Green Marketing: Reality or Greenwashing.

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ABSTRACT

Green marketing is also known as ecological marketing and environmental marketing. Green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe. Thus green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising. In the modern era of globalization, it has become a challenge to keep our natural environment safe. And this is the biggest need of the time. Environmental pollution is a buzz word in today’s business environment. Consumers are also aware of the environmental issues like, global warming and the impact of environmental pollution. Green marketing is a phenomenon which has developed particular important in the modern market and has emerged as an important concept in India and also in other developing and developed world, and is seen as an important strategy of facilitating sustainable development. In greenwashing a company promotes green-based environmental initiatives or images but actually operates in a way that is damaging to the environment or in an opposite manner to the goal of the announced initiatives. This can also include misleading customers about the environmental benefits of a product through misleading advertising. The general idea behind greenwashing is to create a benefit by appearing to be a green company. Even many energy companies, some of the world's biggest carbons emitters have attempted rebrand themselves as environmentally friendly. The tools used in greenwashing can include press releases about green projects or task forces put into place, energy reduction or pollution reduction efforts, and rebranding of consumer products and advertising materials. In actuality, the company or group may be operating in damaging ways or may simply be unwilling to make a meaningful commitment to green initiatives.

Key Words: - Eco-marketing, Green Product, Recyclable, Environmentally safe, Eco Friendly.

INTRODUCTION

There is growing interest among the consumers all over the world regarding the protection of the environment. Worldwide evidence indicates people are concerned about the environment and are changing their behavior. As a result of this, green marketing has emerged which speaks for the growing market for sustainable and socially responsible products and services. Although environmental issues influence all human activities, few academic disciplines have integrated this burning issue in there literature. This is especially true of marketing. As society becomes more concerned with the natural environment, business have begun to modify their behavior in an attempt to address society's “new” concerns, and this modification according to requirement of present world emerge the term “GREEN MARKETING”. The term “Green Marketing” first surfaced in the late 1980s as an extension to which the American Marketing Association referred to in 1975 as “Ecological Marketing”. Green or Environmental marketing consists all of all activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchange intended to satisfy human needs or wants occurs with minimal determinable impact on the natural environmental. The united Nations Environment Programme defines it is as a marketing which encompasses all communication operation undertaken to promote a product on the basis of its environmental properties or all its social qualities it is about selling products on an ethical platform.

Thus “green marketing” refers to holistic marketing concept wherein the production, marketing, consumption and disposal of products and services happen in a manner that is less detrimental to the environment with growing awareness about the implication of global warming, non-biodegradable social waste, harmful impact of pollutants etc. both marketers and consumers are becoming never before sensitive to the need for adopt green products and services. While this switching to “GREEN” may appears to be expensive in the short term, but it will defiantly prove to be indispensable and advantageous cost wise too in the long run. Many of business houses understood and accepted
the future of “Green Marketing” that is why this concept has continued to gain adherent, particularly in the light of growing global concern about climate change. This concern has led many companies to advertise their commitment to reduce their climate impact and started producing green product to show their responsibility towards the society and environment.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Polonsky (1994), defines green marketing 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.

Jain and Kaur (2006), studies depicts that all consumers are not always fervent and factual supporters of the protection of environment and certainly are not particularly influenced by the “green” marketing. However, they constitute a target group which can prove to be particularly profitable for the enterprises which will be activated in the sectors of production and disposal of friendly to the environment products.

Mishra (2010), Green marketing is a phenomenon which has developed particular important in the modern market. This concept has enabled for the re-marketing and packaging of existing products which already adhere to such guidelines. Additionally, the development of green marketing has opened the door of opportunity for companies to co-brand their products into separate line, lauding the green-friendliness of some while ignoring that of others. Such marketing techniques will be explained as a direct result of movement in the minds of the consumer market. As a result of these businesses have increased their rate of targeting consumers who are concerned about the environment. These same consumers through their concern are interested in integrating environmental issues into their purchasing decisions through their incorporation into the process and content of the marketing strategy for whatever product may be required.

