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A STUDY ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN INDIA

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Abstract – The environmental movement has achieved a great deal in attempting to meet environmental issues, investing remarkable effort with limited funding against powerful countervailing forces. In these attempts, the environmental movement pursues two basic types of strategy: engaging organizations (both government and businesses) and engaging the particular behaviours that individual citizens pursue. In the current study, an overview of these two strategies as a prelude to introduce a third approach to which the environmental movement must pay close attention. This third approach holds substantial promise for enhancing the effectiveness of the movement's current work and for developing useful strategies for new types of intervention.

The natural world can be a dramatic, dynamic and dangerous place. Life ultimately thrives on Earth because it is a dynamic planet, but the extremes of nature can threaten the survival of individuals, communities and even species. Every year television pictures and newspapers report scenes of devastation, despair and death caused by huge earthquakes, floods, droughts, cyclones, landslides and volcanic eruptions. The Asian tsunami, with around 250 000 deaths, huge economic losses and long term damage to development programmes in the affected countries, brought home to the world the realities of the danger.

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INTRODUCTION

There are many environmental issues in India. Air pollution, water pollution, garbage, and pollution of the natural environment are all challenges for India. The situation was worse between 1947 through 1995. According to data collection and environment assessment studies of World Bank experts, between 1995 through 2010, India has made one of the fastest progress in the world, in addressing its environmental issues and improving its environmental quality. Still, India has a long way to go to reach environmental quality similar to those enjoyed in developed economies. Pollution remains a major challenge and opportunity for India.

Some believe economic development is causing the environmental issues. Others believe economic development is key to improving India's environmental management and preventing pollution in India. It is also suggested that India's growing population is the primary cause of India's environmental degradation. Systematic studies challenge this theory. Empirical evidence from countries such as Japan, England and Singapore, each with population density similar or higher than India, yet each enjoying environmental quality vastly superior than India, suggests population density may not be the only factor affecting India's issues.

Major environmental issues are forest and agricultural degradation of land, resource depletion (water,

mineral, forest, sand, rocks etc.), environmental degradation, public health, loss of biodiversity, loss of resilience in ecosystems, livelihood security for the poor. The major sources of pollution in India include the rampant burning of fuel wood and biomass such as dried waste from livestock as the primary source of energy, lack of organized garbage and waste removal services, lack of sewage treatment operations, lack of flood control and monsoon water drainage system, diversion of consumer waste into rivers, cremation practices near major rivers, government mandated protection of highly polluting old public transport, and continued operation by Indian government of government owned, high emission plants built between 1950 to 1980.

Environmental degradation is a result of the dynamic inter play of socio-economic, institutional and technological activities. Environmental changes may be driven by many factors including economic growth, population growth, urbanization, intensification of agriculture, rising energy use and transportation. Poverty still remains a problem at the root of several environmental problems.

It has been found to be excessive heat in summer both during day and night. The temperature in summer is ranging in most of the days around 40°C which not only is affecting the health and comfort of the people but also is increasing the energy consumption by excessive use of air conditioner, refrigerators etc. The people are not feeling the

presence of all six seasons, rather only summer, rain and winter in which the duration of winter is very small.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

According to Linden et al. (2000), consumers have a vital role in sustainable development in at least three respects: consumers' preferences and demands are in a key position when producers consider whether it is worthwhile investing in environment-friendly products and production

- moreover, consumers' own choices and lifestyles have a direct impact on the environment
- Consumers' attitudes are also taken as an important incitement of necessary political changes that give more weight to the environment as compared with other social tasks.

Hence it is very important to understand the consumers in terms of preferences and demand, in terms of choices and lifestyle and in terms of their attitudes. The goal in this study is to profile the green consumer in a manner that will assist in the development of marketing strategies. Consequently, the researcher is more interested in factors that contribute to green purchase behavior than in factors related to general levels of environmental consciousness or post-purchase behavior such as recycling. This distinction is important and has support from previous polls and studies (Shrum and McCarty, 1995). For example, marketers complain that even though research shows the environment to be important to consumers, its importance does not seem to translate into a change in purchase behaviour (Schlossberg, 1991). Also, empirical evidence shows that general environmental attitudes are not related to particular environmental behaviours (Shrum et al., 1994; Stern and Oskamp, 1987).

Ecologically conscious consumers Numerous studies have addressed the characteristics of ecologically conscious consumers either as a primary point of investigation or as a secondary issue (Murphy et al., 1978 Stern et al., 1993; Linden et al., 2000; Schwartz and Miller, 1991). The majority of these studies have looked at, and found, demographic variables associated with self-report measures of environmental commitment, behavioural indicators of environmental commitment, or psychometric scales measuring environmental consciousness (e.g., Samadhi and Robertson, 1989; Zimmer et al., 1994). Some have offered additional attitudinal or psychographic dimensions associated with green attitudes and behaviour (e.g., Roberts, 1996; Roberts and Bacon, 1997; Stern et al., 1993). A review of these studies suggests several general indicators of an individual's propensity to engage in ecologically conscious consumer behaviour.

As the focus on environmental consequences of climate change increases, greater attention has been

paid to climate change's potential influence on patterns of war and peace (e.g., Renner, 1996; Homer-Dixon & Blitt, 1998; Rahman, 1999; Klare, 2001; Brauch, 2002; Purvis & Busby, 2004; CNA, 2007; Buhaug et al., 2008; Burke & Parthemore, 2008; Raleigh et al., 2008; Salehyan, 2008). The literature on climate change and security focuses on two interrelated processes expected to result in resource scarcity. First, increasing temperatures, precipitation anomalies, and extreme weather are expected to aggravate the ongoing degradation of environmental resources (Renner, 1996; Homer-Dixon & Blitt, 1998; Klare, 2001; Purvis & Busby, 2004; Buhaug et al., 2008). Second, scholars warn that rising sea levels, as well as more extreme weather conditions, will force millions of people to migrate, potentially leading to higher pressures on resources in the destination areas and subsequently fostering competition over resources (Renner, 1996; Rahman, 1999; Barnett, 2001; Oxfam, 2007; Renaud et al., 2007; Raleigh et al., 2008).

