

**PERSPECTIVE VIABILITY AND DIMENSIONS OF
SUSTAINABLE GREEN MARKETING –
A NEW OUTLOOK**

THIYAGARAJ.V.*

ABSTRACT

According to Ehrenfeld (2008), sustainability is the possibility of the human and other life will flourish on the earth forever". Sustainable development as per the "Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (United Nations, 1987)" can be viewed as a pattern of resource use that aims to meet human needs while preserving the environment so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but in the indefinite future. Sustainable development is the form of development which aims at sustainable consumption and sustainable economic growth and tries to protect the environment. The green marketing has evolved over a period of time. The industries who claim that they are environment friendly and have concern for society are known as green industries, their marketing philosophy is termed as green marketing and their environment friendly products are called as green products. It is also believed by the companies that if they will offer green products it will give them a competitive advantage over their competitors as people these days have a positive attitude for green products. This research is an attempt by the authors to understand the attitude of Industries in India towards green marketing.

Keywords: Green Philosophy, Green Marketing, Sustainability, Societal Marketing, Sustainable Development

* PG & Research Dept. Of Commerce, Chikkanna Government College, Tiruppur, India.

Introduction

Green marketing 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.

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". 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.

Review of Literature

Donaldson (2005) in his study realized in the Great Britain initially concluded that in general the ecological attitude of consumers changed positively. This study reported the strong faith of consumers in the known commercial brands and in the feeble behavior referring to the "green" claims, which was the main cause behind the consuming failure to interpret their concerns beyond the environment in their behavior. Alsmadi (2007) investigating the environmental behavior of Jordanian consumers reveals a high level of environmental conscience. Unfortunately however this positive tendency and preference in the "green" products does not appear to have any effect on the final decision, obviously because these consumers have a stronger faith in the traditional products and a small confidence in the green statements. The above obstacles are further strengthened by the lack of environmental conscience by a lot of enterprises and the existence of a large scale of prices for the same product, many of which included an impetuous estimate of environmental responsibility. Brahma, M. & Dande, R. (2008), The Economic Times, Mumbai, had an article which stated that,

Green Ventures India is a subsidiary of New York based asset management firm Green Ventures International. The latter recently announced a \$300 million India focused fund aimed at renewable energy products and supporting trading in carbon credits.

1.0 Basic needs of Green Marketing

- Fix realistic prices
- Avoid unnecessary packaging
- Practice greener distribution
- Setting Corporate Green Objectives
- Practice Social Responsibility
- Comply with the legislation
- Attentive to competitive initiatives
- Concentrate product development on sustainability
- Promote green credentials efficiently
- Practice regular customers to be green
- Exhibit accurate environmental information
- Research products with green characteristics

1.2 Research Objective

The study has been carried out keeping in mind the following primary objectives is to study the perception of Indian Industries towards green marketing for Sustainable Development.

1.3 Phases of Green Marketing

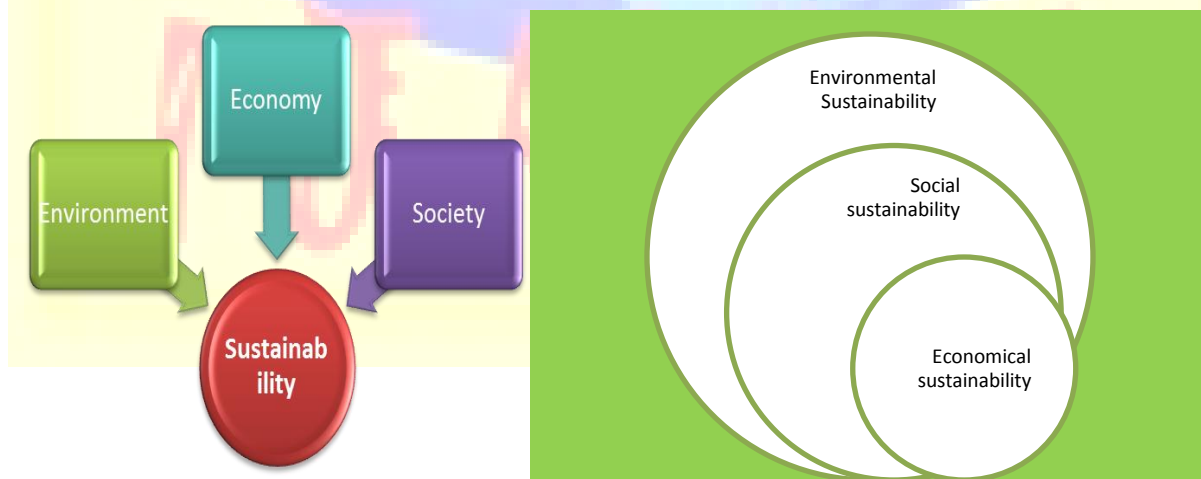
The green marketing has evolved over a period of time. According to Peattie (2001), the evolution of green marketing has three phases. The first phase was termed as “Ecological” green marketing, and during this period all marketing activities were concerned to solve environmental problems with suitable 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. While the shift to "green" may appear to be expensive in the short term, it will definitely prove to be indispensable and advantageous, cost-wise too, in the long run.