Manju (2012), Green Marketing refers to a holistic marketing concept wherein the production, marketing, consumption and disposal of product and services happen In a manner that is less detrimental to the environment. Green Marketing has emerged as an important concept in India as in other parts of the developing and developed world, and is seen as an important strategy of facilitating sustainable development. As, Environmentalism has fast emerged as a worldwide phenomenon, business firms too have risen to the occasion and have started facing to environmental challenges by practicing green marketing strategies. Green consumerism also has played a catalytic role in ushering corporate environmentalism and making business firms green marketing oriented. But most of our green activities are hinged on a set of do’s and don’ts. There are three reasons why we must rethink the idea of green Marketing. First, after-life of these green products is always not very environmental –friendly Second, the impact of the products on environment and thirdly, the hardest of all, is the question whether they are really green or not.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following are the objectives of the study:-

1. To highlights the initiatives taken in India for green marketing.

2. To know that green marketing is reality or Greenwashing.

INICIATIVES TAKEN IN INDIA FOR GREEN MARKETING:

REVA ELECTRIC CAR: MAHINDRA & MAHINDRA LIMITED

Mahindra Reva is the first –in-line of next generation global electric vehicles. Rapid urbanization rising fuel costs Pollution & congestion, Eco-conscious Cost-conscious, Tech savvy, small is big concept, the desire to strike a balance between sustainability and functionality. All these factors motivated Mahindra & Mahindra limited to produce its first electric car Reva.

Consumer choice will increasingly be driven by how “clean” or green a vehicle is, from birth to use to disposal. "Clean" will be defined and broadly understood as a reflection of a clean footprint across the entire value chain from sourcing to manufacturing, to distribution, to product use and ultimately, disposal. The entire mobility chain will see the emergence of “cost-effectiveness” as a mantra for success. Large factories will be replaced by small, smart, flexible, low-cost manufacturing. Superior technology and enhanced features will increasingly become accessible to more and more consumers and "value-for-money" will become the chant by discerning consumers. Large change renewal energies will get rid of vicious circle of oil, making the purchase and use of such born green product cost effective.

GREEN BUILDING CONCEPT: INDIAN GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL

Indian Green building council, formed by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in the year 2001, is continuously striving towards wider adoption of eco-friendly / green building concepts in the Indian Industry. Some of us might have seen the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) – Green Business Center building in Hyderabad which is
one of the green buildings in India. The main features of green building are as follows:-

- Sustainable site development.
- Water savings.
- Energy efficiency.
- Materials selection.
- Indoor environmental quality.

Triggering off the Green Building movement in India is the first Platinum Green Building in India; CII-Sohrabji Godrej Green Business Centre in Hyderabad as per the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Rating system. This landmark achievement put India on the global map of green building movement, through support of all stakeholders from the construction industry.

**DELHI METRO: DELHI METRO RAIL CORPORATION (DMRC)**

Delhi Metro is a metro system serving Delhi, Gurgaon, Faridabad, Noida, and, Ghaziabad, in the National Capital Region of India. Delhi Metro is the world's thirteenth largest metro system in terms of length. Delhi Metro is India's first modern public transportation system, which has revolutionized travel by providing a fast, reliable, safe, and comfortable means of transport. According to a new study of Delhi Metro railway, the much talked about mode of transportation has not just made travelling easy and comfortable but also made significant environmental and social impact on the Capital. Conducted by the Central Road Research Institute (CRRI), the study reveals that the Metro railway has helped save 33,000 tons of fuel and prevented creation of over 2,275 tones of poisonous gases. Also, it has helped commuters in the city save 66 minutes every day on an average and reduced the daily vehicle demand. The reports revealed that the Delhi Metro's Phase-I environmental and social benefits will help recover the full cost of this phase by 2013. The completion of Phase-I of the Delhi Metro Project covering 65 km has resulted in reduction in road accidents, improvement in road traffic conditions as also the environment.

**POLYTHENE FREE HIMACHAL: HIMACHAL GOVERNMENT**

The ban on production, storage, use, sale and distribution of all types of polythene bags made of non-biodegradable materials was imposed on October 2, 2009. The government mobilised citizens, tourists and traders to switch over to jute, paper and cotton bags. It really worked fast as a series of public campaigns kept the pressure on polythene users to discard those carry bags. “Many states have followed the footsteps of Himachal Pradesh. It’s an example, perhaps in South Asia, when the state showed practical results of the ban, collection of waste polythene, recycling and its end-use in the development schemes, especially road construction, to save the environment from its ill-effects. The time has come when the Centre should take the call and ban polythene. Himachal Pradesh's polythene ban has finally won the coveted Prime Minister’s Award for Excellence in Public Administration, for the year 2009-10. The collection, recycling and end-use of waste polythene in road construction is going a long way in saving the environment of the hill state.

