



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Management

GREEN MARKETING AS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL TO PERFORM CSR IN THE POST COVID ERA: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

KEY WORDS: Green marketing, Corporate Social Responsibility, Pandemic, New practices, Covid-19

Dr. Soumyajit Das*

Assistant Professor, EILLM-Kolkata , Neogibagan, P.O. - Chandannagar, Dist.- Hooghly. *Corresponding Author

Sreemoyee Ghosh

Lecturer, EILLM-Kolkata, State - West Bengal , Country - India PIN -712311.

ABSTRACT

The concept of Green Marketing is focused on finding out new opportunities and to ensure better standard of living with sustainable development. The expectation of society for going green has boosted the concept of Green Marketing as a tool for Corporate Social Responsibility. Organizations always try to find out new opportunities and threats constantly presented by the marketing environment and simultaneously understand the importance of adapting to new practices. Green Marketing can be used as a tool to substantiate the CSR responsibilities of the firms and at the same time fulfilling market objectives. Covid-19 pandemic has opened a new window for businesses to shift towards a genuine and authentic CSR initiative and contribute to address urgent global, social and environmental challenges. Therefore the Covid-19 pandemic can lead to significant environmental changes in the modern marketing history, which can create a profound impact on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and basic marketing philosophy. This paper attempts to explain the concept of Green Marketing as a tool for CSR with few examples of companies coming forward towards various social causes in the Post Covid era.

INTRODUCTION:

Society looks forward towards business as a resilient part of society which acts as a responsible member of the social community and contributes towards sustainability. This view entails a responsibility on corporate houses to perform its social responsibility by minimizing their negative impacts and increasing their positive impacts on environment and in turn on the society not only to build their good image but more importantly to exist in today's modern competitive era. (Ishpreet Kaur Viridi, 2016) As society becomes more concerned with the natural environment, businesses have begun to switch their behavior in an effort to deal with society's "new" concerns (Dhar Pranam & Das Soumyajit, 2012). In the present situation, consumers are becoming more conscious while making their purchase decision and this can be a wonderful opportunity for businesses to instill environmental consciousness into their mind. The concept of Green Marketing has emerged to grab the new opportunities and to ensure better standard of living with sustainable development (Choudhury Aparna, 2013). This expectation of society for going green has boosted the concept of Green Marketing as a tool for Corporate Social Responsibility. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is nothing but what an Organization does to positively influence the society in which it exists and operates (Ishpreet Kaur Viridi, 2016). Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a concept with constantly increasing importance for businesses and their stakeholders. The environmental, social and governance (ESG) dimensions

of CSR performance may contribute to organizations' economic performance. A widely recognized interpretation of CSR suggests that CSR includes philanthropic, ethical, economic and legal, components. Marketers always attempt to recognize the new opportunities and threats constantly presented by the marketing environment and simultaneously they understand the importance of continuously monitoring and adapting to new practices. Some businesses could foresee the changing trends of society and quickly adapted to newer practices like establishing environmental management systems and "No Waste Technologies", and have integrated environmental issues into all organizational activities. (Dhar Pranam, Das Soumyajit, 2012) Today main challenge before marketers is to think creatively about how marketing can fulfill the requirements of consumers for a far better standard of living while ensuring sustainable development. Green Marketing is part of the key movements in modern business sustainability though their concern for revenues and profits are also there. Companies focusing on the natural ecological balance in their entire operation are more environmental friendly while maximizing profits; they reduce environmental pollution, conserve natural resources and protect the environment. They gain a singular competitive advantage and develop new markets as they improve their corporate image, their reputation and their product image from the buyer perspective. (Norazah Mohd Suki et.al., 2016).

