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Innovative Practices in Green Marketing: A way to make Indian Business Sustainable

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Abstract

In recent times, with drastic climatic changes, we have become more conscious towards environment. Not only our lifestyle, taste and preferences have changed immensely, but, also our working style, products, production process, promotional strategies etc have also altered. All over the world, business organisations have become more sensitive towards wellbeing of the society and are trying their best to minimise their detrimental impact on environment.

This increased environmental consciousness has leads to Green revolution which has made organisations realise the needs and importance of going green. Business organisations start adopting more innovative marketing tools and techniques to make their business grow and sustain. As a part of this revolution, the concept of Green Marketing was introduced in late 1900's.

Green marketing is a go green concept, in which business organisations are required to be eco-friendly and adopt innovative green practices like green pricing, green logistic, sustainable design, transparency, etc, which help in strengthening organisational efficiency and core competencies.

This paper is an attempt to understand the relationship between green marketing innovations and sustainability of India business organisations. It is a review paper which highlights the significances of innovative green practices in growth, prosperity and sustainability of organisations. Green marketing is a part of marketing activities, which, covers broad range of techniques like product and process modification, packaging reforms, ameliorate advertising, etc.

Keywords Green Marketing Innovation, sustainable business, environmental friendly, innovative green practices

Introduction

In 1960's concern for environment has begun profoundly. Several institutions come together to take part in initiative to safeguard the environment and make the world better place to live. For doing so several actions are taken, various laws are enacted and legislations are made (Charter, 2017). In the line of these actions, many business organisations also begun to recognised their social and ethical responsibilities towards the community and environment. They start to incorporate these actions into their business strategies (Jain and Kaur (2004), (Al-majali & Tarabieh, 2020)

The concept of green marketing came into existence in early 1990s. The American Marketing Association held first workshop on "Ecological marketing" in 1975. The proceeding of the workshop has created a worldwide moment to ensure sustainability in everyday activities. Other milestones which

add on to this moment came in the form of two books, Green Marketing by Ken Peattie (1992) and Green marketing: challenges and opportunities for New Marketing Age by Jacquelyn Ottman (1993). As a response to this, managers all around the world started adopting green marketing strategies to mitigate their detrimental impact on environment and to safeguard customers by providing safe and eco-friendly products (Ottman, Stafford & Hartman, 2006).

From then onwards green marketing concepts were adopted, followed and modified to include wide range of activities, including, product modification, redesigning production process, better packaging, modification in advertisement and distribution, etc. (Pranali, 2019). Present study tries to explain the concept of green marketing and its significance in making Indian businesses sustainable. Additionally, it will also explain various innovations that have taken place in Green Marketing practices.

Green Marketing: concept and innovation practices:

Green marketing is a strategy that a firm uses to ensure social wellbeing and try to avoid any harmful effect on the environment. It focuses on developing those products and services that not only satisfy customer needs and wants but also ensure environmental sustainability (Polonsky, 1994); (simao & Lisboa, 2017). It helps in bridging the gap between market and customer expectations and organisations eco-friendly and technological initiatives (Rex & Baumann, 2007) ; (simao & Lisboa, 2017). Organisation while developing cleaner and better products have to be very cautious, because if customers perceive that products are of lower quality, overpriced or fails to be eco-friendly, they will not buy the product and this will affect goodwill of the organisation (Ginsberg & Bloom, 2004) (Ottman, Stafford, & Hartman, 2006) (simao & Lisboa, 2017). Therefore, organisations try to understand customer needs and wants, their environmental concerns and then try to find ways to incorporate them in the products offering (Ottman J. , 1998); (simao & Lisboa, 2017).

Green marketing is considered to be a holistic management process which is responsible for identifying and satisfying needs and wants of the customers and society in the most profitable and sustainable way (Peattie & Crane, 2008); (Ottman, Stafford, & Hartman, 2006); (Osmana, Othman, Salahudinb, & Safizal, 2016). A green consumer is the one who avoid using any product which causes or can cause any harm to living being or to the environment during or after manufacturing process (Elkington, 1994); (Osmana, Othman, Salahudinb, & Safizal, 2016).

There are numerous factors due to which we promote green products like awareness, green advertisement, increased concern for environment, government support, popularity among social groups, etc. (Ottman A. J., 2008). Green products are basically those products which are developed by using greener technology, which minimise the use of non-renewable resources, avoid using harmful materials and chemicals, etc. some business organisations also integrate laws and regulations related to the environment (Cherian & Jacob, 2012); (Yan & Yazdanifard, 2014).

By adopting green marketing concepts, organisations have started addressing marketing mix in most innovative and greener way, some innovative green marketing practices adopted by business organisation are (Singh & Khushwaha, 2010) :

- Products are manufactured by considering 4 R's concepts- Reuse reduce and recycle and recover.
- Use of Energy saving products is promoted.
- Eco-friendly packaging is used- replacing plastic bags
- Organic products are promoted
- Certified products are sold to guarantee environment benefits
- sustainable marketing and communications techniques are used to
- Traditional promotion techniques are replaced with e-marketing techniques.

- Collaborating with environmental organisations, social groups, research institutes and other companies, to successfully fulfil environmental commitments.

Role of Green Marketing in Sustainable Business Practices:

Sustainability in relation to the environment refers to optimum utilisation of natural resources. Therefore, a sustainable business practices is one that is concerned with addressing environmental issues. It is a way of doing business without causing any harm to the environment like using renewable resources, being energy efficient, minimise wastage, contribute in community welfare, etc (Source: <https://blog.hotmart.com/en/green-marketing/>). Sustainable business practice is something that combines the concept of environment sustainability and social responsibility, to initiate something that not only generate profit but also protect people and environment.