**GREEN FUEL ALTERNATIVES: DELHI GOVERNMENT**

In the country's pursuit of alternative sources of energy, Indian Oil is focusing on CNG (compressed natural gas), Auto gas (LPG), ethanol blended petrol, bio-diesel, and Hydrogen energy. For instance Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) operates the world's largest fleet of CNG-powered buses. Delhi government has also launched CNG operated Auto Rickshaws and Eco-friendly Rickshaws to promote Eco-friendly transportation in the city.

**GREEN MACHINES: WIPROTECHNOLOGIES LIMITED**

Wipro Infotech was India’s first company to launch environment friendly computer peripherals. For the Indian market, Wipro has launched a new range of desktops and laptops called Wipro Greenware. These products are RoHS (Restriction of Hazardous Substances) compliant thus reducing e-waste in the environment.

**WIND POWER: SUZLON ENERGY LIMITED**

Suzlon Energy Limited is the world’s fourth largest wind-turbine maker and is among the greenest and best companies in India. Tulsi and Tanti, the visionary behind Suzlon, convinced the world that wind is the energy of the future and built his factory in Pondicherry to run entirely on wind power. Suzlon’s corporate building is the most energy-efficient building ever built in India.

**COTTON TAGGING AND PAPER BAGS: ADDIDAS, REEBOK, PEPE ETC.**

As we are talking about green marketing and the initiatives taken for it we can see the changes in promotional activities of big brands like Adidas, Reebok, lotto, Nike, and many more who using paper bags, recyclable paper bags or eco friendly bags for packing their products. One more big change is noticed now a day’s Tags on products made of plastic paper of or synthetics are being replaced by cotton tags. These small steps really have big impact on environment and mind of green customers as well.
SOLAR-POWERED ATM: INDUSIND BANK

Green banking has been catching up as among the top Indian green initiatives ever since IndusInd opened the country’s first solar-powered ATM and pioneered an eco-savvy change in the Indian banking sector.

E- WASTE MANAGEMT: CENTRAL POLLUTION BOARD OF INDIA

The ministry of Environment & Forest (MoEF) of the Government of India is responsible for environmental legislation and its control. The “Central Pollution Control Board” (CPCB), an autonomous body under the MoEF, plays an important role in drafting guidelines and advising the MoEF. Historically, in 2001 the corporation with MoEF, the German technology Corporation (GTZ) began work on hazardous waste management in India. Subsequently Swiss Federal laboratories for material testing and research started to implement its global programme ‘knowledge partnership in e-waste recycling’. The rules have been notified with primary objective to channelize the E-waste generated in the country for environmentally sound recycling which is largely controlled by the unorganized sector who are adopting crude practices that results into higher pollution and less recovery, thereby causing wastages of precious resources and damage to environment. The E-waste Rules place main responsibility of e-waste management on the producers of the electrical and electronic equipment by introducing the concept of “Extended Producer Responsibility”(EPR).

SOLAR ENRGY: GUJARAT POWER CORPORATION LIMITED

Gujarat Power Corporation Limited (GPCL) is the Nodal Agency for the development of “Solar Park” in Gujarat. Govt. of Gujarat is admired for taking bold and proactive initiative in the Projects of Renewable energy to harness Clean and Green Energy. GPCL commissioned, Asia’s largest “Gujarat Solar Park” to mitigate impact of Climate Change and to protect environment for our future generation, making Solar Sector vibrant and viable not only in our Nation but also across the Globe.

PAPERLESS OFFICES: INDIAN RAILWAY CATERING AND TOURISM CORPORATION (IRCTC)

A paperless office is a work environment in which the use of paper is eliminated or greatly reduced. This is done by converting documents and other papers into digital form. Proponents claim that “going paperless” can save money, boost productivity, save space, make documentation and information sharing easier, keep personal information more secure, and help the environment. The concept can also be extended to communications outside the office. Recently IRCTC has allowed its customers to carry PNR no. of their E-Tickets on their laptop and mobiles. Customers do not need to carry the printed version of their ticket anymore. Easy recharge, online competitive examinations are steps towards paperless offices.

GREEN TECHNOLOGIES: ITC LIMITED

ITC strengthened their commitment to green technologies by introducing ‘ozone-treated elemental chlorine free’ bleaching technology for the first time in India. The result is an entire new range of top green products and solution: the environmentally friendly multi-purpose paper that is less polluting than its traditional counterpart.