LITERATURE REVIEW:

SL. NO	AUTHOR	YEAR	TITLE	SOURCE	CONCLUSION
1	Cristian Ionu LAZ R	2017	Perspectives on Green Marketing and Green Businesses for Sustainable Development	Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Bra ov Series V: Economic Sciences Vol. 10 (59) No. 1 - 2017	This paper analyses the core concept of the Green Marketing and presents an overview on the efforts made by different companies worldwide to turn their business into green businesses to ensure sustainability.
2	T. Esakki	2017	Green marketing and environmental responsibility in modern corporations	https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320690816_Green_marketing_and_environmental_responsibility_in_modern_corporations	This paper tells us that Green marketing is one of the most efficient way for organizations to convey that their merchandise is protective to environment, which in turn increases profit. Green Marketing and Environmental Responsibility are the measures adopted by industries to raise awareness on sustainable products. Thus, companies are featuring comprehensive coverage across a range of relevant topics such as green consumption, organic food products, supply chain performance, and ecological marketing.

3	Norazah Mohd Sukia	2016	Impacts of Corporate Social Responsibility on the Links between Green Marketing Awareness and Consumer Purchase Intentions	Procedia Economics and Finance 37 (2016) 262 – 268	The paper discusses the roles of Corporate Social Responsibility on the links from green marketing awareness to consumer purchase intention. This paper highlights on how the Corporates are promoting their eco-friendly products and as a result consumers are developing positive Green marketing awareness.
4	Prof. (Dr.) Rajeshkumar P.Patel	2016	Green Marketing: As Tool for Sustainable Development	IOSR Journal of Business and Management; Volume 18, Issue 8 .Ver. III (Aug. 2016), PP 139-142	This paper explores how green marketing strategies have become sustainable tool for business in today's scenario especially in Indian context. It depicts how business firms are developing competitive advantage over their competitors by using innovative green strategies. The paper describes the current scenario of Indian market and explores the opportunities and challenge businesses have with green marketing.
5	Ishpreet Kaur Virdi	2016	Green Marketing and Corporate Social Responsibility as its aspect	International Research Journal of Management Sociology & Humanity; Vol.7, Issue 8	In this paper the concept of green marketing has been discussed in the light of Corporate Social Responsibility. As consumers are becoming conscious for their acts and business activities to protect environment, the businesses are also trying to incorporate environment friendly measures for satisfying the consumers.
6	Yuvika Singh	2015	Sustainable Development through Green Marketing- Opportunities And Challenges	Biz and Bytes (Vol. 6. Issue: 2E-ISSN: 0976 0458)	The paper focuses on the current Scenario of Indian market and explores the major challenges and opportunities businesses have with green marketing. The paper discusses how green marketing plays a dual role of environmental protection on one hand and customer satisfaction and retention on other hand.
7	Pranam Dhar, Soumyajit Das	2012	Green Marketing : Challenges & Opportunities For Innovation And Sustainable Development	International Journal of Marketing, Financial Services & Management Research; Vol.1, No. 5, May 2277 3622	In this article the concept and importance of Green marketing is discussed. This article also focuses on the necessity of adopting innovative and environment friendly measures by the corporate for long term sustainability and growth.
8	Aparna Choudhury	2013	Green Marketing: A Means For Sustainable Development	International Refereed Research Journal; www.researchersworld.com; Vol.-IV, Issue-3(3)	This paper discussed about the concept and importance of green marketing in current scenario. This paper highlights the basic problems associated with green marketing and suggests the required solutions. This paper also describes recent trends in green marketing, and how green marketing can be used as a means for sustainable development.
9	Mayank Bhatia	2013	Green Marketing: A Study of Consumer Perception and Preferences in India	Electronic Green Journal; Issue 36; https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5mc39217	This paper explores the consumers' perception and preferences towards green marketing practices and products which turns out to be quite high. This papers gives us an insight on the need of designing the marketing communication campaigns for promoting green products due to high green value among the consumers.

RESEARCH GAP:

After going through the aforementioned literatures, it was found that no such study was made on the effectiveness of Green Marketing as a tool to perform CSR, in the Post Covid era. This has propelled us to go for this study.

