



## MARKETING STRATEGIES OF ECOPRENEURS - ISSUES & CHALLENGES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THANJAVUR DISTRICT

Ms. K. Jayanthi\* Dr. K. Leelavathy\*\*

M.Phil. Scholar in Commerce (Full Time), PG and Research Department of Commerce, Bon Secours College for Women, Thanjavur, India.

\*\*Dean of Arts, Bon Secours College for Women, Thanjavur, India.

### Abstract

An Ecopreneur is a catalyst of social change and works for the common good. Ecopreneur looks for opportunities, identifies them and seizes them mainly for economic gains. An ecopreneur is a person who is able to express and execute the urge, skill; motivation and innovative ability to establish an eco- friendly business or Green business. Ecopreneur is enriched with the inborn qualities of adventurism, willingness to face risks, innovative urge and creativity and is eager to make dynamic changes in the production process, introduce innovations and to find out new uses for raw materials. While starting a new business by individual face so many challenges; such as instability, stress, negative mindset, overwhelming feelings, lack of support, feelings of wanting to give up, growing a business, problems of raw material, problems relating to marketing, outdated technology, lack of infrastructural facilities, lack of skilled labors etc. In order to conduct an efficient business an ecopreneur must overcome the challenges. The main objectives of the study are to identify the challenges faced by the ecopreneurs and to analyse the measures to overcome them. On the basis of the findings various suggestions has been offered. It is believed that if these suggestions are seriously considered by the ecopreneurs, it would result in the welfare of various ecopreneurs to improve their sales.

**Key Words:** Ecopreneur, Green Business, Eco-Friendly, Challenges, Innovative.

### INTRODUCTION

The term ecopreneur is derived from two terms which are “entrepreneur” and “ecology”. An ecopreneur is an entrepreneur who is focused on ecologically-friendly issues and causes, attempting to do business on any of a range of environmentally friendly products or activities including recycling, building green spaces. A business which is ecologically friendly is known as “Green business”. In the early 21st century, green business began to experience exponential growth. Many consumers grew more aware of environmental causes as organization and government tried to raise concerns about the health of the world’s environment, and enterprising businessmen jumped to fill the desire for green business.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Peter Kangis (1992)** in his study on "Concerns about Green Marketing" found that Proposes that the challenges both for marketing specialists and for consumers, raised by the concept of green marketing, are due to several issues, such as the lack of an acceptable definition for green marketing, the absence of a clear understanding of cause-and-effect relationships in matters affecting the environment, and the overt and covert reasons for concern about such issues. The paper is also suggested that, in the hands of unscrupulous marketers, green marketing can turn into green gold. **Suresh(2006)**, in his article “Green marketing – The Indian scenario” states, that due to multiple reasons – regulatory pressures, technological development, consumer movement, emergence of niche segments – Indian marketers are going to green in product development, product modification and packaging. **Zhan Xiaodi and Zhang Tiejun (1999)** in their study on “Green marketing: A noticeable new trend of international business” explained that the new trend has been exerting strong impact on the traditional way of international marketing and will be in the mainstream of international marketing for the next century. To intensify the research on the new trend is of great significance for improving the capacity of marketing and participating in the competition in the world marketplaces. The main content and significance of the new trend in the market economic condition and finally offers some suggestions on how China can meet the challenges of the new trend and grasp opportunities to develop “Green Marketing”.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know the strategies of marketing who are producing Eco-friendly products.
- To understand the strategy needed for successful green marketing
- To analyze the present scenario and potentials of green marketing among the ecopreneurs of Thanjavur district.



## AREA OF THE STUDY

Tamilnadu government is becoming very careful about green issues, but all of them were not possible for investigation due to the limitation of time and resources. So, only Thanjavur district is selected for this study. Thanjavur is a home of Thanjavur painting; a painting style unique to the region. Thanjavur is located in the Cauvery delta is known as the “Rice bowl of Tamilnadu”. Thanjavur is administering by Municipal Corporation covering an area of 36.33 – 14.03 Sq. Km. and had a population of 2,22,943 in 2011.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

Data were collected using the personal contact approach. Census survey is to be adopted for collecting data. The statements/items for the questions were formed after consulting relevant literature and some relevant research conducted in the area. Besides the study questions, the survey also included a section to capture the general profile of respondents. They were asked about their demographic background including age, education level, and marital status. The present study has used tools like simple percentage and Chi- square test.

## COLLECTION OF DATA

Data was collected through primary source and secondary source. The primary data was collected through interview schedule and the secondary data was collected from research publications, standard journals and periodicals.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Table -1 Demographic factor of the respondents**

Demographic factor	No. of respondents	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	42	87.5
Female	6	12.5
Transgender	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age (in years)</b>		
Below 25 years	0	0
25-35 years	18	37.50
35-45 years	26	54.17
Above 45 years	4	08.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Educational qualifications</b>		
Illiterate	4	08.33
Schooling	8	16.67
Under graduate	20	41.67
Post graduate	9	18.75
Professional courses	7	14.58
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary data

It is inferred that 87.5 per cent of the respondents are male and no transgender are identified in this study. 54.17 per cent of the respondents are belongs to the age group between 35-45 years. 41.67 per cent of the respondents are under graduate in this study.