NO WORKING ON SATURDAY AND MINIMUM USE OF LIGHT DURING THE DAY TIME: TATA METALIKS (TML)

Every day is environmental day at TML, one of the top green firms in India. A practical example that made everyone sit up and take notice is the company’s policy to discourage working on Saturday at the corporate office. Lights are also switched off during the day time with the entire office depending on sunlight.

CLEAN DEVELOPMENT MECHANISM PROJECTS AND WIND POWER PROJECT: TAMIL NADU NEWSPRINT AND PAPERS LIMITED (TNPL)

Adjudged the best performer in the year 2009-2010 green business survey, TNPL was awarded the green business leadership award in the pulp and paper sector. The initiatives undertaken by this top green firm in India includes two clean development projects and a wind farm project that helped generate 2.3,3023 carbon emission reductions earning Rs. 17.40 Crore.

GO GREEN STEPS: HCL TECHNOLOGIES

This major IT Company is considered as the icon of Indian green initiatives, thanks to “go green” steps taken in solving the problem of toxics and e-waste in the electronics industry. HCL is committed to phasing out the hazardous vinyl plastic and brominated flame retardants from its products and has called for a restriction on hazardous substances (RoHS) legislation in India.

GREEN CREMATORIUMS: OIL AND NATURAL GAS COMPANY (ONGC)

India’s largest oil producer, ONGC, is all set to lead the list of top 10 green companies with energy efficient, green crematoriums that will soon replace the traditional wooden pyre across the country. ONGCS Mokshada green cremation initiative will
save 60-70% of wood and a fourth of the burning time per cremation.

**USE MOBILE, SAVE PAPER CAMPAIGN: IDEA CELLULAR**

One of the best Indian companies, IDEA, paints India green with its national ‘use mobile, save paper’ campaign. The company had organized green pledge campaign at Indian cities where thousands came forward and pledged to save paper and trees. IDEA has also set up bus shelters with potted plants and tendril climbers to convey the green message.

**CONTINUOUS INNOVATION IN GREEN PRODUCTS: HERO HONDA MOTORS**

Hero Honda is one of the largest two-wheeler manufacturers in India and an equally responsible top green firm in India. The company’s philosophy of continuous innovation in green products and solutions has played a key role in striking the right balance between business, mankind and nature.

**GREEN MARKETING OR GREENWASHING**

Greenwashing describes the fraud made by companies when they pretend they help the environment by using green marketing to increase their profit. During the last few months we have done research on greenwashing because it was a new concept for us. We found it very interesting because companies around the world spend money and time to make us think that their policies or products are environmentally friendly when sometimes they are not.

**THE SEVEN SINS IN GREENWASHING:**

1. Sin of the Hidden Trade-off, committed by suggesting a product is "green" based on an unreasonably narrow set of attributes without attention to other important environmental issues.

2. Sin of No Proof, committed by an environmental claim that cannot be substantiated by easily accessible supporting information or by a reliable third-party certification.

3. Sin of Vagueness, committed by every claim that is so poorly defined or broad that its real meaning is likely to be misunderstood by the consumer.

4. Sin of Worshipping False Labels is committed when a claim, communicated either through words or images, gives the impression of a third-party endorsement where no such endorsement exists.

5. Sin of Irrelevance, committed by making an environmental claim that may be truthful but which is unimportant or unhelpful for consumers seeking environmentally preferable products.

6. Sin of Lesser of Two Evils, committed by claims that may be true within the product category, but that risk distracting consumer from the greater environmental impacts of the category as a whole.

7. Sin of Fibbing, the least frequent Sin, is committed by making environmental claims that are simply false.

**SOME EXAMPLES OF GREENWASHING:**

**McDONALD'S**

In 2009, European McDonald's changed the colour of their logos from yellow and red to yellow and green; a spokesman for the company explained that the change was to show their responsibility for the preservation of natural resources.

**COMCAST CORPORATION**

An article in Wired magazine alleges that slogans are used to suggest environmentally benign business activity: the Comcast Ecobill has the slogan of "Paper LESS is MORE" but Comcast uses large amounts of paper for direct marketing. The Airbus A380 airliner is described as "A better environment inside and out" even though air travel has a high negative environment cost.

**SUZUKI, SEAT, TOYOTA AND LEXUS**

The Advertising Standards Authority in the UK upheld several complaints against major car manufacturers including Suzuki, SEAT, Toyota and Lexus who made erroneous claims about their vehicles.

