The Reality of Green Purchase in Most Polluted Cities in India

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Abstract

India is riding high on the development vehicle fuelled by its changing demographic structure. With rise in family income, contribution by female earning members, rise in nuclear families, consumers are bestowed with more disposable income and this disposable income drives then to upgrade their lifestyle. In order to upgrade their lifestyle they are buying more and more. This tendency may lead to over consumption which may disturb the balance of nature. The concept of sustainability which stresses upon the importance of leaving the same set of natural resources to our posterity becomes vital in such scenario. Green products be it LED bulbs, solar panels, hybrid vehicles, star rated equipments etc are the options to tackle the problem related with sustainability.

Keywords: Sustainability, Green marketing, Green purchase, Green products.

INTRODUCTION

Unfortunately Ten Indian Cities namely Delhi, Kanpur, Allahabad, Lucknow, Firozabad, Patna, Gwalior, Raipur, Ludhiana and Khanna are among the top twenty most polluted cities in the world as per World Health Organisation. For this study, we have chosen Delhi, Kanpur,
Allahabad, Lucknow, Firozabad as they are the top five cities when arranged in descending order of their population as per 2011 census. Through this study, we have tried to explore the ground condition of green purchases in these cities. The findings suggests that green products require more promotion as people are having abstract knowledge about the issue but lack in concrete knowledge pertaining to green products impedes them from buying green products. Both Government and industry should invest more on increasing concrete knowledge to boost the adoption of green products.

Green marketing products that are presumed to be environmentally safe. It incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process, sustainable packaging, as well as modifying advertising. Yet defining green marketing is not a simple task where several meanings intersect and contradict each other; an example of this will be the existence of varying social, environmental and retail definitions attached to this term. Other similar terms used are environmental marketing and ecological marketing.

Green, environmental and eco-marketing are part of the new marketing approaches which do not just refocus, adjust or enhance existing marketing thinking and practice, but seek to challenge those approaches and provide a substantially different perspective. In more detail green, environmental and eco-marketing belong to the group of approaches which seek to address the lack of fit between marketing as it is currently practiced and the ecological and social realities of the wider marketing environment.

The legal implications of marketing claims call for caution or overstated claims can lead to regulatory or civil challenges. In the United States,
the [Federal Trade Commission] provides some guidance on
environmental marketing claims. This Commission is expected to do an
overall review of this guidance, and the legal standards it contains, in
2011.

The popularity of such marketing approach and its effectiveness is hotly
debated. Supporters claim that environmental appeals are actually
growing in number—the Energy Star label, for example, now appears on
11,000 different companies' models in 38 product categories, from
washing machines and light bulbs to skyscrapers and homes. However,
despite the growth in the number of green products, green marketing is
on the decline as the primary sales pitch for products.

Shel Horowitz, a green marketer for over 30 years and primary author of
Guerrilla marketing Goes Green states that to market effectively, green
businesses need to market to three different audiences, "deep green," "lazy green," and "nongreen," and that each must be approached
differently. Each will have different trigger points that will move them
to buy, and for the nongreen audience, marketing effectively usually
requires emphasizing product superiority rather than care for the planet.

On the other hand, Roper’s Green Gauge shows that a high percentage
of consumers (42%) feel that environmental products don’t work as well
as conventional ones. This is an unfortunate legacy from the 1970s when
shower heads sputtered and natural detergents left clothes dingy. Given
the choice, all but the greenest of customers will reach for synthetic
detergents over the premium-priced, proverbial "Happy Planet" any day,
including Earth Day. New reports, however show a growing trend
towards green products.
Confusion

One challenge green marketers – old and new – are likely to face as green products and messages become more common is confusion in the marketplace. "Consumers do not really understand a lot about these issues, and there's a lot of confusion out there," says Jacquelyn Ottman (founder of J. Ottman Consulting and author of "Green Marketing: Opportunity for Innovation.")[17] Marketers sometimes take advantage of this confusion, and purposely make false or exaggerated "green" claims. Critics refer to this practice as "green washing".

Greenwashing

Corporations are increasingly recognizing the benefits of green marketing, although there is often a thin line between doing so for its own benefit and for social responsibility reasons. The term “greenwashing” refers to all industries that adopt outwardly green acts with an underlying purpose to increase profits. The primary objective of greenwashing is to provide consumers with the feeling that the organization is taking the necessary steps to responsibly manage its ecological footprint. In reality, the company may be doing very little that is environmentally beneficial.

The term greenwashing was first used by environmentalist Jay Westerveld when objecting to hotelier's practice of placing notices in hotel rooms which asked their guests to reuse towels to “save the environment”. Westerveld noted that there was little else to suggest that the hoteliers were interested in reducing their environmental impacts, and that their interest in washing fewer towels seemed to be motivated by a concern to save costs rather than the environment. Since then greenwashing has become a central feature of debates about marketing
communications and sustainability, with “awards” for greenwashing established and numerous campaigns, law and advices developed in an attempt to reduce or curb it.

**Benefit corporations**

In January 2012, Patagonia became the first brand to register for benefit corporation status. A benefit corporation is an alternative to its standard counterpart as it operates under the legal premise of

1) Creating a positive impact socially and environmentally in its materials,
2) Uphold corporate social responsibility in terms of considering its workers, its community, and the environment as well as challenge its current boundaries in those areas, and
3) Report its activity as a company as well as its achievements in social and environmental areas publicly using a non-partisan third party source.

**Statistics**

According to market researcher Mintel, about 12% of the U.S. population can be identified as True Greens, consumers who seek out and regularly buy so-called green products. Another 68% can be classified as Light Greens, consumers who buy green sometimes. "What chief marketing officers are always looking for is touch points with consumers, and this is just a big, big, big touch point that's not being served," says Mintel Research Director David Lockwood. "All the corporate executives that we talk to are extremely convinced that being able to make some sort of strong case about the environment is going to work down to their bottom line."
Reference