**Table -2 Financial Assistance Rendered by the Government**

Financial assistance rendered by government	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	42	87.5
No	6	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary data

Out of 48 respondents 87.5 per cent are accept that the government rendering the financial assistance to the business and 12.5 per cent of the respondents have given the negative remark about the statement.



**Table - 3 Consumers become the Green Consumer**

Factors	No. of respondents	Percentage
Advertisement	21	43.75
Word of mouth	15	31.25
Retail outlet	6	12.5
Awareness programmes	0	0
Others	6	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary data

Out of 48 respondents 43.75 percent of the respondents states that advertisement is the factor that reach the consumer easily, 31.25 percent of the respondents states that word of mouth is a factor that reach consumer, 12.5 percent of the respondents accept that retail outlet and other than the above said factors that helps to reach the consumer.

**Table 4 Educational Qualifications Vs Financial Assistance Rendered by the Government**

Educational Qualifications	Financial Assistance rendered by the Government		Total
	Yes	No	
Illiterate	3	1	4
Schooling	6	2	8
Under Graduate	17	3	20
Post Graduate	9	-	9
Professional Courses	7	-	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>48</b>

Source: Primary data

**Chi – Square = 4.12,  $p > 0.05$ , Not significant**

Among 48 respondents, 20 respondents were of Under Graduates, 17 respondents out of these 20 respondents have rendered the financial assistance by the Government. Educational qualifications were found to be associated significantly with financial assistance by the Government ( $p > 0.005$ ).

**Table 5 Family Type Vs Reasons to involve in the Ecopreneurial activities**

Family Type	Hobby	Experience in the field	Means of survival	Venture something new	Others	Total
Nuclear Family	3	5	14	5	13	40
Joint Family	-	3	3	-	2	8
Total	3	8	17	5	15	48

Source: Primary data

**Chi – Square = 3.42,  $p > 0.05$ , Not significant**

Around 40 out of 48 respondents were found to have ecopreneurial activities, among them, 14 respondents are living in the form of nuclear family system. The association between family type and reasons to involve in the ecopreneurial activities was statistically not significant ( $p > 0.005$ ).

#### OTHER FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

- Majority of the respondents are established their business between the year of 2005-2010.
- Non-availability of fund is the important barrier for starting the business.
- Majority of the respondents are stated that quality is the factor that differentiates the product from other product.
- Majority of the respondents accept that the government rendering the financial assistance.
- More than 50 per cent of the respondents are follow the targeted promotion for their product and service.



- Majority of the respondents are having an idea to get the loan for future usage.
- Majority of the respondents are accepting that the business challenge is the important challenge to the business.
- Discount is the important strategy that follows for the price fixation.
- Lack of advertisement is one of the major reasons for poor marketing

### SUGGESTIONS

- Adults who are in their 30's and 40's are more environmentally conscious than any other groups. The reason might be that this age group has strong believed in Green marketing. So it is necessary to create the awareness about environment conscious to all age group of peoples.
- Once if the ecopreneurs fetch the fruits of easy marketing, certainly they will engage in more production at lower costs and one day they can also become global players.
- The workshop have to be organized and engaged the ecopreneurs in making handicraft items, soaps, jute bags, paintings, textile designs, incense sticks with eco- friendly way. They were made able to market their products effectively.
- Adoption of green marketing may not be easy in short run, but in the long run it will definitely have a positive impact on the society.
- Sales promotion activities can be improved with advertisement in print media as well as web media.
- The governments also can conduct trade fairs exclusively for Eco-friendly or Green products and provide market for the products. If they can fetch foreign orders it will also be useful to be overcome balance of pay deficits. Ecopreneurs should identify and exploiting these green opportunities.
- Government bodies are creating specific laws and utilize its authority to implement the green marketing.

### CONCLUSION

The rise in the world affluence holds promise for better lives and also comes with significant risks to ecosystem if prevailing pattern to production and consumption persist. The need to reduce energy consumption, pollution and waste create new opportunities for entrepreneurs to introduce innovations and setup new business venture. Marketers also have the responsibility to make the consumers understand the need for and benefits of green products as compared to non-green ones and the benefits they can reap in the future. The green marketers can expect full support of the government, and the consumer also will not mind paying more for a cleaner and greener environment. Finally, the consumers, industrial buyers and suppliers need to promote the positive effects of green marketing on the environment. Green marketing assumes even more importance which should be path breakers and trendsetters for all other to follow.

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