**KIMBERLY CLARK CORPORATION**

Kimberly Clark's claim of "Pure and Natural" diapers in green packaging. The product uses organic cotton on the outside but keeps the same petrochemical gel on the inside. Pampers also claims that "Dry Max" diapers reduce landfill waste by reducing the amount of paper fluff in the diaper, which really is a way for Pampers to save money.

**WALMART**

Over the past years WALMART has proclaimed to "go green" with a sustainability campaign. However, according to the Institute for Local Reliance (ILRS), “Walmart’s sustainability campaign has done more to improve the company’s image than the environment.” WALMART still only generates 2 percent of U.S. electricity from wind and solar resources.
BP GLOBAL

BP Global, have spend millions o dollars in claiming themselves as a green technology leader when in facts, they are responsible for one of the most destructive oil spills in the history of the world.

IBM LIMITED

IBM runs advertisements which claim that replacing computers and other devices often is a ‘go green’ practice. Unfortunately these claims are deceiving as discarded computers and other devices have become a serious issue to deal with when it comes to waste management.

SARA LEE CORPORATION

Sara lee ran an advertisement for one of their bread products claiming that their new “eco grain” is sustainable than the normally used organic grain. An organic industry audit agency called them out and asked them to take back their words as the claim was completely unjustified.

SOUTHERN COMPANY

Southern company is a coal company based in southeastern United States. It ran advertisements in 2010 promoting ‘clean coal’. Unfortunately, the concept of ‘clean coal’ is false. Also southern company is known for high carbon dioxide emissions which harm the environment and is one of the reasons of global warming.

SHELL GLOBAL

Shell ran an advertising campaign ‘let’s Go’ through which they aimed to reposition themselves as an energy company instead of an oil company. These ads implied Shell’s investment in green technology when in fact; their contribution towards a better environment has been devastating. They continue to drill oil at an increasing pace, which is reducing environmental resources every day across the planet.

LEXUS CORPORATION

Lexus the car company claimed that its new hybrid cars have the lowest carbon dioxide emissions in their class. Although the step of hybrid cars is in the right direction, but Lexus hybrid cars have the worst fuel economy compared to other hybrid cars and even non-hybrids.

CONCLUSION

The discussions made earlier leads to conclude that some Indian companies and government agencies like Mahindra & Mahindra limited, Addidas India, Reebok India, McDonald, Wipro technologies limited, HCL, DMRC, Indian Green Building Council, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, Himachal Pradesh Government, Delhi Government, Central Pollution Control Board, Gujarat Power Corporation Limited and Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation, IndusInd bank, Suzlon energy limited, ITC limited, Tata Metaliks, TNPL, ONGC, Idea cellular and Hero Honda Motors etc. are very much aware about green marketing and environmental protection. They also do have a long chain of green products.

But its the fact that majority of Indian companies and government agencies are not concerned about the Green marketing and environmental protection. In greenwashing a company promotes green-based environmental initiatives or images but actually operates in a way that is damaging to the environment or in an opposite manner to the goal of the announced initiatives. This can also include misleading customers about the environmental benefits of a product through misleading advertising. The general idea behind greenwashing is to create a benefit by appearing to be a green company. Even many energy companies, some of the world’s biggest carbons emitters have attempted rebrand themselves as environmentally friendly. McDonalds, Comcast, Suzuki, Seat, Toyota, Kimberly Clark, Walmart, BP Global, IBM, Sara Lee, Southern Company, Shell Global and Lexus corporations etc. are the names of some international companies who are just pretending of green marketing. Now from the discussions made earlier we can conclude that if a company jumps into the “go green” do not be flattered by their claims, verify them and check if their claims are realistic or just gas. Their marketing campaigns could just turn out to be an attempt at ‘Greenwashing’. Now this is the right time to select “Green Marketing” globally. It will come with drastic change in the world of business if all nations will make strict roles. Green marketing is essential to save world from pollution. The research paper concludes that business firms need to change their mind set from traditional marketing to green strategies with a huge investment in technology, R and D and through green marketing elements such as eco-design of product, eco-labeling, eco-packing, green logo in order to survive in the green competitive world and to have a positive impact on the environment. Thus we can say that Green marketing is still in its infancy and a lot of research is to be done on green marketing to fully explore its potential. Marketers also have the responsibility to make the consumers understand the need and benefits of green products as compared to non-green ones. In green marketing, consumers are willing to pay more to maintain a cleaner and greener environment. Finally, consumers, industrial buyers and suppliers need to pressurize the minimizing of the negative effects on the environment. Green marketing assumes even more importance and relevance in developing countries like India.
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