Sustainable Development

The concept has included notions of weak sustainability, strong sustainability and deep ecology. Different conceptions also reveal a strong tension between egocentrism and anthropocentrism. Many definitions and images (Visualizing Sustainability) of sustainable development coexist. Broadly defined, the sustainable development mantra enjoins current generations to take a systems approach to growth and development and to manage natural, produced, and social capital for the welfare of their own and future generations. Below given figure is a representation of sustainability showing how both economy and society are constrained by environmental limits (Ott, K.2003).

Figure1 & 2. Illustrating Sustainability and environmental limits



Sustainability is constituted on three dimensions:

Sustainability constitutes the following, the environment, the economy, and the society. Hence the field of sustainable development can be conceptually broken into three constituent parts: environmental sustainability, economic sustainability and socio-political sustainability. Due to challenges of global warming, nations and people these days have all time high concern for environmental protection and a new format of business has emerged as Green Business.

Sustainable development is a pattern of resource use that aims to meet human needs while preserving the environment so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but also for future generations. The term was used by the Brundtland Commission which coined what has become the most often-quoted definition of sustainable development as development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” According to Hasna Vancock, (2007) sustainability is a process which tells of a development of all aspects of human life affecting sustenance. It means resolving the conflict between the various competing goals, and involves the simultaneous pursuit of economic prosperity, environmental quality and social equity famously known as three dimensions of Sustainability. 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.

Sustainable development is a buzzword found in much environmental and some economics literature these days. Certainly the idea of sustainable development has become increasingly popular in the contemporary world. “[The] word sustainable has been used in too many situations today, and ecological sustainability is one of those terms that confuse a lot of people. We hear about sustainable development, sustainable growth, sustainable economies, sustainable societies, and sustainable agriculture. Everything is sustainable (Temple, 1992, Aggarwal , et. al., 2010)

