

## **Green Marketing: A Pathway towards Sustainability of Tourism Products**

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**Abstract:** *In the current scenario green marketing has emerged as an essential tool for the protection and promotion of environmentally friendly products. Entrepreneurs round the globe are increasingly adapting green marketing practices because of the rising demand from consumers, who prefer to use these products for multiple specifications like good quality, better performance and cost affordability, among others. So with this regard companies are striving hard to influence the consumers by changing production process and improving advertising & packaging techniques, thus modifying products as per the needs of consumers. Thus keeping in view the significance of green marketing, this paper has made an attempt to study the process of green marketing by focussing on internal and external factors responsible for this movement. The study has also analysed the relationship between tourism industry and green marketing. Moreover the study has also highlighted the various reasons for its growth and the challenges faced by this movement in the current scenario. Lastly some feasible suggestions have been provided for the better functioning of this movement. In view of the specific objectives, methodology followed in carrying out the present study was based on secondary data, mainly taken from research papers, journals and reports of many Government and Non-Government organisations.*

**Keywords:** *Green marketing, Green products, Entrepreneurs, Tourism Industry.*

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### **I. Introduction**

According to the American Marketing Association, "Green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe, involves developing and promoting products and services that satisfy customers want and need for Quality, Performance, Affordable Pricing and Convenience without having a detrimental input on the environment". Green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally preferable to others. It incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes of production process, sustainable packaging as well as modifying advertising. Green marketing is also sometimes referred as environmental marketing and ecological marketing. Thus Green, environmental and eco marketing are part of the new marketing strategies which offer a significantly different perspective and thinking of existing philosophy. In fact green, environmental and eco marketing establishes a link between marketing and the ecological and social realities of the wider marketing environment. (*wikipedia*).

According to Charter (1992), 'Green marketing is a holistic and responsible strategic management process that identifies, anticipates, satisfies and fulfils stakeholder needs, for reasonable reward, that does not adversely affect human or natural environmental well-being'.

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 implications of global warming and other harmful pollutants. However while the shift to "green" may appear to be expensive in the short term, it will definitely prove to be indispensable and advantageous even cost-wise too, in the long run.

The term green marketing is relatively new concept which came into limelight in the late 1980's (Ottma, 2006). Lionel Robinson believes that green marketing is inevitable because of limited resources and unlimited human wants, forcing companies to adapt these techniques for the effective utilization of resources. Although green marketing is of a recent origin but it has got much prominence in the last few decades because of fulfilling stricter environmental standards.

In the current scenario green marketing has emerged as an essential tool for the protection and promotion of environmentally friendly products. Entrepreneurs round the globe are increasingly adapting green marketing practices because of the rising demand from consumers, who prefer to use these products for multiple specifications like good quality, better performance and cost affordability, among others. So with this regard companies are striving hard to influence the consumers by changing production process and improving advertising & packaging techniques, thus modifying products as per the needs of consumers. Green marketing companies are defined as the companies which adapt several environment friendly techniques like use of biodegradable waste, minimal use of plastic material, greater use of hydroelectricity and smaller emission of

toxics etc. in order to safeguard natural environment. Thus the products manufactured through this process are referred to as, 'Green Products', having no adverse impact on environment. Menon & Menon (1997) and Charter (1992) have devised several ways for firms in order to move towards greenness, starting from product inception stage till product dispensation stage. These include changes in inputs, modification in existing product, better advertising campaigns, changes in management and innovative entrepreneurial activities.

**Objectives of the study**

1. To study the process of Green marketing.
2. To analyse the relationship between tourism industry and Green marketing.
3. To examine the reasons and challenges of Green marketing.
4. To provide some feasible suggestions for the better enactment of the movement.

