



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Green Marketing and Sustainable Development: A Need of Himalayan Region

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ABSTRACT

Green revolution, going green, environmental protection, sustainable life style, sustainable developments, protecting our earth and many more has become a natural phenomenon in our everyday life. People around the world are becoming more aware of the environmental stresses humans are placing on the planet. Many consumers now display concern about environmental deterioration. This is the major impetus for green products and green marketing. Green marketing refers to the satisfaction of consumer needs, wants, and desires in conjunction with the preservation and conservation of the natural environment. Green marketing is a phenomenon which has a great importance in the modern market and has been emerged as an important concept in India. It has equal importance in the other parts of the developing and developed world, and generally seen as an important strategy of facilitating sustainable development. The paper examines the present trends of green marketing and the role of green marketing in sustainable development of the Himalayan region. It explores the main issues in the adoption of green marketing practices. The paper will make an attempt to study the satisfaction and perception of customers regarding green marketing and also advance suggestions for the sustainable development of the country.

Key words: Green Marketing, Consumer, Environment, Green Product and Sustainable Development

Received: 19th Nov. 2015, Revised: 8th Dec. 2015, Accepted: 12th Dec. 2015

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How to cite this article:

Inderjit (2016): Green Marketing and Sustainable Development: A Need of Himalayan Region. AJMECS, Vol. 1[1]: January, 2016: 17-22.

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, consumers have become more enlightened on environmental issues. Green marketing refers to selling product or rendering services based on environmental benefit. It came into existence in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Green marketing is growing rapidly and consumers are willing to pay a lot for a green product. There has been little analysis of the impact of this new market for the consumers and the environment so far. Green marketing affects all areas of our economy, it does not just lead to environmental protection, but it also creates new market and job opportunities. Although environmental issues influence all human activities, few academic disciplines have integrated green issues into their literature. As society becomes more concerned with the natural environment, businesses have begun to modify their behaviour in an attempt to address society's "new" concerns. Some businesses have been quick to accept concepts like environmental management systems and waste minimization, and have integrated environmental issues into all organizational activities. One business area where environmental issues have received a great deal of discussion in the popular and professional press is "Green Marketing". Green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be the environmentally safe. Thus, green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production

process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising. Green products balance environmental compatibility with performance, affordability, and convenience. They are typically durable, non-toxic, recyclable, and are often made from recycled materials. Green products have minimal packaging and should carry low environmental impact.

Green marketing not only focuses on advertisements and promotion of products with environmental characteristics, but it pervades all the activities of designing, production, packaging and promoting greener products. Green marketing thrives on the underlying philosophy Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. Green or Environmental Marketing consists of all activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchanges intend satisfy human needs or wants, such that the satisfaction of these needs and wants occurs, with minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment. It ensures that the interests of the organization and all its consumers are protected, as voluntary exchange will not take place unless both the buyer and seller mutually benefit. The above definition also includes the protection of the natural environment, by attempting to minimize the detrimental impact this exchange has on the environment. This second point is important, for human consumption by its very nature is destructive to the natural environment. Thus, green marketing should look at minimizing environmental harm, not necessarily eliminating it.

CONCEPT OF GREEN MARKETING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

"Green Marketing" refers to holistic marketing concept wherein the production, marketing consumption a 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. Many people believe that green marketing is a way to promote or advertise a specific product using environmental terms, such as television advertisement, to announce a type of heaters as not to cause a shortage of oxygen but all that cannot be named more than eco-declaration, or green advertising, which forms one components of green marketing, or of the green marketing claims, therefore, green marketing includes a wider range of organizational activities, such as; product modification, changes to the production process, packaging changes and delivery changes, and more (Polonsky,2007). In their attempt to define green marketing, researches and practitioners have addressed several terms relate with this concept, Prakash (2002), pointed out that he employed the term green marketing in his survey "to refer to the strategies to promote products by employing environmental claims either about their attributes or about the systems, polices and processes of the firms that manufacture or sell them". Other researchers have defined environmental marketing as "the holistic management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying the requirement of customers and society, in a profitable and sustainable way" (Karna et al, 2001).

Green marketing has been an important academic research topic for at least three decades and has been defined in many different ways. According to The American Marketing Association, "Green or Environmental Marketing consists of 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. Thus we can say that Green Marketing involves:

1. Manufacturing and providing products to the consumers, which are of good quality and at the same time not harmful to them even in the long run.
2. Use the resources for development in such a manner which will enable the future generations to avail the resources to meet their needs leading to sustainable development.

