



# Feasibility of Green Marketing in the Women Cosmetics Industry

Prof Surya Rashmi Rawat  
Symbiosis Law School, Pune

## **Abstract**

"A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people."

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Abstract

Concern for mother earth is gaining momentum, there is escalating awareness amongst consumers all over the world concerning protection of environment. There is a need to create interest amongst people to handover a clean earth to their progeny. Various studies by environmentalists indicate that people are gradually becoming less hostile towards the environment. Majority of consumers in western world, both individual and industrial are becoming more and more concerned about eco - friendly products. Most of them believe that the use of eco - friendly products is the need of hour. This era of recyclable, non-toxic and eco-friendly goods has led to the emergence of green marketing with prime focus on marketing sustainable and socially-responsible products and services in the society. This has come as a panacea for marketers to differentiate their products from others, satisfy the needs of consumers and earn better profits. Many business organizations have started implementing green marketing in India.

In this paper an endeavor has been made to study the potential of green marketing in the women cosmetics. The need of green marketing, analysis of the awareness of masses in India and the challenges and opportunities in implementing green marketing in the women cosmetics is the main focus of the paper.

## **Introduction**

Environmental degradation today is the greatest cause of concern for research scholars, corporates and the citizens of Earth. The economic boom in India registering a GDP close to 8.0% and the rapidly growing population is putting strain on the environment, infrastructure and the natural resources (Rana, Z., 2010). Global warming, greenhouse gas emissions, pollution and energy crisis in the world today are posing severe threat to life (Murari, K. 2010).

The honorable Supreme Court of India (1990) has explicitly mentioned that Article 21 of Indian Constitution which speaks about the fundamental right to live also includes the right to live with dignity, in healthy environment. In this scenario the responsible business houses with a concern for corporate social responsibility can play a vital role in channelizing the resources in a manner so as to provide maximum satisfaction to the consumers with minimum efforts and cost.

According to the American marketing association, green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe. The study of works of different researchers reveals that green products are durable, recyclable and reusable. These are made from natural, renewable or environment friendly resources. They cause reduced emissions and do not contain any ozone-depleting substances like greenhouse gases. Their production process does not result in highly toxic by-products or waste products harmful to society and environment and are biodegradable.

Since the research is to understand the feasibility of green marketing in the women cosmetics, let's now study, what is a cosmetic? According to Cosmetic Products (Safety) Regulations 2008, of UK, a 'cosmetic product' is any substance or preparation intended to be placed in contact with external parts of the human body, or with the teeth and the mucous membranes of the oral cavity, with a view exclusively or mainly to cleaning them, perfuming them, changing their appearance, correcting odour, protecting them or keeping them in good condition.

The word "cosmetae" was first used to describe Roman slaves whose job was to bathe men and women in perfume. (Keville, Green, 1995) As early as 10,000 BC, men and women used scented oils and ointments to clean and soften their skin and mask body odor. Dyes and paints were used to color the skin, body and hair.

Ecocert (2003) Bio cosmetics or the green cosmetics are considered as cosmetics with a level of superior demand compared to the conventional regulation of cosmetic products. It guarantees environmental conservation all along the production line, consumer's respect and utilization of natural matter with superior ecological quality.

## **Review of Literature**

### **Background**

First Earth Day, 22 April, 1970 is often cited as the birth date of the environmental movement or at least a key date in its development (Dunlap and Catton 1979). In fact, by the latter half of 1960's, the green awareness about the negative impact of consumption pattern along with the impact of economic and population growth on environment had started catching attention of masses. But, a serious concern of green marketing appeared in the late 1980s with a rapid increase in the consumer awareness for the green products (Cohen, 2001).

### **Climate change**

(Pearce, Fred, 2007) Greenhouse gas emissions are causing severe threat to climatic conditions in the form of droughts and floods ruining the agricultural produce. (Mike Pflanz, 2010) Contaminated and polluted water now kills more



people than all forms of violence including war Centre for Science and Environment says that the raw sewage causes 75 to 80 percent of the river's pollution. (Speth, James G., 2004) Even Green revolution has led to leaching, salination, alkalization and water logging due to irrational use of fertilizers, pesticides and irrigation.

(Harvard University, 2011) India is seventh most environmentally hazardous country in the world with per capita carbon dioxide emissions roughly 3,000 pounds (1,360 kilograms) in 2007. (UNEP report, 2010) India produces about 3, 80,000 tons of e-Waste per annum, from refrigerators, TVs, PCs, printers and mobile phones this environmental degradation is leading to different types of diseases affecting the human throat, lungs, heart and eyes.

