

A Qualitative Study On Consumers' Attitude and Behaviour towards Green Marketing Practices.

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Abstract: *Increasing Awareness On The Various Environmental Problems Has Led A Shift In The Way Consumers Go About Their Life. There Has Been A Change In Consumer Attitudes Towards A Green Lifestyle. People Are Actively Trying To Reduce Their Impact On The Environment. However, This Is Not Widespread And Is Still Evolving. Organizations And Business However Have Seen This Change In Consumer Attitudes And Are Trying To Gain An Edge In The Competitive Market By Exploiting The Potential In The Green Market Industry. This Paper Highlights The Consumers' Perception And Preferences Towards Green Marketing Practices And Products With The Help Of A Structured Questionnaire. A Study Was Conducted On 106 Respondents. High Level Of Awareness About Green Marketing Practices And Products Was Found Among The Consumers. Green Values Were Also Found To Be High Among The Respondents. Research Has Given Good Insights For Marketers Of The Green Products And Suggests The Need Of Designing The Marketing Communication Campaigns Promoting Green Products Due To High Green Value Among The Consumers. Results Of Regression Analysis Reveals The View That Overall Green Values, Awareness About Green Products And Practices And The Perception Regarding Seriousness Of Marketing Companies Towards Green Marketing Had Positive Significant Impact On Consumer Persuasion To Buy And Prefer Green Products Over Conventional Products.*

Date of Submission: 10-03-2018

Date of acceptance: 26-03-2018

I. Introduction:

Businesses Need To Constantly Assess The Latest And Most Attractive Marketing Trends. Marketing Trends Can Be Found Out By Continually Researching About The Changes In Consumer Behavior In The Marketplace. By Identifying The Changes In The Consumer Behavior, The Businesses Can Modify Their Offering To The Consumers. Consumers Today Are More Concerned About Environmental Degradation And Negative Impact Of Their Uses Of Product And Services On Environment. The Reason For This Concern Could Be Visible Climatic Changes, Global Warming And Increasing Air And Water Pollution. Thus Using Green Marketing By The Organizations Not Only Provides An Opportunity To Meet consumer Expectations And Address Their Environmental Concerns, But Also To Gain A Competitive Advantage And A Strong Consumer Base.

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.

II. Literature Review:

Consumers Are Substantially Aware About Green Products; However Applying Green Marketing Practices In Business Operations Is Not An Easy Task (Juwaheer, 2005). Antonio Et Al (2009) Suggested That Due To Environmental Consciousness That Has Evolved Over Time, Studies On Green Consumerism Will Be The Main Focus Point In Future Leading To Identifying The Consumer Attitudes, Behaviors And Intentions. Braimah And Tweneboah-Koduah (2011) Studied Ghanaian Consumers And Have Found Low Level Of Awareness Towards Green Marketing Issues Which Affected That Purchase Decision Of The Consumers. Price

Of Green Products Was Also Found To Be One Of The Factor That Influence The Purchase Of Green Products. However, It Was Found That Young Consumers Are Morelikely To Be Influenced By Green Issues. CherianAnd Jacob (2012) Found That Consumers Lack Green Knowledge And Because Of This Low Awareness, Organizations Are Still Not Focusing Towards Development Of Green Products.

The Concept Of Green Or Ecological Marketing Calls Upon Businesses To Follow Ethical And Green Practices While Dealing With Customers, Suppliers, Dealers, And Employees. Companies Have Started Marketing Themselves As Green Companies. Even The Public Sector Units And State Governments Are Now Paying A Lot Of Attention Towards Environmental Issues Such As Global Warming, Pollution, Or Water Contamination And Have Started Taking Steps To Prevent Environmental Pollution. In A Recent Survey Conducted By National Geographic Society And The International Polling Firm Globescan(2010) To Determine Consumers' Green Attitude Called "Consumer Greendex", The Top Scoring Consumers Were In The Developing Economies Of India, Brazil And China While Industrialized Countries Ranked At The Bottom. Consumers Showing The Largest Increase In Environmentally Sustainable Behavior Were In India, Russia And The United States (Howe Et Al., 2010). A Company To Be Successful In Green Marketing Requires To Be Committed To Operate In Environmentally Friendly Ways.

Environmental Marketing, More Popularly Known As Green Marketing Or Sustainable Marketing Can Be Defined As The Effort By A Company To Design, Promote, Price And Distribute Products In A Manner Which Promotes Environmental Protection (Polonsky, 2011). Green Marketing Has Be Defined 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' By Polonsky(2011).

