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# Green Consumerism and Ethics in Green Marketing

**Dr.P.S.VIJAYA LAKSHMI**

Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies, Periyar Maniammai University, Vallam, Thanjavur.

## ABSTRACT

*Successful marketing is the crux of any business and more so in modern times wherein there are acute competitors. Green marketing has become inevitable as resources are scarce against unlimited human wants. Hence the means are to be used in judicious manner for the present and future generations. In this respect, Green marketing assumes prime importance.*

*Green marketing is the process of developing products and services and promoting them to satisfy the customers who prefer products of good quality, performance and convenience at affordable cost, which at the same time do not have a detrimental impact on the environment. It includes a broad range of activities like product modification, changing the production process, modified advertising, and change in packaging that aimed at reducing the detrimental impact of products and their consumption and disposal on the environment. Companies all over the world are striving to reduce the impact of products and services on the climate and other environmental parameters.*

*Determinants of Green Marketing are Setting Green Objectives; Demonstrate Social Responsibility; Comply with the legislation; Respond to competitive initiatives; Provide accurate environmental information; Identify products with green characteristics; Focus product development on sustainability; Set realistic prices; Eliminate unnecessary packaging; Practice greener distribution; Promote green credentials efficiently; and make it easy for customers to be green.*

*Green marketing takes into account the wider relationship of the organization and its products to the surroundings. It is about a more aware, open, targeted and sensitive approach that integrates the strategic link between the company, the environment and marketing, rather than being primarily concerned with tactical communication opportunities for profit alone. The prime emphasis is on, developing relationships and satisfying separate stakeholder needs in an environmentally and socially responsible manner. The key stakeholders are customers, investors, the parent company, directors, employees, the community, legislators, pressure groups, supplier, and the media.*

*This paper attempts to shed the light on the new concepts namely green marketing and green consumerism. The green consumerism fixes responsibility on producers for producing environmental-friendly goods so that the environment will be preserved for the future generations too. It also deals with determinants of and ethical issues, involved in green marketing.*

**KEYWORDS : Green Marketing, Green Consumerism, Consumer Behaviour**

**MEANING & CONCEPT OF GREEN MARKETING**

*"We say we love flowers, yet we pluck them. We say we love trees, yet we cut them down. And people still wonder why some are afraid when told they are loved"*

**Author - anonymous**

The colour green is an off shoot of the English verb _growan'which means _to grow'. Green has traditionally been associated with hope and growth and it also represents nature. Over a period of time, the colour has virtually become a synonym for environment. As resources are limited and human wants are unlimited, it is important for the marketers to utilize the resources efficiently without waste as well as to achieve the organization's objective. So green marketing is inevitable.

Green marketing was given prominence in the late 1980s and 1990s after the proceedings of the first workshop on Ecological marketing held in Austin, Texas (US), in 1975, paving way for rich resources of literatures in green marketing. According to the Joel Makeover, green marketing faces a lot of challenges because of lack of standards and public consensus as to what constitutes "Green".

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**Phases of Green Marketing**

The green marketing has evolved over a period of time. According to Peattie (2001), the evolution of green marketing has three phases. The first phase was termed as "Ecological" green marketing, and during this period all marketing activities were concerned to solve environmental problems with suitable remedies. The second phase was "Environmental" green marketing and the focus shifted on clean technology that involved designing of innovative new products, which take care of pollution and waste issues. The third phase was "Sustainable" Green Marketing. It came into prominence in the late 1990s and early 2000.

With the continuing rise in environmental awareness and concern, companies recognize that it pays to be green. If the companies are acting in an environmentally responsible way, it becomes important for companies to communicate their green credentials.

**Green Consumer and Features**

A green consumer is one "Who is mindful of environment related issues and obligations, and is supportive of environmental causes to the extent of switching allegiance from one product or supplier to another even if it entails higher cost."

According to Jacquelyn Ottman of J. Ottman, green consumers seek out the following when making purchase decisions:

- Green consumers want to know how raw materials are procured and where they come from, how food is grown, and what their potential impact is on the environment once they land in the trash bin.
- Green consumers patronize manufacturers and retailers they trust and boycott the wares of suspected polluters.
- Green consumers often do not have the same consumptive spending patterns as the mass consumer.

**Green Consumerism**

Green Consumerism refers to public awareness of pressing environmental issues. Green marketers hope to capitalize on this by develop-

ing strategies that allow consumers to integrate green products into their lifestyles. Many such efforts by green marketers have met with considerable success. The "organic" industry, for example, specializes in the sale of organically based foods, health and nutritional products, and other green lifestyle items.