CONNECTION BETWEEN GREEN MARKETING & CSR:

Corporate and social responsibilities are continuously competing to provide a common platform to address a new form of green consumerism that the eco-conscious generation can appreciate. Green Marketing is providing a two-fold benefit to the Corporates by fulfilling its social obligations with the help of CSR and also complying with the business requirements. (Salil Seth, 2015). The modern era of marketing is encountering a double – edged sword of keeping the natural environment safe on one hand and to satisfy and retain the consumers on the other (Singh Yuvika, 2015). With the ever increasing environmental problems across the globe there is a need to protect the natural environment of the earth. Green Marketing acts as the bridge connecting the corporate, environment and consumers. Business organizations have started to respond to social expectations of consumers by opting for holistic environmental stewardship. Without social acceptance it is

extremely tough for any business organizations to provide good quality of goods/services to their customer and to maintain the brand image. The company's responsibility in creating green products is playing the pivotal role since it will help the companies to support sustainable growth and gain a competitive advantage. Thus, Corporate Social Responsibility does not occur on a single line but it must be based on the “Triple Bottom Line” since a single line will only reflect the financial gain of the company (Sri Widyastuti et.al., 2019). CSR refers to the obligation of an organization which considers the interests of all their stakeholders which includes the customers, employees, shareholders, communities and ecological considerations in all aspects of their operations. According to the Bhagbat Gita philosophy, dharma is the way of life for every man and this is true for a corporation as well. It is not a question of the corporations having social responsibility or not but the question is how to discharge the Social Responsibility. The Bhagbat Gita model of discharging the responsibility by following the dharma can be a model for discharging CSR by incorporating Individual Social Responsibility and Global Social Responsibility. (Balakrishnan Muniapan, 2013)

SIGNIFICANCE OF CSR IN POST COVID ERA:

Covid-19 pandemic offers a great opportunity for businesses to shift towards a genuine and authentic CSR initiative and contribute to address urgent global, social and environmental challenges. The COVID-19 global pandemic has had a profound impact on the global business community. Amidst the ongoing crisis, countries around the world are opening up again to a business world in which it is imperative for both the consumers and company to learn how to survive in the "New Normals". The impact of Covid-19 on the global economy is likely to be unprecedented since the 1930's Great Depression. Therefore probably the Covid-19 pandemic represents one of the most significant environmental changes in the modern marketing history, which could potentially have a profound impact on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), consumer ethics, and basic marketing philosophy. These changes have important impacts on the fate of the companies that, in the face of this new consumption context, need to adjust their strategic decisions. Numerous companies are using corporate social responsibility (CSR) to demonstrate their commitment towards society by introducing new initiatives to fight against COVID-19 and alleviating the negative consequences of the pandemic for their stakeholders. Organizations reflecting on the post-pandemic world will need to re-evaluate their visions, missions, and their objectives to account for the changes to their customers, competitors, and other stakeholders. Goals and objectives that incorporate long-term survival, strategic agility, and meaningful social responsibility, focusing on a social marketing orientation seems absolutely relevant in the present context.

FEW EXAMPLES OF COMPANIES PERFORMING CSR ACTIVITIES DURING CURRENT SCENARIO:

Under the current scenario of Covid-19 pandemic, many companies are coming forward with their various performances towards social causes. Many companies and businesses are donating certain amounts to the "PM Cares Fund" formed by the Government of India while others focus on facilitating vital necessities like masks, sanitizers, gloves, medicines, food to the underprivileged, health institutions, hospitals, etc. They are also placing health check-up camps in tier 2 cities in order to help migrants get tested first hand. Several companies have launched their unique campaign on digital platform with the hash tag #SafeHandsChallenge, #NamasteKaro, backing the government towards social distancing, it is also important to educate and create awareness amongst the migrant labourers and underserved about the current crisis and the precautionary measures to be taken care of. Few companies have also come forward to manufacture ventilators, sanitizers, thermal testers, drones under their prevailing brand name lending assistance to the Government in combating this pandemic situation. Brands are also performing CSR activities by promoting social awareness for social distancing. Many companies also have changed their advertisement slogans to make people understand the importance of social distancing. A few examples are cited below:

- The MC Donald's company has depicted the message to the society by bifurcating the logo 'm' divided into two parts-"n""n". The two parts of 'm' represent the meaning of social distance.
- Similarly, the logo of Audi is represented by four separate rings and exploring the tagline to keep distance. The new logo of Audi is enough for understanding the importance of social distancing.
- The Bengal Beverage company has also made similar changes in their logo by creating a gap from each letter. The company also spreads the message as "Staying apart is the best way to stay united".
- Amul released a series of messages to motivate people to wash their hands, greet others using the no-contact "Namaste" method and to work from home.
- Tata Motors has released an innovative message that reflects how crucial it is "to stay home now to be together

always".

- Hindustan Unilever Limited, has made a unique CSR initiative through its product Lifebuoy soap, by spreading the message of "washing hands frequently with any soap or hand-wash or alcohol based Sanitizer to combat against the spread of Corona Virus".
- In an attempt to support India's fight against COVID-19, retail giant Walmart, Flipkart have announced to provide Rs 46 Crore worth help that will focus on personal protective equipment (PPEs) including N95 masks and medical gowns for medical staff, and other necessities for vulnerable communities.
- Expressing solidarity with the government in its fight against the Covid-19 outbreak, Piramal Group has pledged Rs.25 Crore towards the PM CARES Fund.
- UPL Ltd., the manufacturer of crop protection products pledged Rs. 75 Crore to PM-CARES Fund in assisting the government to fight against COVID-19. It is also providing significant numbers of Personal Purchase Equipment (PPE) units to help the frontline workers.
- Infosys Foundation has announced the launch of a 100-room quarantine facility for COVID-19 patients, in the vicinity of Narayana Health City in Bengaluru, Karnataka. The facility will serve patients belonging to the economically weaker sections of the society, will accommodate patients, offer regular monitoring by doctors, nurses, and provide essential medication, free of cost.
- Larsen & Toubro, India's leading conglomerate, is committed to participate in corporate India's response to COVID-19 through funds, community welfare plans and through leveraging its expertise to offer assistance.
- Coal India has distributed 1.2 lakh cooked food packets as well as more than 50,000 packets of ration to the needy people, besides donating funds to run a community kitchen amidst the Coronavirus lockdown.

CONCLUSION:

To conclude, it can be said that, Green Marketing can be used as a powerful weapon for performing Corporate Social Responsibility as it protects our environment and in turn ensures better living for mankind. Corporate adopting "Triple Bottom Line" strategy, are undoubtedly taking a step forward towards the upliftment of standard of living in terms of quality. Green Marketing is still in its infancy in India but it's offering a number of significant benefits:

1. Marketers get access to new markets and gain an advantage over competitors that are not advocating "greenness."
2. Marketers can charge a premium on products that are seen as more eco-friendly.
3. Organizations adopting environmental protection measures are perceived to be more responsible towards society.

The interplay of environmental concerns with any type of the so called CSR actions can be used by the organization to construct a stronger position in the market place. All the arguments which claim that CSR behavior in general, and green marketing in particular, are consequences of non-profit oriented actions, either to protect the good of the individual or the good of society as a whole are shown to be unable to account for the costs of the behaviors and the consequences of undertaking them in a competitive environment. The various measures adopted by corporate for environmental safeguard, are regarded by some- either as a way to reduce costs by better use of resources, or as a way to market goods and services to a specific group of consumers willing to pay more for them. In reality, most of the customers choose to satisfy their personal needs before caring for the environment. It is definitely one of the responsibilities of the Marketers to make the consumers understand the need for and benefits of green products as compared to non-green.

There is one more vital factor for the advancement of the social control of Corporates. First is the stakeholders' economic decision making process which puts pressure on the Corporates. Companies will only incorporate social and environmental concerns in their policies when economic agents will make them realize that they also seek these values by incorporating them into their economic decisions.

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