3. Framing and implementing policies which will not have any detrimental effect on the environment, i.e. at present as well in future.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the concept and present scenario of Green Marketing and sustainable development in India.
2. To analyse the profile of respondents engaged in the marketing of eco-friendly products.
3. To evaluate the significance of green marketing and also to study the perception of stakeholders on the use of eco-friendly products.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on primary as well as secondary data. The secondary data was collected from Books, Journals, Internet, Magazines, and Newspaper reports. Primary data were collected through questionnaires, personal interview and also by observation methods. In all, 60 respondents of Himalayan region Shimla, the State Capital of Himachal Pradesh involved in green marketing at different places was taken as a sample selected on the basis of convenience sampling. Questions were framed to study the concept, present status, and perception of stakeholders regarding eco-friendly products. While selecting the sample an utmost care has been taken to ensure that the respondents of different age, religion, educational background and family income, etc. are included. Consistent with the study objectives, different techniques like, percentage methods and averages have been used to analyze the data. In case of certain hypothesis, an advanced statistical technique such as Chi square test, Standard deviation and Skewness has also been used. Interpretation of data is based on rigorous exercises aiming at the achievement of study objectives.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS:

Profile of the Respondents regarding Green Marketing:

A general description of the respondents' profile is shown in Table 1. A majority (73.3%) of respondents is male, while the remaining of them is female. It is also abstracted from the above table that 8.3 percent respondents below the age of 20 years, 40 percent in the age group of 20-30 years, 31.7 percent in the age group of 30-40 years and 10 percent in the age group of 40-50 and above 50 years are conversant with green marketing. The respondents' perception in Green Marketing on the basis of their occupation. The majority of the respondents who viewed the green marketing familiar, i.e. 40 percent are from service class. 18.3 percent respondents in the income group less than Rs. 50000, 46.7 percent in the income group of Rs. 50000-200000, 28.3 percent in the income group of Rs. 200000-500000 and 6.7 percent in income group the above Rs. 500000 are aware of eco-friendly products. Majority of respondents from income group Rs. 50000-200000, i.e. 46.7 percent.

Green Marketing and its Significance:

The table 2 clearly shows that the role of Green Marketing in present scenario for eco-friendly products. The mean value is greater than 3 i.e. standard score of five point scale. The standard deviation and Skewness also support our findings. Table 2, clearly depicts that Respondents said strongly agree and agree that they believe in the concept of green marketing. This can be inferred from the computed mean.

The calculated values of χ^2 (Chi Square) are more than the table value at 5 percent level of significance for different attributes and the null hypothesis is rejected, which means consumer are strongly agreeing and agree on the role of green marketing. It reveals that the opinions of the respondents are not equally distributed. Thus, the above analysis leads

to the conclusion that the majority of respondents are of the opinion that consumer awareness, internet based marketing, environmental issues and Government companies plays important role in green marketing.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents regarding Green Marketing

Variables		Number of Respondents	Total Sample
Gender wise	Male	44 (73.3)	60 (100)
	Female	16 (26.7)	
Age wise	Below 20 years	5 (8.3)	60 (100)
	20 -30 years	24 (40.0)	
	30-40 years	19 (31.7)	
	40-50 years	6 (10.0)	
	Above 50 years	6 (10.0)	
Occupation wise	Service	24 (40.0)	60 (100)
	Business	15 (25.0)	
	Professional	10 (16.7)	
	Household	11 (18.3)	
Income wise	Less than Rs. 50,000	11 (18.3)	60 (100)
	Rs. 50,000 – Rs. 200,000	28 (46.7)	
	Rs. 200,000 – Rs. 500,000	17 (28.3)	
	Above Rs. 500,000	4 (6.7)	

Source: Various Questionnaires from Respondents

Table 2: Green Marketing and its Significance

VARIABLES	Nature of Responses					Total	\bar{x}	S.D	SKW	χ^2
	S.A	A	N	DA	SDA					
Customers are becoming aware of green eco-friendly products.	2(3.3)	36(60)	14(23.3)	6(10)	2(3.3)	60(100)	3.50	0.854	-1.184	68.0
Internet is promoting green eco-friendly products.	13(21.7)	32(53.3)	11(18.3)	2(3.3)	2(3.3)	60(100)	3.81	0.911	-1.121	50.17
Consumers are now focusing on the environmental issues.	11(18.3)	23(38.3)	19(31.7)	6(10)	1(1.7)	60(100)	3.62	0.958	-0.345	27.33
Government and companies are taking necessary steps in this regard	16(26.7)	31(51.7)	7(11.7)	5(8.3)	1(1.7)	60(100)	3.93	0.936	-1.017	47.67

Source: Various Questionnaires from Respondents

Note: S.A. indicates Strongly Agree, A- Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, S.D- Strongly Disagree

Stakeholders Opinion about the Usefulness of Eco-Friendly Products:

Based on marketing literature, stakeholders play one of the most influencing roles in any organization and market. They influence all aspects of green strategy also in areas such as purchase of green product, the nature of the product, the packaging, advertisement, promotion and also Green awareness programs. When a particular company wants to 'go green' the stakeholders are at the forefront of their green marketing strategy. The table 3, depicts that the mean value of stakeholder perception about the eco-friendly is higher than the mean standard score i.e. 3 in five point scale. The Standard deviation and Skewness shows that the perception of the respondents is changing towards the higher side of the mean standard score. From table 3, we get that chi-square value is greater than

table value at the 5 percent level of significance. Therefore, our hypothesis is rejected, which means there is a significant difference in the perception of stakeholders about the eco-friendly products.

