

# Green Marketing: A Call for Sustainable Future

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**Abstract**—Now-a-days terms like green revolution, sustainable development, environmental protection, sustainable lifestyle, going green, protecting our earth and many more has taken the attention of many consumers. There is a noticeable shift in the consumers' choices and attitudes towards a green lifestyle because of the environment and environmental problems. In current business scenario, organizations are continuously striving to meet and satisfy consumers' demands for getting a competitive edge by exploiting the potential in the green marketing industry. Many global players are now successfully implementing & potentially participating in various green improvement activities and marketing. Green marketing is a tool which plays a vital role to promote and reinforce the idea of environmental protection and sustainability both in the minds of the customers and the firms. It emerged as a very important field of study for researchers who wanted to gain insights about the growing market for sustainable future. In this context, paper highlights the conceptualization of green marketing along with its needs and importance. Additionally, it emphasized the key factors that why companies are adapting green marketing and what challenges and constraints they are facing for its implementation.

**Keywords:** Consumers, Environment, Green Marketing, Organization, Sustainable

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Environment and environmental problems are one of the reasons why the concept of green marketing emerged. These environmental issues affect all human activities; therefore green marketing has become a key area for researchers now-a-days. Thus, businesses have started to modify their behavior in an attempt to address this new concern of society. Green marketing incorporates an extensive range of activities like product modification, changes in the production process, green packaging, as well as modifying advertising through public announcements and press releases.

Green marketing refers to holistic approach wherein, the product, its disposal strategy happen in a manner that is less destructive to the environment with growing awareness about the consequences of global warming, non-biodegradable solid waste, harmful impact of pollutants etc. Both consumers and marketers are becoming increasingly sensitive to the need to switch into environ-friendly products and practices. This concept has emerged as a call for re-marketing and re-packaging of existing products in a manner which will be as per the guidelines and are more eco-friendly. Moreover, green

marketing has opened the opportunities for many firms to co-produce their products which are green and nature friendly as well as to attract and target the conscious consumers to adopt greener products and services.

## 2. EVOLUTION OF GREEN MARKETING

Green marketing came into prominence in the late 1980s and early 1990s, it was first discussed much earlier. The American Marketing Association (AMA) held the first workshop on "Ecological Marketing" in 1975. The proceedings of this workshop resulted in one of the first books on green marketing entitled "Ecological Marketing" (Henion and Kinnear, 1976a).

The AMA workshop attempted to bring together academicians, practitioners, and public policy makers to examine marketing's impact on the natural environment. During that workshop of AMA, ecological marketing was defined as "the study of the positive and negative aspects of marketing activities on pollution, energy depletion and non-energy resource depletion" (Henion and Kinnear, 1976b).

The tangible milestone for the first wave of green marketing came in the form of published books, both were called Green Marketing. It was contributed by Ken Pattie (1992) in the United Kingdom and by Jacquelyn Ottman (1993) in the United States of America.

According to Peattie (2001), the evolution of green marketing has three phases.

- In the first phase all the marketing actions were concerned to solve environment problems and providing suitable remedies for it.
- In second phase the focus shifted to cleaner technology that involved innovations in new products and its process which ultimately take care of pollution and waste issues.
- During the last and third phase it dealt with "Sustainable" aspect of green marketing. Here green marketing look into minimizing the environmental harm rather than eliminating it totally.

### 3. CONCEPTUALIZATION OF GREEN MARKETING

As per Mr. J. Polonsky (1999), Green marketing can be defined as, "All activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchange intended to satisfy human needs or wants such that satisfying of their needs and wants occur with minimal detrimental input on the national environment." Green marketing is also called environmental marketing and eco-marketing. In general we can define green marketing as those activities or strategies used by companies to satisfy human wants with the minimal negative impact on the environment or nature.

As the human wants are endless and the resources are limited, so it calls for effective and efficient utilization of all the available resources in order to minimize resource wastage and lead to achievement of all set goals. As a result green marketing has emerged as a very important field of study for the researchers who speak for the growing market pertaining to the sustainable products and practices. Therefore, eco-marketing or green marketing is the need of the hour for generations for being conscious while using products which are environment safe. It is the need of the hour for marketers as well in order to satisfy their customers and lead a sustainable future.

### 4. COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF GREEN PRODUCTS

The products that are manufactured using green technology causing no environmental hazards are called green products. Promotion of green technology and green products is essential for conservation of natural resource and for sustainable development. Some characteristics of green products are:

- Products those are recyclable, reusable and biodegradable.
- Products grown without using harmful pesticides or chemicals.
- Products with natural ingredients.
- Products containing recycled contents and non-toxic chemical.
- Products contents under approved chemicals.
- Products that do not harm or pollute the environment.
- Products that will not be tested on animals or harm animals.
- Products that have eco-friendly packaging i.e. reusable, refillable containers etc.