One thing is clear that the climate change is happening and is fast showing its impact too. At this juncture it becomes very important to start thinking for the way outs to reduce the environmental degradation. The question arises how? May be green marketing is an answer? But green marketing in which product category?

According to Michael and Kate (2009), Women represent the largest market opportunity in the world. So the marketers must pay head towards this promising segment. Beauty products and services promote a sense of emotional well-being in women. According to author, women who spent a higher portion of their income on cosmetics felt more satisfied, successful, and powerful; they also reported lower levels of stress even if they worked longer hours. Many companies are making use of new technologies to address women's desire to look younger. Facial skin-care products have grown into a \$20 billion category worldwide. There has been a remarkable shift from the traditional moisturizers to sun protection, skin plumping, and capillary strengthening formulas all designed to prevent or at least disguise aging. Let's try to find out the potential of green cosmetics in India?

The herbal and traditional cosmetics manufactured from plant extracts are quite common in Asian countries. However, green marketing of these products is rather recent. The objective of this paper is thus to find the awareness and the potential of green marketing in women cosmetics in India - the country of Miss Universes and Miss Worlds.

### **Green Claims and Consumer skepticism**

Bounds, G. (2009) the advent of green has led to the increasing confusion among consumers about the veracity of green marketing promises. (Borin, N., Douglas C. Cerf and Krishnan, R., 2011) A large number of symbols currently used, new descriptive terms such as "sustainable" and "low-carbon footprint," and the questionable validity of some green claims are simply adding to the consumer skepticism. Green Claims and Consumer skepticism has been identified as one of the major threats in practicing green in the western countries. Let's try to find out the attitude of our population towards these major bottlenecks in practicing green in India.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are as under:-

- (a) To study the potential of green marketing in women cosmetics
- (b) To identify the awareness of masses
- (c) To identify the challenges in practicing green marketing in women cosmetics
- (d) To recommend measures to encourage green marketing in women cosmetics

### **Research Methodology**

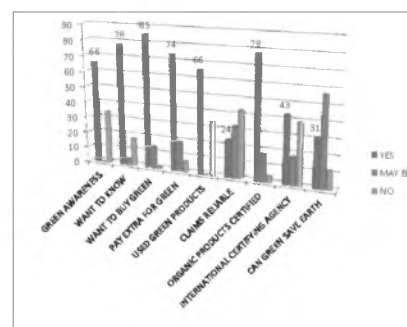
The research is based on primary data, collected and collated through a survey over a sample of 100 working women in Pune, Maharashtra India. The respondents were selected through Stratified sampling method. Data was collected through a questionnaire and in depth interviews with the sample. It comprised of Executives, Academicians and BPO Workers.

Secondary data in the form of articles published in books, journals, magazines, research papers, newspapers and reports will also be incorporated.

### **Findings**

This figure shows the consolidated graphical representation of the responses.

Figure 1



Since the research was conducted to analyze the potential of green marketing in women cosmetics, the questionnaire was drafted accordingly. The analysis of data revealed that the sample belonged to four different income groups viz, less than 3 Lacs, 3 - 5 Lacs, 5 - 8 lacs and 8 - 12 Lacs. The sample represented the double income group families. 66% of the sample knew about the Green cosmetics and for them green cosmetics meant ayurvedic and herbal cosmetics. Most of them were really keen to know about green cosmetics, its availability and its significance. 85% of sample showed keen interest in saving earth, 14% stayed indifferent and 1% said No. 74% of the population agreed to pay little extra to save the earth. 7% seemed happy with the way things were moving and 19% said they may pay an extra amount in this marathon to save environmental degradation. Of the



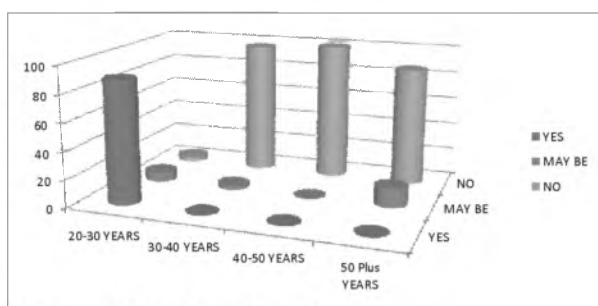
population 66% have used the Green product and of those 66%, 70% are the regular users.

Majority of people are highly suspicious about the claims made by companies in their advertisements. To overcome this fear factor 78 % have recommended that the products be certified duly by some authentic government body. Further 43 % of population was of the opinion that the products having certification from the international agencies would be more reliable than the national ones.