**Green Consumer Purchasing Behavior**

Consumer behavior can be defined as, *"Study of how people or organizations behave when obtaining, using, and disposing of materials, products and services".*

Green Consumer behavior involves the use and disposal of materials and products as well as the study of how they are purchased. This means that the consumer's behavior is a process in purchasing goods and services. Product use is often of great interest to the marketer, because this may influence how a product is best positioned or how the people involved can encourage increased green consumption.

**Need & Significance of Green Marketing**

As resources are scarce and human wants are unlimited, it is important for the marketers to economise the resources use avoiding and achieving efficiently the organization's objective. So green marketing is inevitable. There is a growing interest among the consumers all over the world regarding the protection of environment. Worldwide evidence indicates that people are concerned about the environment and are changing their behavior. As a result of this, green marketing has emerged emphasizing the sustainability of growing market for sustainable with the availability of socially responsible products and services.

The growing awareness among the consumers over the world environment is result of the present generation's aim to bequeath a clean earth to their offspring. Various studies by environmentalists indicate that people are concerned about the environment and are changing their behavior pattern so as to be less hostile towards it. Now everyone see that most of the consumers, both individual and industrial, have become more concerned about environment-friendly products. Most of them feel that environment-friendly products are safe to use. As a result, green marketing has emerged. Marketers are taking the cue and are going green.

**Determinants of Green Marketing**

- Setting Corporate Green Objectives
- Demonstrate Social Responsibility
- Comply with the legislation
- Respond to competitive initiatives
- Provide accurate environmental information
- Identify products with green characteristics
- Focus product development on sustainability
- Set realistic prices
- Eliminate unnecessary packaging
- Practice greener distribution
- Promote green credentials efficiently
- Make it easy for customers to be green

**INNOVATION – URGENT REQUIREMENT**

The extensive use of pollutants in factories, farms, and power plants is an indication of how the plant works. They are primitive inventions that have been designed by people who didn't fully grasp the consequences of their actions. But as comprehension has grown, a market has emerged for more sensible alternatives. As global warming becomes a real threat, it is time to upgrade technology to tackle the issue in various streams of Agriculture, Automobiles, Batteries, Electricity, FMCG goods, Electronics etc. Among all these streams one such field is the agriculture where it is highly essential to focus in increasing the productivity by safeguarding the environment. As a result, green marketing has emerged, aiming at marketing sustainable and socially-responsible products and services. Now is the era of recyclable, non-toxic and environment-friendly goods. This has become the new mantra for marketers to satisfy the needs of consumers and earn better profits.

**ETHICS IN GREEN MARKETING**

Friedman says that business has no social responsibility beyond that of increasing profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, that is, engage in open and free competition without deception or fraud. In other words, business has no business to consider question of good or evil, relevance of social justice or environmental sustainability. This raises the question of whether there is a distinction to be drawn between ethical action and good business sense. Green marketing may be viewed as a strategy for the future or for profitability. Decision-making in business has become complex as environmental questions have been raised about all aspects of corporate activity. Since business is of the community:, by the community: and for the community, the business works fall within the physical and ethical frameworks, and hence it has to consider the environment as an ethical issue.

The rate of environmental degradation has intensified. The nineteenth century witnessed the firms large scale pollution as companies geared themselves to produce goods as fast as possible, with virtual disregard to human or environmental well-being. Nations battled for industrial supremacy using raw materials and creating pollution at a staggering rate unmindful of bad consequences. As countries became economically stronger, competition also grew. More efficient production methods were employed, and very few companies, gave a thought to the degrading impact as they were having on their surroundings. With increase in water pollution from chemical works, and air pollution from the iron and steel industry, towns and cities began to pay the price for high industrial productivity.

**The three Rs of Environmentalism are:**

1. Reduce
2. Reuse and
3. Recycle

**CONCLUSION**

Green marketing takes into account the wider relationship of the organization and its products to the surroundings. It is about a more aware, open, targeted and sensitive approach that integrates the strategic link between the company, the environment and marketing, rather than being primarily concerned with tactical communication opportunities for profit alone. The prime emphasis is on, developing relationships and satisfying separate stakeholder needs in an environmentally and socially responsible manner. The key stakeholders are customers, investors, the parent company, directors, employees, the community, legislators, pressure groups, supplier, and the media.

Green marketing differs from its societal and ecological predecessors by intertwining of ecological and social concerns, in the breadth of the ecological agenda that it tackles, and in its potential application across all types and sectors of business. Green marketing goes beyond societal marketing in four key ways:

1. It is an open-ended rather than a long-term perspective.
2. It focuses more strongly on natural environment.
3. It treats the empowerment as something which has an intrinsic value over and above its usefulness to society.
4. It focuses on global concerns rather than those of particular societies.

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