Table 3: Stakeholders Opinion about the Usefulness of Eco-Friendly Products

VARIABLES	Nature of Responses					Total	\bar{x}	S.D	SKW	χ^2
	S.A	A	N	DA	SDA					
Good for the environment	11(18.3)	31(51.7)	17(28.3)	0(0)	1(1.7)	60(100)	3.85	0.771	-0.625	31.47
Healthy for the customers	6(10)	22(36.7)	22(36.7)	6(10.0)	4(6.7)	60(100)	3.33	1.020	-0.522	28.00
Have a better quality than conventional products.	21(35)	18(30)	18(30)	2(3.3)	1(1.7)	60(100)	3.93	0.972	-0.551	31.17
Have a better performance than conventional/regular products.	11(18.3)	30(50.0)	6(10.0)	11(18.3)	2(3.3)	60(100)	3.62	1.091	-0.715	38.50
Have a reasonable price.	5(8.3)	32(53.3)	20(33.3)	2(3.3)	1(1.7)	60(100)	3.63	0.758	-0.712	61.17
Easily accessible/available in the market.	15(25.0)	37(61.7)	5(8.3)	2(3.3)	1(1.7)	60(100)	4.05	0.790	-1.369	75.33

Source: Various Questionnaires from Respondents

Perception of Respondents over the Use of Eco-Friendly Products:

From the table 4, we get that Chi-square value is greater than table value at the 5 percent level of significance. Therefore, our hypothesis is rejected, which means satisfaction and awareness level of stakeholders are strongly agree and agree regarding the eco-friendly products. The table 4, further indicates that the mean value of opinion relating to the satisfaction and awareness level of stakeholders about the eco-friendly products is higher than the mean standard score i.e. 3 in five point scale. The standard deviation and skewness shows that the opinion of the respondents is changing towards the higher side of the mean standard score.

Table 4: Perception of Respondents over the Use of Eco-Friendly Products

VARIABLES	Nature of Responses					Total	\bar{x}	S.D	SKW	χ^2
	S.A	A	N	DA	SDA					
Opinion of my family for eco-friendly products.	15(25.0)	22(36.7)	16(26.7)	5(8.3)	2(3.3)	60(100)	3.72	1.043	-0.604	22.83
Pay attention to advertisements of eco-friendly products.	10(16.7)	34(56.7)	9(15.0)	6(10.0)	1(1.7)	60(100)	3.77	0.909	-0.914	54.50
Pay a high price for an eco-friendly product.	10(16.7)	21(35.0)	13(21.7)	5(8.3)	11(18.3)	60(100)	3.23	1.345	-0.486	11.33
Blindly trust green product claims	6(10.0)	25(41.7)	20(33.3)	7(11.7)	2(3.3)	60(100)	3.43	0.945	-0.486	32.83
Recommend eco-friendly products to my family and group.	7(11.7)	27(45.0)	19(31.7)	6(10.0)	1(1.7)	60(100)	3.55	0.891	-0.453	38.00
Eco-friendly products come in eco-friendly packaging.	13(21.7)	23(38.3)	16(26.7)	6(10.0)	2(3.3)	60(100)	3.65	1.039	-0.557	22.83
The eco-friendly packaging is easily recyclable.	27(45.0)	16(26.7)	15(25.0)	1(1.7)	1(1.7)	60(100)	4.12	0.958	-0.838	41.00

Source: Various Questionnaires from Respondents

In a nutshell, it can be concluded that the status and perception of stakeholders regarding eco-friendly products play a significant role in environment. Studies have shown the significant influence of environmental knowledge and consciousness on consumer

environmental attitude. Consequently, companies that communicate their 'green product' in their packaging, advertisement or manufacturing process, gain satisfied customers.

CONCLUSION

Green marketing is a tool for protecting the environment for the future generation. It has a positive impact on environmental safety. Because of the growing concern of environmental protection, there is an emergence of a new market which is the green market. For companies to survive in this market, they need to go green in all aspect of their business. Consumers want to identify themselves with companies that are green compliant and are willing to pay a premium for a greener life style. As such, green marketing is not just an environmental protection tool but also, a marketing strategy. Consumers has expressed strong concerns about the concept of green marketing and eco-friendly products. People are aware of green environment because it is less detrimental to the environment and companies can look into implementation of this concept for betterment of business. So it creates an opportunity for developing green market. As consumers want eco-friendly product from those companies which has positioned themselves as green marketer or eco-friendly manufacturer. The right combination of eco-friendly products and services, sales, marketing and management expertise is needed to target and attract the consumers who are willing to buy eco-friendly products.

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