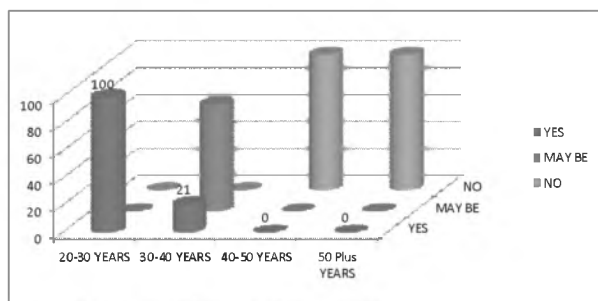
The new economic boom, changing demography from the traditional joint family to nuclear family system and couples preferring to have single child rather than two, three or more have drastically affected the purchasing power of consumers. The research in hand also verified these results.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

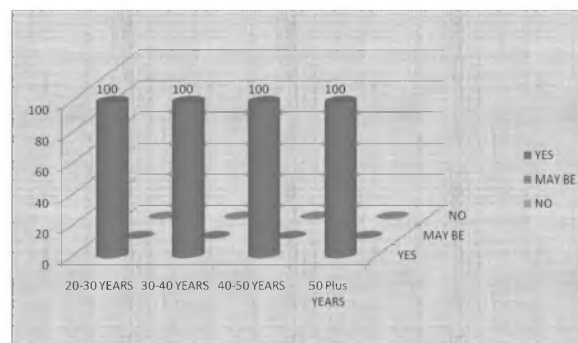
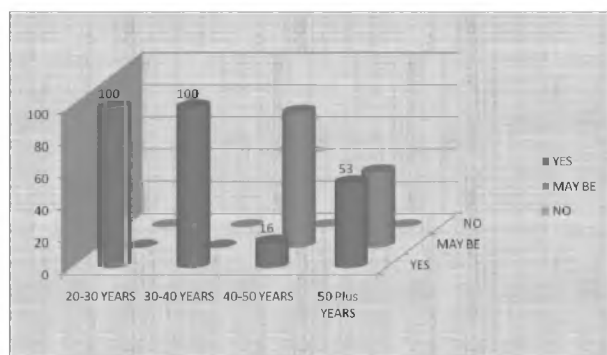
On the basis of findings of survey, the buyer's preference can be summarized as under:-



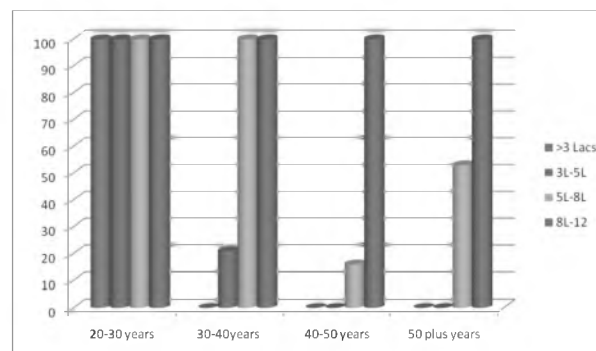
Ist Income Group: Less than 3Lacs



Ivth Income Group: 8Lacs to 12Lacs



### Summary of Buyer Behaviour



- (a) Ist Income Group ie less than 3Lacs. Here only first age groups said yes with other three age groups saying no for green. Reasons for this no are false green claims by companies & over exaggerated cost in the name of green. For them, conventional cosmetics are quite effective in keeping them look presentable & their responsibility towards their children is more pressing than saving earth and protesting against animal testing. They also said if cosmetics are not tested over animals than where should they be tested?
- (b) IInd Income Group ie 3 -5 Lacs. This income group showed diverse results ranging from a small yes, to small may be to a bigger no. Here only the youngest lot in the age group of 20-30 years said yes. This age group prefers to go green for they feel a pressing need to save mother earth and at the same time health and charming looks are priority one for them. This generation is also against animal testing. Age group 30-40 years wants to use it but due to other priorities in life says it may use it at some later stage. Age group 40-50 years & 50 years and above said no for green cosmetics because their other responsibilities at home like children and their career is their priority rather than spending extra for green.
- (c) IIInd Income Group ie 5 - 8 Lacs. In this segment it was revealed that the point of time when this income came in the hands of sample made all the difference. Someone getting this income at an early age between 20-30 years & 30- 40 years prefers to buy green cosmetics at any cost as their health and impressive looks is what matters them. This age group is seriously concerned about the



saving of mother earth and are also averse towards the animal testing. In the same income group, people in the age group of 40-50 years & 50 plus category said though saving environment is a need, looking young and charming is a dream but they may go for green cosmetics or might prefer to be happy with comparatively budgeted conventional cosmetics.

