

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE & MANAGEMENT

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**GREEN MARKETING MIX AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The development that is going on in today's world, all the marketing strategies that are being followed by the top most companies, all finances which are being used in the research and development of the products so as to beat the competition will only be sustainable if the prime aim is futuristic and can be put to use by the coming generation. Nowadays, companies are trying to make everything sustainable from the very base level to the top management level. Companies are now struggling to grow and beat the competition on the basis of green or environmentally friendly products. Moreover, people are getting more attracted towards those products or brands which are following green marketing strategies as it assures them that they are going for something which is natural and favourable to environment with no chemical added, and therefore, they are ready to pay more for green products. Many top companies are grasping sustainability and green marketing like McDonalds, Nike, GE and many more. However, green marketing have not been completely successful. It may face problems as consumers may perceive that the product is of inferior quality as a result of being green or they may also feel that the product is not really that green to begin with. Successful green products have to overcome these hazards to persuade customers that they are working in their own and societies' long-run interest simultaneously.*

**KEYWORDS**

green marketing mix, marketing strategies, sustainable development.

**INTRODUCTION**

rowing awareness about the environmental issues has led the market to produce more of environment friendly products and services. Today's generation is now more concerned for sustainable development rather than self development. Green marketing has become the primary objective of most manufacturers, retailers and brands. They manufacture those products which are environmentally preferable to others. The objective of sustainable development has created the jargon like "carbon footprint" and "offsetting". In India, environmentalists have started campaigning against industries causing pollution. For example, in Kerala, local community in Plachimada Village, have voiced against Coca-Cola as it was affecting the environment and resulting into the shortage of water in the vicinity of the plant. However, it is not always desirable to go for green production and marketing without government intervention as it is more easy and cheaper to produce conventional products than producing green products for the marketers. Thus, to resolve the sustainability issues, government has enacted many laws and these laws hit certain industries very badly. For example, steel companies have had to invest billions of dollars in pollution-control equipment and environmentally friendly fuel. Soap industries have also increased its product's biodegradability. In Delhi, it is now mandatory for the public transportation vehicle like buses and autorikshaws to use only Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) as fuel instead of diesel and petrol. Moreover, there is a recent ban over the vehicles which are ten years older on Delhi roads because of the heavy pollution cause by the engines.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH**

- To understand the concept of environment marketing mix.
- To know about sustainable development.
- To recognise about consumer perception for green products and the impact of using green products on their life and environment both.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research paper is based on secondary data and the information has been collected through internet, newspaper and magazines.

**ENVIRONMENTAL MARKETING MIX**

Marketing mix is the combination of four Ps: product, place, promotion and price. Marketing mix construct a base for sustainable marketing mix. Manufacturers, retailers and marketers have to build innovative and qualitative strategies to adhere well with sustainability principles throughout the process of marketing mix. The purpose of sustainable marketing mix is to increase the brand identification, provide credibility and maintain honesty, trust and transparency with all its stakeholders besides the basic objectives marketing mix such as high sales level, creating brand value, beating competition, earn profitability and high market share. Environment marketing mix which is also known as green marketing mix has become so crucial that organisations have to manage their marketing mix strategies in a way to generate sustainable development as people are increasingly aware of climatic changes.

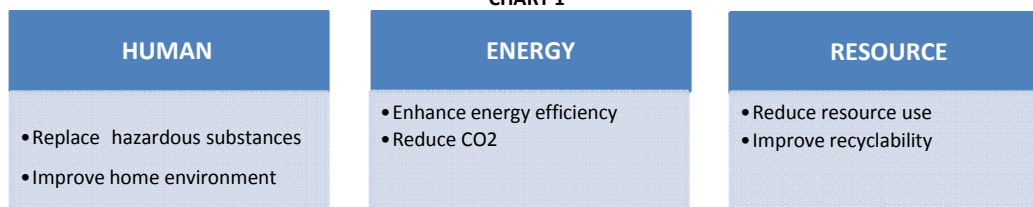
**GREEN PRODUCT STRATEGY**

It is one of the marketing strategies where the marketers decide about the product ingredients and its packaging. The manufacturers generally produce those products which increase the sales level and earn profit, but they should not deviate from the fact that it should be sustainable too. There are many environmental issues which have their impact on the manufacturing of goods like impact of using raw materials and ingredients for the manufacturing of goods on the environment, objective of achieving minimum level of environment friendly packaging and supplier's practices. Thus proper attention has to be there to assure that the products are made up of all natural and organic materials which are sourced from fair trade suppliers using lean manufacturing and distribution methods which help them to achieve the objective to minimise the company's carbon footprint.

For example, LG electronics has set a strategy to produce goods that reduce the impact of environmental issues throughout its product life cycle. Its strategy is classified into three with green features:



CHART 1



**HUMAN:** LG electronics has been working for replacing hazardous substances such as PVS and BFRs and phasing out the use of Phthalates, Antimony trioxide and Beryllium in product components. They add anti-bacterial features to its products such as washing machines, air-conditioners and vacuum cleaners and they are also into the process of reducing noise vibration produced by the products cleaners to improve home environment for its customers.

**ENERGY:** LG electronics completely acquiesce with international energy regulations and also in the process of reducing greenhouse gas emission during manufacturing period.

**RESOURCE:** For proper utilisation of resources LG Electronics has manufactured slim designed products. It consider environmental issues like product decomposition and recyclability during the manufacturing time and for this it uses evaluation and support tools as recycling check list.

**PACKAGING:** In 2012, LG Electronics has introduced green packaging design for its products includes TVs, Refrigerators, Mobile Phones, A/C, PC, MNT, Range, and Vacuum cleaner. It uses pulp consisting of at least 50% of recycled paper for its packaging boxes and assess according to its 22 checklist.