Although climate change is usually viewed as a potential future threat, some argue that global climate change has already been a contributing factor in current conflicts such as the Darfur crisis (Byers & Dragojlovic, 2004; Ki-moon, 2007). Although they warn against overstating the relationship between climate change and armed conflict, Jon Barnett (2001), as well as Nigel Purvis and Joshua Busby (2004), accept that the depletion and altered distribution of natural resources likely to result from climate change could, under certain circumstances, increase the risk of some forms of violent conflict. It is not likely to be a major or sufficient cause of conflict, but may form a mounting environmental challenge that could play a contributing role (Brauch, 2002; Tänzler & Carius, 2002). Climate change is likely to influence the capacity of many areas to produce food. Some areas may experience a reduction in crop yields, but others are likely to benefit.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

In recent years, consumer interest in ecological issues has dramatically increased as demonstrated by an increasing:

- (a) involvement in environmental-caring activities, such as recycling packaging, energy saving, and composting foods.
- (b) acceptance of lower technical performance of the products purchased in exchange for better eco-performance.
- (c) reliance of purchasing decisions on environmental-related issues, such as biodegradable, CFC-free, and organically grown products.
- (d) willingness to pay higher prices for acquiring environmentally friendly goods.
- (e) tendency to travel to non-traditional distribution outlets, such as organic food sellers, to purchase

green products (Mostafa, 2007). This change in the ecological behaviour of consumers has been driven by various factors, including wider media coverage, more stringent legislation, and greater involvement of environmental pressure groups (Aitken, 2006; Melillo & Miller, 2006).

Although at times organisations have primarily been accused of being responsible for causing environmental problems through, for example, the use of inappropriate equipment, dangerous substances, and non-recyclable materials, consumers have also been blamed for their uncontrollable consumption of goods and irresponsible treatment of the environment (Menon & Menon, 1997; Banerjee, 2002). Thus, on the one hand, understanding the motives, attitudes, behaviour, and actions of consumers with regard to ecological issues is of paramount importance in alleviating part of the problems associated with the environment (Roberts & Bacon, 1997). On the other hand, a deeper understanding of the characteristics of green consumers by organisations can lead to the design of more efficient and effective sustainability marketing programs (Rundle-Thiele, Paladino, & Apostol, 2008). However, there is still no clear consensus in the extant literature regarding the forces motivating environmental concern among consumers, especially as regards cultural (e.g., McCarty & Shrum, 2001), societal (e.g., Roberts, 1996), and ethical (e.g., Chan, Wong, & Leung, 2008) factors. There is also inadequate understanding about the consumer eco-friendly attitude-behaviour link (Diamantopoulos, Schlegelmilch, Sinkovics, & Bohlen, 2003), while the literature has treated the measurement of environmental attitudes and behaviour in a composite manner (Fransson & Garling, 1999; Kilbourne & Pickett, 2008; Sarigöllü, 2009).

All the scale items in the schedule for measuring the ecoattitude and behaviour of the respondents with regard to environment have been subjected to reliability analysis to ascertain whether the items included in the various scales are reliable or not for further proceeding the analysis. The reliability analysis is a pre-requisite before considering the data for further statistical analysis.

HYPOTHESES:

This study consists of four major parts: antecedent forces, attitudinal factors, behavioural factors, and outcomes. Antecedent forces comprise three sets of background consumer parameters, namely cultural ('collectivism' and 'long term orientation'), political ('political action' and 'liberalism'), and ethical ('deontology' and 'law obedience'). Attitudinal factors refer to the pro-environmental attitudes of the consumer, and these are divided into 'inward', that is, attitudes referring to the abuse of the environment by individual consumers, and 'outward', that is, attitudes

about the perceived need for social, political and legal changes to protect the environment (Fransson & Garling, 1999; Kilbourne & Pickett, 2008; Sarigöllü, 2009). Behavioural factors include the environmentally-friendly behaviour of the consumer, which can be 'green purchasing', that is, activities that lie in the personal domain and have a direct effect on the natural environment, or 'general environmental', that is, activities that fall under the public domain and have an indirect effect on the natural environment by influencing public policy initiatives (Dietz et al., 1998).

CONCLUSION:

Multiple and multilateral benefits which derive from environmentally oriented marketing communications are unquestionable. However, the marketing communications as a part of green marketing, is faced with numerous challenges. Marketing communication is often been in the focus of criticism and we can say that it represents one of the most controversial areas in green marketing, primarily because of its role in promotion of unnecessary spending and the creation of consumer society, but also because of resources spent to convey messages to consumers. Also, perhaps even more important criticism is regarding the presentation of green products as oversimplified solutions for complex environmental problems. As a result the concept of "sustainable communication" is shaped, which is defined more broadly than the concept of green promotion.

Since trust and credibility are the key concepts in environmentally oriented communications, it is essential to ensure the consistency of messages sent by an economic entity. This consistency must be achieved along different dimensions. First, in the sense of uniting the elements of the promotion mix through a common, consistent message, and second in the sense of systematic coordination of the promotion mix elements. In this way we can reduce the possibility of skepticism among consumers and creating a much worse starting position in an already complex process of meeting the demands of consumers and generally adjusting to the demands of the environmental paradigm and the concept of sustainable development.

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