- (d) IVth Income Group ie 8-12 Lacs. All women in this group irrespective of their age group are ready to buy organic cosmetics at any cost. Their health concern and young looks is what matters them. For them using green does not only serve their intrinsic motives but is also a way to show concern towards environment and a protest against Animal Testing as practiced by conventional cosmetics industry.

### **Recommendations**

The research came out with quite optimistic results regarding the buyer behavior of customers towards green cosmetics. Based on the study following recommendations can be made regarding the marketing of green cosmetics:-

- (a) Green marketing can be successfully launched in the women cosmetics irrespective of the age group of buyer. Specifically, the age group ranging from 20 to 30 years promises a comparatively better market in every income group.
- (b) It infers that cosmetics should not only focus to the beautiful and healthy looks but also take care of anti aging formulas so as to give not just healthy and beautiful looks but also the young looks to kill.
- (c) People are ready to pay extra for green not just to save green but to stay healthy; therefore this part should not be ignored.
- (d) Income is the most decisive factor in the acceptance of green, so the marketer should try to device out ways to see that if at the reasonable cost something can be catered to the price sensitive low income groups.
- (e) Majority of people are averse to animal testing with a hand full raising questions about the alternative. Marketers will have to take care of both the aspects with minimum side effects to nature and maximum benefit to humans.
- (f) Quite a significant proportion is skeptical over the credibility of claims made by marketers, for this the certification of the green cosmetics is the safest way out. A certified product shall have its production process guaranteed by an accredited certifying agency.
- (g) 43 % of population wishes to have international certification for green cosmetics.
  - i) In this regard I would like to advice the

population that International certification means further addition of cost and hence the even more expensive product. Are they ready for it?

- ii) At the same time I would like to draw the attention of marketers and the government towards the fact that quite a significant strength has lost faith over the marketers claim and government accreditation agencies. It is an alarm and a warning for both the marketers and government to really do something to build up their lost credibility.

### **Conclusion**

From the analysis and interpretation of data we conclude that:

- (a) Income is the decisive factor in the buying of eco friendly green cosmetics. We saw from the survey that every age group has a dream to look young and have healthy and beautiful skin and all of them are trying to manage the same within the recourses in their reach.
- (b) We saw the population in age group of 20-30 years is the most promising market for green, irrespective of the Income group they belong to. The age group 30-40 years also represented quite optimistic results with roughly 52 % in the fray of going green. The age group 40-50 years showed the worst of all responses with merely 11% showing a bent for going green. The last age group ie, 50 plus years showed quite optimistic results with 15% of the lot ready to go green.
- (c) People have lost the faith over the credibility of claims made by marketers, so they want the products should be duly certified. A certified product shall have its production process guaranteed by an accredited certifying agency. 43% wants the certification be done by some international agency.
- (d) Lack of awareness of product, its availability and its significance is a major challenge. We must spread awareness amongst the masses about the significance of green marketing and the role of buyer in preventing environmental degradation so that we can hand over a safe and healthy earth to our progeny as just the 32% of sample thinks that the Green marketing can really play a role in controlling environmental degradation; remaining 12% feels it's a waste effort.
- (e) To sum up, beauty is a dream of every heart, but it needs cost to come true therefore, with manageable challenges the green marketing has a great potential in the women cosmetics.
- (f) Let's make a beginning by showing our commitment to the motto- "Think Green, Save



## Green and Buy Green"

### **Research Limitation & Scope of Future Research**

According to the Central Statistics Office (CSO), the per capita income of India is estimated at Rs. 53,331 in 2010-11 as against Rs. 46,117 for the previous year. The income groups considered for this study were "Less than 3 Lacs, 3 - 5 Lacs, 5 - 8 Lacs and 8 - 12 Lacs". The women in the age group of 20-30 years irrespective of their income group are ready to buy organic cosmetics at any cost hence, giving a green signal for green marketing. The point that needs to be carefully understood at this juncture is that this research is based on primary data, collected and collated through a survey over a sample of 100 working women in Pune, Maharashtra India specifically the Executives, Academicians and BPO Workers. Here I would like to add that the Executives, Academicians and BPO Workers alone do not represent the population of India. Therefore the results hence obtained may aptly be applied to a metro city with the similar population mix but not to India as such. Because even now a considerable population of India stays in non-cosmopolitan cities. Therefore there is a need to extend this research in the other rural parts of India too.

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