



Volume: 4th & Issue: 13th (January – March 2017) PP: 27-32 Date: 25-03-2017

GREEN CONSUMERISM

By: Dr. Miss. Minu A. Karir

Author's Particulars:

Dr. Miss. Minu A. Karir,
C. D. Jain College of Commerce,
College Road,
Shrirampur - 413 709
Dist- Ahmednagar,
Maharashtra,
India.



E-Mail: minukarir2@gmail.com

Mobile: 0091 9860025012

Authors' Introduction:

Dr. Miss. Minu A. Karir is qualified as M. Com., PGDBM, UGC- NET, M. Phil. and Ph. D. Currently she is serving as Associate Professor in C. D. Jain College of Commerce, Shrirampur, Dist- Ahmednagar (M. S.). She has done her specialization in Costing, Financial Management and Banking. So far, she has the experience of 9 years in this field. She has a strong research profile. She has won first prize in *Comm-Search-* the Research Competition organized by Savitribai Phule Pune University for the best research paper presentation. Also she has won the best M. Phil. dissertation award and the best Ph. D. thesis award in her Research Centre. She has attended and presented research papers in number of National and International Conferences and Seminars. She is also involved in social work through a campaign based on *Financial Literacy Drive*.

Abstract:

Consumerism, a movement to protect consumers against dangerous products, unethical pricing practices and deceptive advertising, has increased in the recent years particularly in respect to certain issues and protection of the environment in one of them. The main issues pursued by the consumer movement fall into three categories, viz., environmental protection, product performance and safety, and information disclosure. Major forces driving the movement, in addition to consumers themselves, are consumer organizations and other interest groups, consumer education and consumer laws. 'Green Consumerism' aims at

protecting the consumers against environmentally harmful products and practices. It has increased the interest of consumers in environmental impacts of the products they buy. 'Green consumerism' certainly has the potential to significantly reduce the strain on our environment. Therefore, the choice between 'green' and 'un green' consumerism should be obvious to anyone who cares about the future. But there are certain crucial limitations to the success that can be achieved by an individual's firm dedication to that choice. The construction of a better world requires not only individual actions, but also collective actions and political and institutional restructuring based on a sound

understanding of the limits of growth and the concept of ecological sustainability. The present paper deals only with the concept of 'green consumerism' and have also endeavored to highlight some of the emerging issues connected with it and the challenges which the Indian consumer movement and its protagonists are presently facing and/or are also likely to face in the future.

Keywords: Consumerism, unethical pricing practices, viz., environmental protection, product performance, Major forces, organizations, consumer education, 'Green Consumerism', potential, crucial limitations, political and institutional, ecological sustainability.

Introduction:

A majority of people believe that green marketing refers solely to the promotion or advertising of products with environmental characteristics. Terms like Phosphate Free, Recyclable, Refillable, Ozone Friendly, and Environmentally Friendly are some of the things consumers most often associate with green marketing. While these terms are green marketing claims, in general green marketing is a much broader concept, one that can be applied to consumer goods, industrial goods and even services. Green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising. Yet defining green marketing is not a simple task.

With increasing awareness about sustainability and sustainable practices, and with a fast growing middle class in India showing increasing interest in and

concern about the three Ps of sustainability - People, Planet and Profits - Indian businesses need to start realigning themselves to this changing marketplace.

Examples of Green Consumerism:

1. Worldwide, buyers of energy-saving compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) have eliminated the need for nearly 40 medium-sized, coal-fired power plants.
2. At the seafood counter, consumers can now find rock lobster, cockles, hoki, mackerel, herring, and salmon that carry the Marine Stewardship Council's logo as having been harvested under environmentally responsible management.
3. Thai consumers have used information from an appliance-labeling program to drive the market share of energy efficient, single-door refrigerators from 12 percent in 1996 to 96 percent in 1998.
4. In 21 European countries, beachgoers follow the ratings of the European Blue Flag campaign to find some 2,750 beaches and marinas with high environmental standards and sanitary and safe facilities.

5. Coffee drinkers in the US and Canada can ask for their coffee to be brewed from beans carrying the Bird Friendly seal of approval from the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center. This program certifies that the beans meet standards for shade farming and organic production.

Objectives:

1. To understand the concept of green consumerism
2. To study the level of awareness among various stakeholders about green consumerism
3. To have an overview of green consumerism trend in India

Methodology:

The research is based on secondary data collected from various books, articles, journals, newspapers and websites.

Green Consumerism Awareness:

The awareness about green consumerism has been increasing these days; the following point highlights the raised awareness among various interest groups about green consumerism:

1. Consumers have been asking for green products, i.e. there has been a clear raise in demand for such products.

2. Businesses have looked into the green process - generating corporate environmental profiles, monitoring and evaluating green performance, and improving corporate image as a result.

3. Green products have also increased competition among businesses to generate more environmentally friendly products.

4. Ecolabelling networks that monitor and evaluate green products have been developed in many countries. These networks have done life cycle analyses to understand the impact of products.