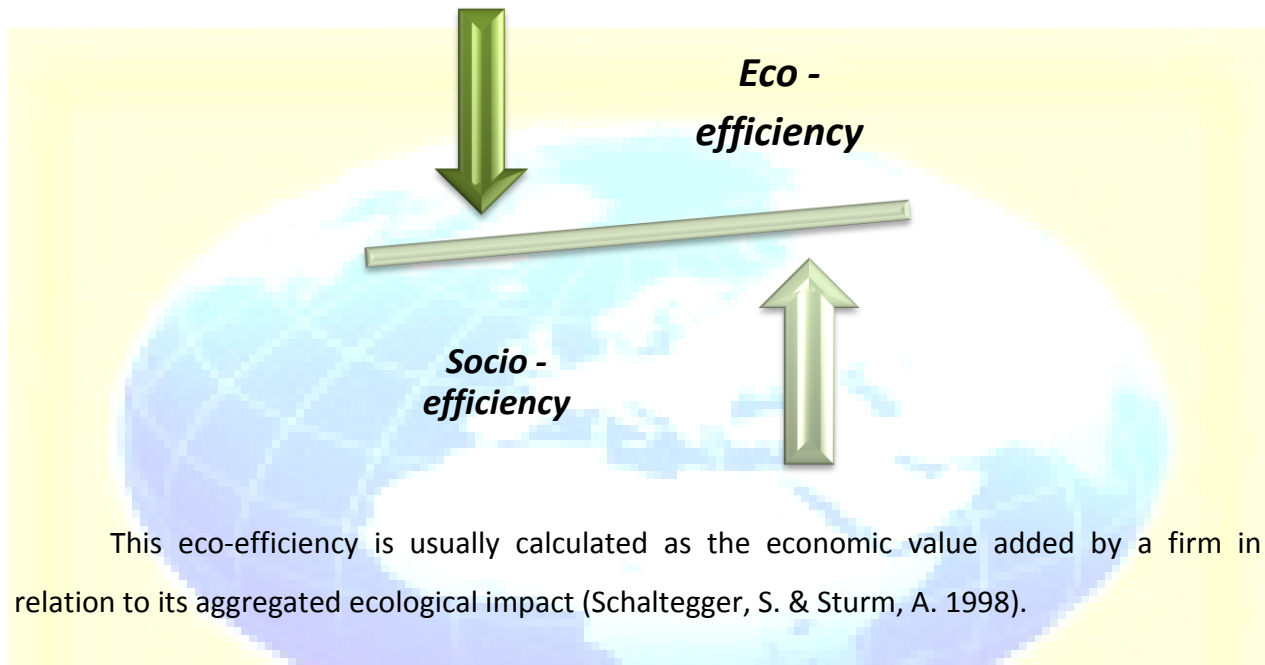
Ecofriendly concept

Eco - efficiency& Socio- Efficiency

Definition

It can be defined as *“Eco-efficiency is achieved by the delivery of competitively-priced goods and services that satisfy human needs and bring quality of life, while progressively reducing ecological impacts and resource intensity throughout the life-cycle to a level at least in line with the earth’s carrying capacity.”* (DeSimone and Popoff, 1997).

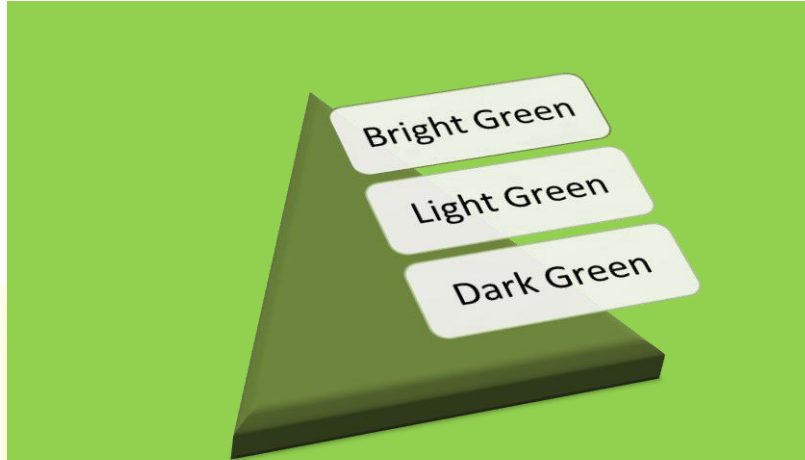
Figure .3 Explaining Balance between Eco – efficiency & Socio - Efficiency



This eco-efficiency is usually calculated as the economic value added by a firm in relation to its aggregated ecological impact (Schaltegger, S. & Sturm, A. 1998).

Similar to the eco-efficiency concept but so far less explored is the second criterion for corporate sustainability. Socio-efficiency describes the relation between a firm’s value added and its social impact. Both eco-efficiency and socio-efficiency are concerned primarily with increasing economic sustainability. Sustainable development has continued to evolve as that of protecting the world’s resources while its true agenda is to control the world’s resources. Realizing this importance, these days one of the key business strategies ensuring sustainable development has taken the shape of Green Marketing. Green marketing concept emerges from societal marketing (Kotler, 1999). Green marketing is an attempt to characterize a product as being environmental friendly (eco-friendly).

Dark, Light & Bright Green Environmentalism



The term **“bright green”**, first coined in 2003 by writer Alex Steffen, refers to the fast-growing new wing of environmentalism, distinct from traditional forms. Bright green environmentalism aims to provide prosperity in an ecologically sustainable way through the use of new technologies and improved design. Alex describes contemporary environmentalists as being split into three groups, “dark”, “light”, and “bright” greens.

“Light greens” see protecting the environment first and foremost as a personal responsibility. They fall in on the transformational activist end of the spectrum, but light greens do not emphasize environmentalism as a distinct political ideology, or even seek fundamental political reform. Instead they often focus on environmentalism as a lifestyle choice.

In contrast, **“dark greens”** believe that environmental problems are an inherent part of industrialized capitalism, and seek radical political change. The dark green brand of environmentalism is associated with ideas of deep ecology, post-materialism, holism, the Gaia hypothesis of James Lovelock and the work of Fritjof Capra as well as support for a reduction in human numbers and/or a relinquishment of technology to reduce humanity’s impact on the biosphere. Dark greens believe that dominant political ideologies (sometimes referred to as industrialism) are corrupt and inevitably lead to consumerism, alienation from nature and resource depletion. Dark greens claim that this is caused by the emphasis on economic growth that exists within all existing ideologies, a tendency referred to as “growth mania”.

Based on these concepts of Sustainable Development and its importance in growth, many of the Nations have adopted “Green Marketing” as integral part of their business strategies. They have realized the fact that “Green marketing” isn’t merely a catch phrase; it’s a marketing strategy that can help you get more customers and make more money leading to sustainable growth. It is only since 1990’s that the researchers have started academically analyzing consumers and industry attitude towards green marketing. This empirical study examines the concept of green marketing and its interface with industries for sustainable development.

