunity, the marketers need to look at the long-term benefits from this new green movement. It will require a lot of patience and no immediate results. Since it is a new concept and idea, it will have its own acceptance period.

- **Avoiding Green Myopia**

The first rule of green marketing is focusing on customer benefits i.e. the primary reason why consumers buy certain products in the first place. Do this right, and motivate consumers to switch brands or even pay a premium for the greener alternative. It is not going to help if a product is developed which is absolutely green in various aspects but does not pass the customer satisfaction criteria. This will lead to green myopia. Also if the green products are priced very high then again it will lose its market acceptability.

Remedies To Solve The Challenges

1. Know you're Customer

Make sure that the consumer is aware of and concerned about the issues that your product attempts to address, (Whirlpool learned the hard way that consumers wouldn't pay a premium for a CFC-free refrigerator because consumers didn't know what CFCs were.).

2. Educating your customers:

Its a matter of letting people know you're doing whatever you're doing to protect the environment, but also a matter of letting them know why it matters. Otherwise, for a significant portion of your target market, it's a case of "So what?" and your green marketing campaign goes now here.



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3. Being Genuine & Transparent

you are actually doing what you claim to be doing in your green marketing campaign and the rest of your business policies are consistent with whatever you are doing that's environmentally friendly. Both these conditions have to be met for your business to establish the kind of environmental credentials that will allow a green marketing campaign to succeed.

4. Reassure the Buyer

Consumers must be made to believe that the product performs the job it's supposed to do-they won't forego product quality in the name of the environment.

5. Consider Your Pricing:

If you're charging a premium for your product-and many environmentally preferable products cost more due to economies of scale and use of higher-quality ingredients-make sure those consumers can afford the premium and feel it's worth it.

6. Giving your customers an opportunity to participate:

Personalizing the benefits of your environmentally friendly actions, normally through letting the customer take part in positive environmental action.

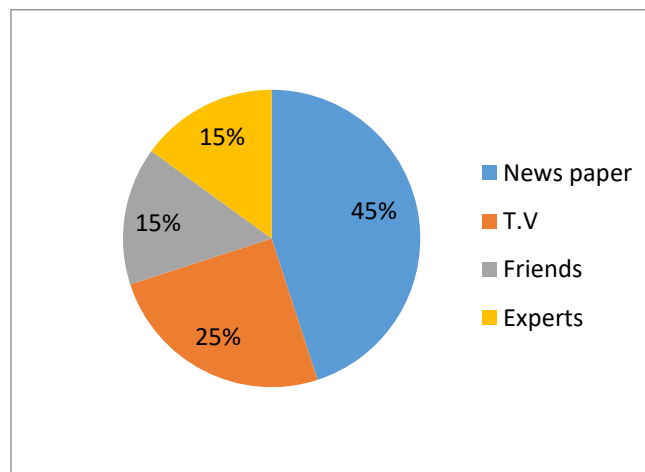
7. Thus leading brands should recognize that consumer expectations have changed:

It is not enough for a company to green its products; consumers expect the products that they purchase pocket friendly and also to help reduce the environmental impact in their own lives too.

Analysis And Interpretations

Table showing how the respondents are aware about green marketing products

Mode of awareness	No. of respondents	percentage
News paper	36	45%
T.V	20	25%
Friends	12	15%
Experts	12	15%
Total	80	100%





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Interpretation

Thus on the basis of above data this is to show that 45% of the respondents are aware about green products through news papers, 25% known through T.V , 15% are aware about through friends and balance 15% aware through experts.

Findings

- The main challenges faced by green marketing are there is no standardization for green products, it's a new concept for mass people, and it takes time to get result.
- The consumers who already bought eco-friendly products and those who are satisfied by these previous purchases were willing to repeat purchases.
- Most of the consumers 45% are aware about green product through newspapers.

Suggestions

- Consumer awareness is the most important factor in the case of successfulness of green marketing.
- Various government agencies should take promotional activities for green marketing.
- Various government departments like panchayath, municipality, health departments, NGO are making attempt to promote green marketing.
- the success of green products depend on the consumers adopting or changing their attitude and behavior towards such products, it is imperative that green marketers identify all the factors that encourage cooperation
- Businesses should concentrate on focusing on developing a green product that have a demand from the general public and which also aligns to the company's core positioning.

Conclusions

Consumers' level of awareness about green products found to be high but at the same time consumers are not aware about green initiatives undertaken by various government and non government agencies signifying need for more efforts from organizations in this regard. Newspaper remains leading source of information for most of the respondents and should be utilized more for reaching out to the consumers regarding green products and practices.

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