### 5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The paper entitled "**Green marketing: A call for sustainable future**" is aimed to fulfill the following objectives:

1. To know the concept of green marketing.
2. To identify the need and importance of green marketing in current scenario.

3. To study the green opportunities and challenges of green marketing faced by marketers.

### 6. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dharmendra Mehta (2011) in his study indicated that Indians are not only conscious about their environment but also health conscious as well. This lead to the change in attitude of Indian consumers which ultimately attract them to green marketing. This has made Indian consumers more responsive.

Banumathi Mannarswamy(2011) in her study had reported that these days people are more concerned about the environment and are changing their behavior accordingly. As an outcome there is a strong market growth for sustainable and socially responsible products and services.

Charles W Lamb et al (2004) explained that green Marketing has also become an imperative way for marketers to build awareness and loyalty by promoting. By strong positioning of their brands they can convey strong message to consumers that these brands are ecologically friendly.

Selvakumar & Ramesh Pandi (2011) indicated that Green Marketing is not only about producing green products but also including the marketing strategies to develop consumer's eco-friendly nature and changed attitude so to help in creating lesser negative impact on environment.

Sanjay K. Jain & Gurmeet Kaur (2004) in their study have highlighted that green consumerism has played a catalytic role in helping corporate environmentalism and making businesses tapping green aspect, whereas, Kilbourne, W.E. (1998) discussed the failure of green marketing to move beyond the limitations of the prevailing paradigm.

The study by Sandhya Joshi(2011) pointed that Environmental problems have gained significance throughout the world in consumers as well as in marketers life. Undoubtedly green marketing is the crucial part of corporate strategy these days as it includes not only four Ps of marketing:product,price,place ,promotion but also the green strategies.

Sudhanshu Joshi et al (2008) identified the examples of Corporate Initiatives towards green branding in Banking. India's largest private bank ICICI started with the paperless banking facilities (paperless bank statements, e-passbooks etc.).

The literature review portrays that green marketing is the need of the hour as it facilitated consumer awareness as well as creating opportunities for the marketers to tap green consumers along with profits.

### 7. NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF GREEN MARKETING

Review of literature emphasized many reasons for the organizations to use green marketing. Five possible reasons are as follows:

1. Organizations perceive environmental marketing to be an opportunity that can be used to achieve its objectives (Keller, 1987; Shearer, 1990).
2. Organizations believe that they have a moral obligation to be more socially responsible (Davis, 1992; Freeman and Liedtka, 1991; Keller, 1987; McIntosh, 1990; Shearer, 1990;)
3. Governmental bodies are forcing firms to become more responsible (NAAG, 1990).
4. Competitors environmental activities pressurize firms to change their environmental marketing activities (NAAG, 1990)
5. Cost factors associated with waste disposal or reductions in material usage forces firms to modify their behavior (Azzone and Manzini, 1994).

Thus green marketing is highly important in today's scenario and the firms have to be proactive to adapt green technology so not to harm the environment anymore.

## 8. GREEN OPPORTUNITY

In India it appears that both the consumers and the marketers are becoming more concerned and conscious about our mother earth. And as the demand change, many firms see these changes as an opportunity to be exploited at its best.

**Opportunity** in India, most of the shoppers seeks greener products energized by the prospects of healthier alternatives, high quality and preserving the environment. Therefore green marketing will create a niche for this segment of shoppers and cater to.

The Surf Excel detergent which saves water (advertised with the message—"do bucket paani roz bachana") and the energy-saving LG consumers durables are examples of green marketing.

**Social Responsibility** Many companies have started recognizing their responsibility towards environment. They now believe in both achieving environmental objectives as well as fulfilling the needs of CSR too.

**Governmental Pressure** Various guidelines are framed by the government to safeguard consumers and the society at large. Indian government has developed an outline of legislations to reduce the harmful impact of goods and services produced.

Including those damaging the environment; for example, the ban of plastic bags, prohibition of smoking in public areas, etc.

**Competitive Pressure** Another driving force in the environmental marketing is to maintain the competitive edge among other brands. In various instances this competitive pressure has caused an entire organization to act responsibly and produce green products less damaging to the environment.

**Cost Reduction** many times firms develop mutual relationship with other firm whereby the waste generated by one company is used by another as a cost-effective raw material which leads to considerable cost savings. For example, the fly ash generated by thermal power plants, which would otherwise contribute to a gigantic quantum of solid waste, is used to manufacture fly ash bricks for construction purposes.