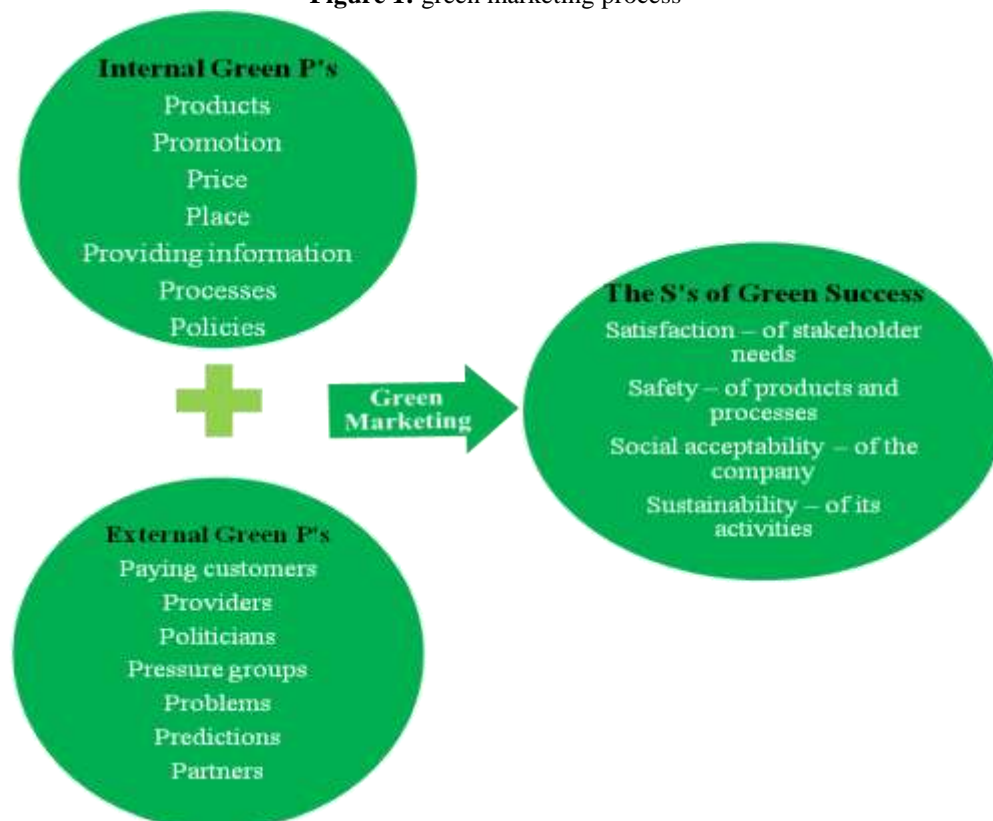
**Research methodology**

In view of the specific objectives, methodology followed in carrying out the present study is mainly descriptive in nature. Secondary data sources is gathered from the organisations such as Ministry of environment \_ GOI reports, Department of Tourism Reports and other authentic reports from Government & Non-Government Organisations. In addition to this, data has been also collected from other trusted sources like departmental websites, journals, articles and newspapers.

**Process of Green Marketing**

The success of Green marketing depends on both internal and external factors which are popularly known as internal P's and external P's. Green marketing analysts believe that stress must be put on both of these factors in order to make green marketing a success story. The internal 7 P's are composed of Products, Promotion, Price, Place, Providing, information, Processes and Policies whereas Paying customers, Providers, Politicians, Pressure groups, Problems, Predictions and Partners are considered as external P's. This results in green process success, which is measured through 4 S's consisting of Satisfaction – of stakeholder needs, Safety – of products and processes, Social acceptability –of the company and Sustainability – of its activities. This can be illustrated properly in figure 1, as shown below.

**Figure 1:** green marketing process



(Source: Anirban Sarkar (2012), P. 125)  
*Tourism and Green marketing*

The relationship between tourism and green marketing can be better understood through Eco-tourism, which has now become the talk of the town. Eco-tourism in simple words means development of tourism industry without degrading the natural environment. I.e. effective stress is being laid on safeguarding the interests of future generations. Eco-tourism includes many other similar concepts like eco-travel, eco-adventure and eco-safari, among others, which have been showing a significant increase from last couple of years. Despite having higher growth potential, large number of businesses are being accused of its over exploitation for greater benefits. James Sanno, believes that, 'Eco-tourism is a fashionable marketing boy right now but it is often being exploited' (Batra, 2006). However if measures like Government legislation, public concern, and technological innovations on environmental issues are properly carried out, eco- tourism will prove to be an effective tool for ensuring sustainable development in future

***Characteristics of Green Products:***

- Products with no adverse impact on environment
- Products using natural ingredients with non-toxic chemicals
- Products which are recyclable and reusable
- Products which are originally grown
- Products using eco-friendly packaging

***Reasons for Green Marketing***

**1) Opportunities**

Companies producing environmentally friendly products have much greater opportunity to produce & meet the increasing demand of consumers as compared to the companies which produce less environment friendly products. Increase in demand for these products helps firms to gain competitive advantage over others. E.g. McDonald's waxed paper, Photocopier paper by Xerox.

**2) Government Pressure**

In a welfare state, it is the utmost responsibility of government to protect its population from detrimental activities. With this regard Government frames and adapts some stringent regulations, which when applicable, ensure that all the individuals of the society are well protected from any harmful action. Same is the case with green marketing, where the state frames rules in order to protect society from harmful and non-environment friendly products. New Delhi, which is among the top most polluted cities of the country, has recently introduced the 'Odd-Even Scheme' in transport sector in order to reduce the pollution level in the state,. Likewise, in July 2016, National Green Tribunal (NGT) has ordered that all Diesel vehicles in the state, plying over 10 years, will be deregistered with an immediate effect. Furthermore regulations related to the introduction of CNG in all public transport systems is also a way forward for ensuring Greenness to the society as a whole.