By practicing green philosophy companies can gain a competitive advantage. Their green products will be preferred by the consumers over the non-green and with green image they can establish the sustainable distinctive advantage. Also to compete in International market, Indian companies need to manufacture environmental friendly products (Green Products) in order to compete and increase their market share in global markets. There should be long term vision for the company to survive in future. Its vision should be green inward and outward. It has to be integral part of the strategic context of business for attaining sustainable growth and development.

Recommendations for Further Research

An immense scope of further research lies vast on green marketing in emerging economies like India, as people in these nations are highly aware of green and have positive attitude to go for green. There is not much research done on green philosophy in developing nations like India and many types of researches can be performed in the context of green; such as:

- ❖ Research can be done on Indian Power Sector with respect to **GREEN POWER**.
- ❖ Research should be done on Indian Tourism Industry with respect to **GREEN TOURISM**.
- ❖ Research can be undertaken in financial sector with **GREEN INVESTMENT** versus Non Green.

- ❖ A deep study on rural Indian Consumers can be performed to know their **awareness**, concern and **attitude towards green marketing**.
- ❖ **Intensive research** can be done on Indian Automobile Industry with respect to green marketing issues.
- ❖ Research can be done on Indian Housing Sector with reference to **GREEN HOUSES or GREEN BUILDINGS**.
- ❖ Green products must **be made available in Local Markets**.

REFERENCES

- Aggrawal, Artee, Chaudhary, Richa and Dr.Gopal (2010), "Green Marketing in India – Way Ahead to Sustainability", SIES National Research Marketing Conference, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp.23-29.
- Alsmadi, S. (2007), —Green Marketing and the Concern over the Environment: Measuring Environmental Consciousness of Jordanian Consumers||, Journal of Promotion Management, Vol. 13(3–4), 2007.
- Brahma, M. & Dande, R. (2008), The Economic Times, Mumbai.
- Clarke, Geri (2004). Understanding Green Consumer Behavior. Journal of Consumer Behavior, Vol. 4, pp. 73 – 79.
- Coddington, Walter (1990). How to Green Up your Marketing Mix. Advertising Age, Vol. No. 61 (September 3), pp. 30.
- Crosby, Lawrence A, James D. Gill and James R. Taylor (1981). Consumer / Voter Behavior in the Passage of the Michigan Container Law, Journal of Marketing, Vol. No. 45 (Spring), pp. 19 – 32.
- DeSimone, Livio D and Frank Popoff with the World Business Council for Sustainable development (1997). Eco-Efficiency: The Business Link to Sustainable Development, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Donaldson, R. H. (2005), —Green brands||, NZ Marketing Magazine, 24(8), 14– 17.
- Ehrenfeld, John R. Sustainability by Design (2008), (<http://baudson.cute-ice.de/serendipity/index.php?/archives/27-Sustainability-by-Design-John-R.-Ehrenfeld,-2008.html>)
- Hasna, A. M. (2007). "Dimensions of sustainability". Journal of Engineering for Sustainable Development: Energy, Environment, and Health 2 (1): 47–57.

Kotler, P (1999). Marketing Management: The Millennium Edition, New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India.

Ott, K. (2003). "The Case for Strong Sustainability." In: Ott, K. & P. Thapa (eds.) (2003). Greifswald's Environmental Ethics. Greifswald: SteinbeckerVerlag Ulrich Rose.

Oyewole, P. (2001). Social Costs of Environmental Justice Associated with the Practice of Green Marketing. Journal of Business Ethics, 29(3), Feb, pp. 239-252.

Prothero, A. (1998). Green Marketing: The 'Fad' That Won't Slip Slide Away. Journal of Marketing Management, 14(6), July, pp. 507-513.

Prothero, A. & Fitchett, J.A. (2000). Greening Capitalism: Opportunities for Green Community. Journal of Macromarketing, 20(1), pp. 46-56.

Schaltegger, S. & Sturm, A. 1998. Eco-Efficiency by Eco-Controlling. Zürich: vdf.

United Nations. 1987. "Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development." General Assembly Resolution 42/187, 11 December 1987.

World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Future Leaders Team Business Role Workstream- Dialogue on Sustainable Consumption in India, 2008, (Consumer attitudes in emerging markets: Focus on India).

World Commission on Environment and Development (1987). Our Common Future, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Web sites:

www.greenmarketing.net/strategic.html

www.greenpeace.org/international