## 9. GREEN MARKETING: COMPANY INITIATIVES

There are various strategies for businesses to be green. Some leaders in green marketing are involved in practices such as:

- Use recycled materials in production process
- Use green energy (wind and geothermal energy)
- Reduce production waste (in both energy and materials)
- Use eco-friendly methods (using organic agriculture)
- Buy/sell produce without using harmful chemicals, pesticides etc.
- By using green manure while cultivating
- Buy/sell locally produce, reducing transportation energy
- Reduce product packaging (biodegradable food packaging)
- Cosmetics made from organic content and do not harm animals or tested on them.
- Make products reusable and recyclable

## 10. SOME CORPORATE INITIATIVES ARE:

- McDonald's restaurant's napkins, bags are made of recycled paper.
- Badarpur Thermal Power station of NTPC in Delhi is devising ways to utilize coal-ash that has been a major source of air and water pollution.
- Barauni refinery of IOC is taken steps for restricting air and water pollutants.
- Introduction of CNG in all public transport systems to curb pollution in Delhi
- HCL's Environment Management Policy under HCL eco-Safe
- Similar items in your shopping cart with greener products.
- The refrigerator industry has shifted from chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) gases to more environmentally friendly gases.
- Philips Light's CFL
- ITC has been 'water positive' six years in a row (creating three times more rainwater harvesting potential than ITC's net consumption)
- ITC is closed to 100% solid waste recycling
- Supreme Court of India forced a change to alternative fuels. In 2002, a directive was issued to completely adopt CNG in all public transport systems to curb pollution.
- Coca-Cola pumped syrup directly from tank instead of plastic which saved 68 million pound/year.

## 11. GREEN MARKETING – CHALLENGES

Even though a large number of firms that are practicing green marketing, it is not an easy job for them as there are a numerous problems which need to be addressed. Green marketing requires a holistic approach. A firm simply cannot proceed just by highlighting the green aspect of their product range but should also focus on demonstrating green processes at every level in the production process. Consumers are very cynical when it comes to green products or market or titles. They are pretty aware that firms are just 'greenwashing' their minds to make it their businesses to appear environment friendly but in real having less concern for nature. Therefore one of the first challenges of green marketing is establishing reliability by using strong strategies. A company can't advertise falsely the green aspects of a product if it does not actually saving the environment. Secondly, it has to be open about all their claims for environment friendly products. Third, it should be clear. Consumers need information about a business to evaluate its prerogatives and status; therefore, the firm should promote awareness of its product range, its environmental impact alongwith the CSR policies. Last challenge is that a product should be certified under proper certification and the firm should also advertise about the same so to inform the consumers and make them full aware (third party certification).

The major challenges are:

**1. Fresh Concept-**Indian consumers are getting more aware about the advantages of Green products. But it is still a new idea for the common people. The consumer needs to be educated and made aware of the environmental fears. Majority of the people are not aware of green products, its uses and the benefit out of it so it will take a lot of time and effort.

**2. Cost Factor-** Green marketing involves marketing of products/services having green impact, newer technology, renewable power/energy for which requires a huge investment in R&D. These new techniques, processes, marketing will need more money and majority of the consumers are not willing to pay that extra penny for green products.

**3. Lack of credibility-**The customers may not totally agree with the company's strategies of Green marketing, therefore the company should guarantee that they undertake all possible actions to persuade the customer about their green products. Else consumers are not very willing to buy these products.

**4. Sustainability-** Primarily the profits are nominal since green technology and practices requires more money and efforts. Green marketing will be fruitful only in long run. Hence the business needs a long term strategy rather than short terms plans and avoid any unethical practices to gain profits.

**5. Non Cooperation-** The organizations practicing Green marketing have to struggle hard in convincing the stakeholders as most of the times consumers fail to understand the long

term benefit of using green products thereby creating positive impact on environment.

**6. Avoiding confusion-** Green marketing must not confuse consumers regarding green or sustainable claims. The marketers must avoid the 'misleading claims'. Pick the products or services you promote saying them 'green' with care and be more cautious about what part of your product or packaging is green so to avoid confusion among consumer's minds.

Despite these challenges, green marketing has continued to gain believers, particularly for the global and environmental concern. This alarms many global players to implement green marketing activities and tap the potential in this amazing field to make our planet greener.

## 12. CONCLUSION

Consumers these days are very much conscious about environmental impact. Thus, it is the need of the hour for the marketers not only involved in corporate social responsibility but also to attract and retain their loyal customers who are now more into 'Green' thing. So green marketing is the approach for protecting the environment for generations to come and also to give them the strong message to save our planet. The concept of green marketing has evolved over time but still it is in the infancy stage. Adoption of green techniques will definitely be fruitful in the long run for both the marketers as well as for consumers. There are lots of green opportunities for the companies to save the environment by adopting newer technologies, new processes having lesser impact on environment. Current scenario demands a systematized approach to adopt green technologies and need a support from the consumers' to shift their behavior by adopting various eco-friendly life styles. A conservational devoted organization should not only produce goods that have reduced their harmful impact on the environment, but should also emphasize their suppliers to perform in a more environmentally responsible manner for achieving sustainability in the near future.

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