**3) Competition**

Uncompetitive and unresponsive firms struggle hard to compete in the global market because they do not possess effective green marketing strategies (Fuller, 1999). Like consumers, firms also get attracted towards the green products being produced by its rivals in the market. Demonstration effect helps the firms not only to keep pace with its rivals but they also try hard to surpass them by producing better & environment friendly products.

**4) Social Responsibility**

Most of the firms in the present context believe that they share a wider responsibility towards the society rather than individuals and therefore they produce such products which are least detrimental to the environment. Such firms work for social motives rather than private motives.

**5) Cost and benefit concerns**

Ottman (1993) showed that businesses actively adapting green marketing strategies, expand their market share and profit in contrary to those businesses which repudiate such strategies. Although it is very easy to produce environmentally harmful products but their disposal has always been a matter of great concern because of higher costs. However it is quite reverse with respect to firms producing environment friendly products, where no costs of disposal are incurred and instead substantial cost savings are experienced. Thus firms realise the benefits of producing green products and shun the habit of producing non green products for more savings

Although there are numerous good reasons for business establishments to adapt green practices as highlighted above, however the question arises as to what are the ways through which greenness can be accomplished. It is argued that measures like Know your Customer, Educating the Customer, Transparency in

Business, Belief of the Buyer and Genuine Pricing of the product among others are the golden rules/ways to achieve Green Marketing in an effective manner.

### ***Challenges of Green Marketing***

Joel Makeover opines that Green marketing faces numerous of challenges because of lack of proper standards and public consensus both from producers and consumers of what constitutes "Green". He further elaborates that it is because of lack of consensus which has resulted in the slow progress of green products. Furthermore there are several other challenges faced by green marketing businesses, as pointed out by Mishra & Sharma (2010), as shown below.

- **Need for Standardization**

Till now no proper standardization procedure has been followed which could certify a product of being 'Green or Non Green'. Furthermore no such rules have been framed so far as product authentication is concerned. It has been argued by marketing analysts that until & unless an effective regulatory organisation for product standardisation is not in place, it would be impossible to follow any standardised mechanism for labelling, licensing and certification of green products.

- **New Concept**

Since the concept of Green marketing is of very recent origin, it is being said that Indian consumers are mostly uneducated about its widespread benefits accrued by the society. However if informed properly, Indian consumers would welcome these products, as has been the case with Indian Ayurveda. So a need for well managed Green movement is being felt all across the nation, which would help the uninformed consumers to get better knowledge of green commodities.

- **Patience and Perseverance**

Because of its long gestation period, Patience and perseverance is the way for green marketing to be a successful movement. Moreover being a new idea, it needs time to adjust itself with the prevailing conditions. Willingness to invest from entrepreneurs and other corporates should be much higher in green projects as compared to non-green projects.

- **Avoiding Green Myopia**

Customer satisfaction for a Green product is considered to be the best reward for any company. However it is a difficult task to perform and if a firm fails to do so, it will lead itself to Green Myopia. To avoid such state of affairs, many initiatives like proper pricing of green products, customer motivation, and suitable premium for greener alternatives are required.

Current scenario of green marketing in the world shows that most of the consumers are willing to pay higher price for green products in relation to non-green products. An article entitled as, "U.S. Consumers Still Willing to Pay More for 'Green' Products", shows that more than one third of Americans said that they would be willing to pay extra money for green products. Another study carried out by Mintel, showed that about 12% of consumers of U.S population frequently bought green products while as almost 68% of consumers bought such products occasionally (wikipedia).

## **II. Conclusion**

It is evident from the above discussion that most of the companies in the past have been more reluctant in adapting the policy of Green marketing in India because of their ill-conceived presumption that such a policy is non profitable. It is imperative here that policy makers should educate such companies about the benefits of green marketing and if needed government should also offer some premium to such firms for its promotion. Most of the studies have shown that although the environmental concerns of both producers and consumers have been very low but it is showing a rising trend. In the recent past there has been a change in the mind set of some businesses and marketers by concentrating more on the long term benefits of this policy and ignoring the high initial costs. Such businesses are putting more stress on developing product characteristics like green design, green positioning, green pricing, green logistics, green promotion and green alliance. Likewise consumers should also prefer green products so that it would become a norm of life rather than an exception. In short green marketing in India is still in the stage off infancy and lot more needs to be done in order to realise its fuller potential.

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