Consumerism Can Perhaps Be Identified As A Movement Which Initially Begun As A Process Which Was Presented To Protect Consumers Against Practices Of Unethical Marketing. Over Time This Has Extended And Become Broader In Nature. When Today's Agenda With Regards To Consumer Activism Is Taken Into Consideration It Can Be Observed That Protection Of The Environment Is The Most Vital Aspect .There Is A Resultant Increase In The Concern Expressed Towards Environmental Protection Leading To "Green Consumerism" (Eriksson, 2002).

The Growth Of Green Marketing And Green Consumer Is "Perhaps The Biggest Opportunity For Enterprise And Invention The Industrial World Has Ever Seen" (Cairncross1992: 177). A Green Consumer Can Be Identified To Be One Who Avoids Any Product Which May Harm Damage To Any Living Organism, Cause Deterioration Of The Environment During Process Of Manufacturing Or During Process Of Usage, Consume A Large Amount Of Non Renewable Energy , Involves Unethical Testing On Animals Or Human Subjects (Elkington, 1994).

There Have Been A Number Of Different Factors Which Are Instrumental In Promoting Green Consumers To Purchase Green Products. Extensive Research Over The Years Identify That Heightened Awareness Of Green Issues; Increased Level Of Information Availability On Environmental Sustenance; Green Advertising By Corporations; Increased Concern For The Environment; Increase In Popularity Of Green Products By Social And Environmental Charities As Some Factors. This Overwhelming Increase In The Overall Environmental Consciousness Among Different Consumer Profile There Have Been Efforts Undertaken By Firms To "Go Green" By Presenting The Concept Of Corporate Environmentalism (Banerjee, 2003; Hay And Lichter2000). Today Green Development Are Identified As Opportunities By Business Firms As Opportunities To Improve Their Marketing Niche Rather Than Just Actions Which Need To Be Carried Out.

III. Strategy

The Current Research Paper Is A Conceptual Study In To Green Marketing. Therefore The Researcher Adopted A Qualitative Research Strategy. According To (AderEt Al., 2008), There Are No Independent Or Dependant Variables Involved In A Qualitative Study As A Qualitative Strategy Is Not Experimental In Nature. (Saunders, M, Et Al 2003), States That When It Comes To Conceptual Research, It Is Important To Review Previously Done Researches On The Same Subject Matter. A Qualitative Approach Allows For An Elastic Process During Which Changes Can Be Made And Incorporated Into The Research. The Current Study Does Adopt A Purely Qualitative Strategy As This Research Involves A Dependent Variable (Consumer Perception Of Green Marketing) And Its Impact On Independent Variable (Attitude And Behaviour Towards Green Consumerism).

Consumer Attitude Towards The Environment

Environmental Attitude Is Identified As The Judgment An Individual Has Towards The Protection And Promotion Of The Environment. Conflicting Results Have Been Published With Regards To The Relationship That Currently Exists Between Attitude Towards The Environment And The Resultant Behaviour. There Has Been Other Empirical Research Which Has Concluded That The Relationship Is Moderate At Best .Green

Marketing Depends On The Consumer's Attitude Towards The Environment. If There Is No Strong Demand For Such A Shift In Consumer Attitude, Businesses Will Not Put In The Extra Effort To Move Towards Introducing Green Products And Services.

ConsumerbehaviorTowardsEco Labeling

One Important Tool Of Green Marketing Involves The Promotion Of Eco Labels On Environmentally Friendly Products .Eco Labeling Is An Effective Measure Which Helps In Bridging The Gap Between Sellers And Buyers By Providing Information On Two Aspects: Information Function Presenting Intangible Quality Measures Including Product Quality And Value Function Which Presents The Recyclability And CSR Related Brand Prestige .Empirical Research Has Concentrated On The Need To Look For Ways By Which Eco Labels Will Directly Impact Consumer Purchase Intention Of Products Which Are Deemed To Environmental Safe. There Is A Need To Identify The Impact Eco Labeling Will Have Directly On The Consumer Environmental Attitude In Terms Of Decision Making. The Consumer Awareness Of Eco Labeling And Its Impact On Consumer Intent To Purchase An Eco Friendly Product Has Been Researched And Conflicting Views Have Been Expressed .