Walmart is another example of green packaging initiative where it has committed to eliminate 20 million metric tons of green house gas emissions from its global supply chain by 2015 and for this it has planned to lessen its packaging globally by 5% versus its 2008 baseline. There are many more examples where Walmart has proved that now it is vouching for green packaging. Some of them are:

- Apple iPods' packaging has been changed to 100% renewable, recyclable, and more sustainable materials.
- Walmart has reduced the packaging size of its Kid Connection line of toys and claimed to have saved over \$2.4 million in freight costs.
- All of Walmart's cut fruit and forty-ounce vegetable trays and some of the nine-ounce trays are packaged with Nature Works PLA, a biodegradable polymer. This has resulted in saving about eight hundred thousand gallons of gasoline and avoided more than eleven million pounds of GHG emissions in 2005.

### GREEN PLACE STRATEGY

Under this strategy, marketers' main objective is to deliver the products and services to its target destination in time. However, some products like food products need to reach shortly after its production to retain its freshness. Thus, here the main focus is on "delivery time". And to achieve this objective, they most of the time apply some quick method of distribution that may affect the environment adversely. On the other side, environment friendly distribution method like canals may hamper the speed of delivery of goods and ultimately the quality of goods also. Method that can satisfy both "speed" and "environmentally friendliness" may results into high distribution cost as some are still under development for example electric vehicles. But as now the customers are more aware towards environment protection, they won't feel hesitate in paying little higher for the product which is environmentally favourable. Government policies also have its major role in elevating "environment friendly distribution" at the top of company's priority list. In fact, contravention of any of its policies may lead them to pay fines, sanctions and negative publicity.

The other way to go for sustainability is "sustainable storage". For example, Walmart uses more alternative fuels in its trucks and reduces packaging to build more energy-efficient stores. Moreover marketers should create demand for their products and services domestically rather than globally. This reduces carbon emissions from transporting goods over long distances. Consumers are also increasingly concerned about the sustainable development. According to the 2011 Nielson global online consumer survey, belief in the positive impact of local products is highest in North America, where 65% of consumers reported that local goods have positive impact on the environment.

For example, Whole Foods has set up "buy local strategy" where it has permanently committed to buy fruits and vegetables from local producers only and they also ensures whether they are meeting the high quality standards or not.

### GREEN PRICE STRATEGY

Pricing is the most imperative tool of marketing mix as it is the only tool that generates revenue for the business. The other three Ps (product, place, and promotion) remains as variable cost for the organisation. Price reflects the demand and supply of the products in the market and thus it is difficult to set a relevant price that could meet the demand-supply condition. Price must be something that could at least cover up three Ps' cost, otherwise the organisation will reach up on its shut-down point. Now setting price for environmental friendly products is an arduous job. Raw materials which are required for green products are generally expensive and buying these raw materials for the production of green products increases the cost and ultimately the price of the product. Now marketers need to earn some profit too. Thus ultimately the burden of high payment passes on to the customers. This high price compels the customers to buy conventional products than green products. People are concerned about sustainable development and those who have the capacity to pay, buy and believe in the quality of green products too. However, there are many who are distressed about the sustainability but cannot afford to buy green products. For example, organic food grown with natural fertilisers is more expensive than those which are not grown with natural fertilisers. This results in the price gap between conventional products and green products which is also known as "green pricing gap". This implies to transportation cost also as using lower polluting renewable energy fuel for production contributes to high price.

Marketers need to reduce the green price gap by at least pulling it closer to its conventional counterparts or else by targeting those customers who are better off financially. Government can also play the major part in reducing this green price gap. Government should reduce the tax level levied on green or environment friendly products. This reduces the cost and thus the price of green products which indirectly attract more customers to buy or rely on green products.

### GREEN PROMOTION STRATEGY

Promotion strategy is one of the marketing tactics that communicate about the products manufactured to the market or customers and attract them to buy them too. There are many ways to promote the products and services like advertising, personal selling, packaging, social media, public relation, mobile marketing and many more. Now to achieve the objective of sustainable development, it is important to focus on environmental promotion strategies rather than only on promotion of the products. Thus, whatever method of promotion marketers are going for, whether it is advertising or packaging or any other, it is important to assess their sustainability too. Factors which are considered during this phase are: marketing objectives, effective means to reach the target market, and budget. For example, Toyota has launched the first hybrid cars and endorse these through very persuasive eco-friendly organisations like United Nations, the Sierra Club, and the National Wildlife Federation. This helped them achieve Toyota's green brand image and credibility. In fact, in case of packaging, organisations can clearly mention the recycling properties for its packaging on the packaging.

### CONCLUSION

In today's modern world, technology has shaped people's life as it has invented some wonders as penicillin, open heart surgery and birth control pills and some dread as hydrogen bomb, nerve gas and the submachine gun. Behind this, people have ignored about the natural environment which is getting deteriorated

with every passing second. There is a grave need to understand the affect of “green house gases” released in the atmosphere due to the continuous burning of fossil fuel, about the depletion of ozone layer, due to global warming and certain chemicals used during the production period. Thus, deterioration of the natural environment is a major global problem and we should all divert ourselves towards green products its sustainability. Marketers should shift themselves from “marketing mix” to “green marketing mix”. They should design green products to perform better than other alternatives. They should go for product endorsement or eco-certification from trustworthy party and educate the customers about the reasons behind those endorsement or eco-certifications. Customers could be encouraged through social and internet networks. For examples, Tide’s “coldwater challenge” website includes a map of United States where visitors could track and watch their personal influences spread when their friends request for free samples.

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