5. Governments have also taken several measures that have supported and facilitated such moves by businesses.

Indian Scenario:

There has been a lot of hype over the environmental issues in our country during the last few years. There have been many agitations to conserve the natural habitats when dams were constructed like the Narmada Bachao Andolan. Not only this, the American Enron power project at Dabhol had to face agitations against the environmental hazards of storing naphtha. Reliance's Jamnagar refinery had to face similar situations. Supreme Court judgments on environmental issues, ban on

Plastic Bags, implementation of Euro II Norms, also reflect the rising environmentalism in India. The Government of India, recognizing the severity of these problems, has adopted a comprehensive policy to address the environment. India was the first country to insert an amendment into its constitution allowing the state to intervene and to protect public health, forests and wildlife. Besides, the Central Pollution Control Board that was constituted in 1974, a full-fledged Ministry of Environment and Forests were established in 1985 to implement the environmental laws and regulations.

Various laws to protect the natural environment, such as the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974; the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and the Environment Protection Act, 1986 have also been legislated. Even a voluntary environmental labeling scheme viz., ECIMARK has been launched for informing the consumers about the eco-friendliness of the products. As far as the consumers are concerned, though environmentalism may not have hit the Indian consumers directly, the people here are fast adopting an alternative lifestyle by using products like health foods, organic vegetable and fruits, natural textiles, vegetable dyes, herbal cosmetics,

handmade stationery, traditional ayurvedic medicines and less polluting fuels. Indian consumers may not always be buying out of environmental concerns, but health, which is a bigger motivating factor as far as purchases of safer food products are concerned. Health foods are supposed to be devoid of preservatives, chemicals and artificial colors. As far as consumption of fuel, electricity and water is concerned a major role is played by the cost factor. People generally conserve energy resources to save money than to ameliorate environmental problems and it is also true for the recycling activities undertaken by the households.

Governmental and non-governmental organizations have been making efforts to educate consumers about the environmental issues. For instance, The Bhagidari programme has been launched by the government of Delhi to create awareness about environmental issues among the citizens of Delhi under which it initiated campaigns like anti-littering and anti-plastic bag campaign, Eco-care programme (Environment and Sanitation Drive), Keep City Clean Drive, Anti Fire Crackers Campaign, Khelo Holi Naturally Campaign, Clean Yamuna Campaign, etc. Besides, ECOMARK scheme was launched by the government of India in 1991 for the labeling of eco-

friendly products, i.e., those products which during their cradle to grave cycle – manufacturing, use, packaging, distribution, consumption, disposal and recycling – do not degrade the environment.

Expectations from manufacturers:

1. **Educate Consumers:** Consumers are largely unaware of green buying, so educating them about green production can greatly help people know about green consumerism and the significance of their role in green movement. It's a good idea to expand your efforts beyond your own products to educate them about larger issues of pollution, climate changes, and other environmental problems. Cite examples like the success of Energy Star, a joint initiative launched by the EPA and the U.S. Department of Energy, that has helped individuals and businesses reduce their carbon footprint drastically. Only by letting people know about their social and environmental impact can you encourage them to alter their shopping choices.
2. **Build Better Products:** Most consumers believe that ethical products are cheaper in quality than their conventional counterparts. A survey has found that nearly 61

percent consumers are skeptical about the quality and performance of green products. In order to gain widespread acceptance, green manufacturers need to produce goods that are on par and even better than their conventional alternatives. As performance, quality, and durability still outweigh the product's ecological soundness, ethical businesses need to overcome quality perception issues by outperforming their traditional counterparts.

3. **Be Honest:** Verifying the veracity of the company's claims of being socially and environmentally friendly is no more difficult for consumers. However, it is strongly suggested that you remain honest about your environmental impact as well as inform your consumers about the initiatives you are taking to reduce your footprint. Asking consumers to be environmentally and socially responsible when you are making little or no efforts to improve your practices can only lead to a backlash. So, be mindful of what you are delivering and what you promise about your green initiative.

4. **Offer More:** It's easier for people to switch to ethical products when they know how their choices are making an impact both financially and environmentally. Allow consumers to track their contribution by providing them with information on how your products are being developed and how the profits are being returned to the society. Knowing about how they are contributing to the environment can make consumers feel more confident about their spending.

Conclusion:

Both consumers as well as manufacturers must take a charge to make India a Green India. Green consumerism has gained popularity in recent years. Majority consumers have started preferring organic stuff. Final consumers and industrial buyers have the ability to pressurize organizations to integrate the environment into their corporate culture and thus ensure all organizations minimize the detrimental environmental impact of their activities.

References:

1. **David, R.A.** 1989. *The Greening of Business*, Pitman, London.
2. **Saklani, Alok.** 1989. *Environment: Can You Afford to Ignore It?*, Indian Management, 23 (3):4-6.
3. **Sandeep Singh.** 2003. *Trade Preferences and Growth of Environmental Industry: Issues and Implications for India*. Working Paper, TERI.
4. **Tikoo, R.** 1998. *Centre Should Promote Eco-friendly Products*, www.financial express.com.