ConsumerbehaviorTowardsEnvironmental Advertisements

Along With The Process Of Labeling Their Products, Arriving At Measures Which Promote Manufacturing Ofeco Friendly Products And Reduction Of Environmental Pollution There Is A Growing Trend Among Corporations Across The World To Present Environmental Advertisements. This Process Is Identified To Be A Major Factor Influencing Green Marketing. The Main Aim Of Presenting Green Advertisements Is To Present To The Consumer That The Company Is Eco Centric While At The Same Time Making An Effort To Influence The Purchase Behaviour Of The Consumers By Presenting Them With Choices Of Availability Of Products Which Do Not Cause Harm To The Environment And Directing Their Attention To Positive Consequences Of Purchase Behaviour. There Are Three Elements Which Form The Core Of Environmental Advertising. These Include Presentation Of The Corporation'smission Statement With Regards To Environment Protection, Presentation Of The Procedures Adopted By The Company To Go Green And Finally One Specific CSR Activity Which Has Been Adopted By The Corporation .The Creation Of A Consumer Value And The Subsequent Translation Into Purchase Of Products Is Strongly Identified By The Impact Of Environmental Advertisements .

IV. Conclusion

One Thing That Is Being Reiterated Is That The Current Consumption Levels Are Too High And Are Unsustainable. Therefore There Is A Need For Green Marketing And A Need For A Shift In The Consumer's Behavior And Attitude Towards More Environmental Friendly Life Styles. The Current Study Is A Compilation Of Various Aspects Related To Green Marketing. It Is Clearly Evident From Review Of Literatures And The Conceptual Model That The Majority Of The Consumers Still Lack 'Green' Knowledge And Because Of Such Low Awareness Towards Green Products Organizations Are Still Not Pushing Towards Developing More Green Products Nor Are They Working Hard On Green Packaging. Organizations Still Believe That Marketing Aspects Such As Developing A Proper Supply Chain, Packaging, Pricing Etc Take Precedence Over Green Marketing Initiatives. However, This Is All Changing. People Are Beginning To Realize Their Role And Responsibilities Towards The Environment. Although This Change Is Not Happening Quickly, It Is Happening. Businesses Are Looking Towards Gaining An Edge In The Green Market Industry By Trying To Re-Package Their Products Into A More Environmental Friendly Product. They Are Cutting Down On Extras And Wasted Materials And Turning Their Operations Into More Efficient And Green Operation. Companies Are Also Starting To Educate The Masses With An Increase In Advertising That Puts Emphasis On Green Products And How They Are More Beneficial For The Consumers. This Kind Of Advertising Goes A Long Way In Educating The Masses And Promoting The Concept Of Green Products Among The People. With More And More Consumers Willing To Pay A Little Extra Towards Green Products, Organizations Are Taking Notice Of The Demands And Behavior And Attitude Of The Consumers.

Recommendations

Green Marketing Is A Continuous Process That Requires Constant Inputs From The Suppliers, Government Legislations And Policies And The People. This Is Required So That The Businesses Green Marketing Strategy Can Be Aligned To The Target Markets And So It Can Gain A Sustainable Competitive Advantage. It Is Important That Strategies And Policies In Relation To Green Products Be Developed And Implemented So As To Guide And Help The Retailers And Customers Towards A Green Change. 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. Furthermore Businesses Should Also

Present Efforts In A Manner That Reduces The Risk Related To Costs. In Conclusion, Creating And Implementing A Green Marketing Strategy Is Not Straight Forward Because It Is Not Only Complex, But Also A Relative Concept That Continuously Varies Over Time.

The Framework That Is Presented In The Current Paper Is Based On The Need To Explain Inconsistencies In Attitudes And Behaviors That Have Been Revealed In Past Researches. The Current Framework Will Be Framing The Gap Between The Attitudes And Behaviors As A Social Dilemma And Also Attempts To Understand The Gap By Trying To Identify Individual Factors By Using The Reference Group Theory. Furthermore The Framework Also Tries To Recommend Certain Ways To Cover The Research Gap. The Current Study Will Provide A Valuable Insight To Both Practitioners And Theoreticians Who Want To Understand Environmentally Conscious Individuals. Since 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. Thus The Current Study Will Also Be Of Benefit To The Green Marketers As It Aids In Developing A Marketing Strategy That Persuades Consumers To Seek The Value Of Collective Gain Over Self-Interest.

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Mrs.R.Surya"A Qualitative Study On Consumers 'S Attitude and Behaviour towards Green Marketing Practices."IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM) 20.3 (2018): 26-30.