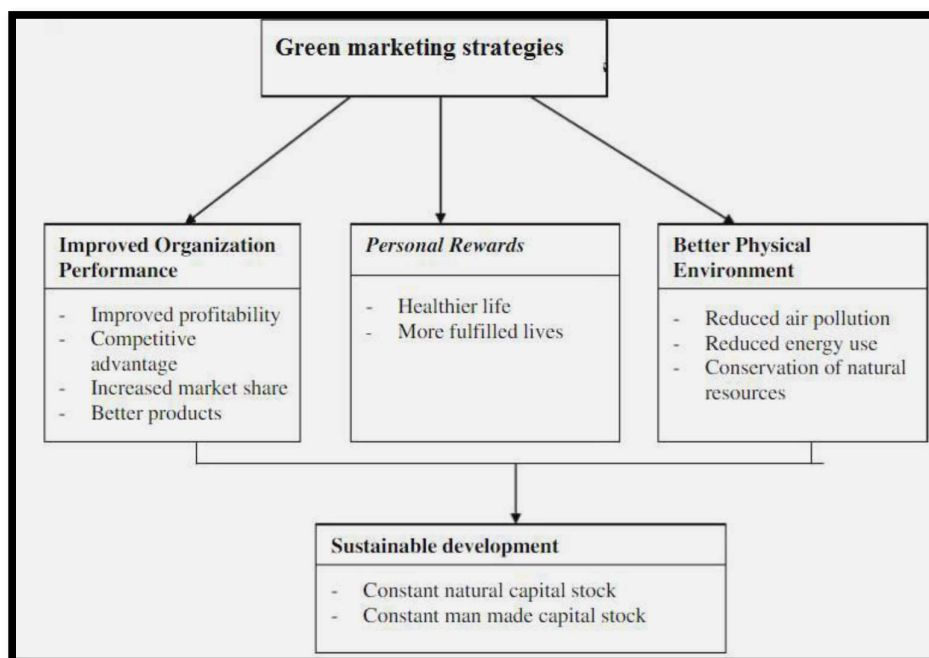


Figure 1.1: Green marketing: benefits
Source: (Pinter, Deutsch, & Ottmar, 2006)

Adopting green marketing not only attract and retain customers but also help in promoting sustainable business practices (source: <https://smallbusiness.yahoo.com/advisor/resource-center/5-green-marketing-tips-for-your-sustainable-business/>). There are several reasons for adopting innovative green practices; some of them are as follows are:

- Organisations can use green marketing as a way to easily achieve their set objectives, as it help in attracting and retaining customers by showcasing business in positive limelight. (Wandhe, 2018)
- In India, approximately 25 percent of customers prefer eco-friendly products and 28 percent opt healthy options for consumptions. Many firms view this customer behaviour as an opportunity to grow and sustain in market. (Bhattacharjee & Mukherjee, 2015)
- Being environmentally conscious, also provide competitive edge. (Bhattacharjee & Mukherjee, 2015)

- By adopting green marketing concept, organisations can easily address government concerns like community welfare, optimum utilisation of resources, minimise wastage, control detrimental impact, etc. (Raghuvanshi, 2015)
- Organisations start considering social responsibility as moral and ethical obligations (Wandhe, 2018).
- Waste reduction and efficient material usage help in reducing overall cost involved (Kiradoo, 2019).
- Pollution control (Wandhe, 2018)
- Better and bio-degradable packaging (Kiradoo, 2019)

Challenges in adopting green marketing:

Adopting green marketing concepts needs lots of brainstorming and strategic decision making. Organisations face several challenges while going green; some of them are as follows:

- Going green stimulates use of eco-friendly products, greener technology, green energy, etc which requires huge spending on research and development. Therefore, initially it is considered to be expensive (Bhattacharjee & Mukherjee, 2015).
- Customers are not aware about the availability and benefits of green products (Bhattacharjee & Mukherjee, 2015).
- Customers are not willing to pay higher prices (Bhattacharjee & Mukherjee, 2015).
- Due to absence of standardisation and quality control, it is tough to differentiate between green marketing and green washing (Quershi, 2019).
- Going green is a longterm investment which need time to show positive results (Quershi, 2019).

Recommendations

Green marketing related literature has highlighted some major suggestions for implementing green marketing practices successfully. Some of them are as follows:

- Better and cleaner technology need to be adopted to make the business process green (Bhattacharjee & Mukherjee, 2015).
- Developing standardisation and quality control associations are required to avoid misleading customers with green washing (Wandhe, 2018).
- Environmental awareness should be created among customers by adopting sustainable marketing tools (Wandhe, 2018).
- Proper eco-labelling should be done to ensure credibility of product claims (Kiradoo, 2019).
- Stringent measures should be taken within the organisation to adhere to various environmental norms (Kiradoo, 2019).
- Government should recognise the benefits of sustainability and should promote green firms by providing them some extra benefits (Bhattacharjee & Mukherjee, 2015).

Conclusion

Green marketing is a technique to protect our environment from detrimental impact of business activities. By adopting green marketing concept business can easily ensure sustainability in their operations, which not only protect environment but also create a positive image among customers and society.

Green marketing is considered to be of greater importance for resource rich developing countries like India. Adoption of green concept will help in effective utilisation of available resources and will also ensure sustainable development. But going green is not an easy task; it requires lot of patience,

perseverance and investment. Better control system needs to be developed at internal as well as external level. Customers need to be educated about the needs and benefits of the green products. Green organisation should be supported and promoted and special benefits should be provided to them.

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