



Green Consumer

Suman and Dr. Kavita Dua

Introduction:

Green consumption is related to sustainable development or sustainable consumer behaviour. It is a form of consumption that safeguards the environment for the present and for future generations. It ascribes to consumers responsibility or co-responsibility for addressing environmental problems through the adoption of environmentally friendly behaviors, such as the use of organic products, clean and renewable energy, and the choice of goods produced by companies with zero, or almost zero, impact (zero waste, zero-emissions vehicle, zero-energy building, etc.).

In Western societies, green consumption emerged during the 1960s and the early 1970s, with the increased awareness of the necessity to protect the environment and people's health from the effects caused by industrial pollutants and by economic and population growth. In the 1980s, the first American "green" brands began to appear and exploded on the American market. During the 1990s, green products grew slowly, remaining

a niche phenomenon. American interest in green products started to increase again in the early 2000s and have continued to grow. A growing number of consumers are looking at what they are consuming, what the effects are on the planet, and are choosing sustainable brands from trash bags to cocktail dresses. The resources in this section will be useful for both consumers who are considering a lifestyle change, and businesses who are exploring the market and trying to understand sustainability-minded consumers. To find specific sustainable brands of products search the internet for "eco-friendly", "earth-friendly", "biodegradable", "green", or "sustainable" along with product categories.

Importance of Green Consumerism

Green consumerism is a holistic and responsible process of management that satisfies, identifies, fulfills, and anticipates the needs of the stakeholders in maintaining the natural well-being of the environment and one that does not endanger the health of humans. The importance of green consumerism,

Suman¹ and Dr. Kavita Dua²

¹PhD Scholar, Department of EECM, CCSHAU, Hisar

²Assistant Professor, Department of FRM, CCSHAU, Hisar

therefore, include:

1. Reduced waste in packaging

Green consumerism advocates for frugal packaging options. It has social attitudes such as the preference to purchase loose products like vegetables and fruits instead of pre-packaged products. Also, it encourages reuse of paper and plastic packaging bags and tins that often cause environmental degradation.

2. Increased energy efficiency

Green consumerism attitudes advocate for the efficient use of energy, which ultimately helps in saving money, reducing utility bills, lowering emissions of greenhouse gas, and enabling economies to meet the growing energy demands. Through green consumerism, environmental and economic benefits of utility systems, as well as the management of risk associated with inefficient production processes, have also been attained.

3. Decreased release of emissions and other pollutants during production and transportation processes

Thanks to green consumerism, emissions from the transportation sector and industries have been considerably reduced. Also, because of green consumerism advocacies and programs, stringent standards against emission have been put in place thus lowering emissions from engines and motors

and the advancement of clean-burning fuel options.

4. Consumption of more healthy foods

Through green consumerism advocacies, there has been an increasing need for more eco-friendly food production. As a result, people are gradually developing a culture of buying more organic and local food, which is arguably healthier as they are not cultivated or produced using artificial chemical fertilizers, antibiotics, hormones, or pesticides.

How To Become a Green Consumer?

Although the depletion of the green cover and its effect on the natural habitat may look ordinary and less important now, in many years to come, people will realize how beneficial it would have been to conserve the planet. To avoid regrets decades into the future, however, we can begin to conserve the green cover and other natural resources by becoming green consumers. The following are possible ways anyone can transform into a green consumer:

1. Saving energy consumption in your surroundings

Though it is challenging to conduct a door-to-door alert on saving energy, a lot can still be done at a personal level, that is, saving as much energy as possible while at home and work. This involves switching off lighting and other sources of power when they are not in use both at work and in our homes. One can

also develop a habit of sitting in a single room daily rather than having many sources of electricity on by operating in different rooms in a building.

2. Change of mindset

It is difficult to force people to consume products or use services that prevent the depletion of natural resources and that result in habitat loss or environmental degradation. As such, every person needs to change their mindset regarding green conservation and know the dangers of environmental degradation by taking it a daily green habit.

3. Use of solar products and renewable energy sources

Using solar products that rely on the sun's energy rather than electricity is a major way to prevent environmental depletion. Some of the products include solar heaters, solar streetlights, solar backpacks, solar geysers, and solar bulbs. Although some of these products cost more than traditional products, they tend to be more environment-friendly and last longer as they utilize natural energy.

Other renewable energy sources such as wind should also be utilized. Governments, energy production facilities, industries, manufacturers, and consumers should, therefore, all join hands towards investing in renewable energy options such as biofuels, biogas, solar, and wind power.

4. Checking energy labels in daily utility products

One can become a green consumer by, for instance, checking the energy labels on appliances before their purchases. Products that consume too much energy ought to be boycotted and replaced by equipment that uses less energy. Additionally, a green consumer should prioritize green energy and use as much green electricity as he or she can.

5. Recycling and using eco-friendly products

You can easily become a green consumer by opting for the recycling of the products you use or using those that are eco-friendly. Instead of buying bottled water, for instance, you can opt for a water bottle you can always use to carry water. And instead of using paper wipes, you can have a cloth wipe that you can wash and use over and over. Generally, attaining this should also involve the purchase of eco-friendly products.

6. Buy locally grown and organic foods

Buying locally grown and organic foods significantly contribute to lowering the effects of carbon emissions during transportation and the effect of artificial pesticide or fertilizer use on the environment.

7. Purchasing a hybrid car

These cars hardly use fuel or have minimal fuel needs. Using hybrid cars relieves the environment from high carbon emission

that is a primary contributor to climate change and global warming, which is also a contributing factor to biodiversity loss and habitat destruction.



Green Consumerism Examples

1. Consumers of seafood such as cockles, herring, rock lobster, salmon, and Hoki demand for foods that have the Marine Stewardship Council's logo that show responsible environmental management.
2. There has been a demand from coffee drinkers in Canada and the United States in buying coffee brewed from beans that have met standards of organic production and shade farming. This type of beans contains Bird-Friendly seals, approved by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center.
3. There have been certifications of more than 25 million hectares of forest gardens in 54 nations by the Forest Stewardship Council based in Mexico. These forests

meet environmental and social standards for sustainable forestry and are more than twice the area covered in 1998.

4. In more than 20 European states, ranks of the European Blue Flag campaign have been followed by many beachgoers who have found 2,750 marinas and beaches to be environmentally friendly, with sanitary and safer facilities.
5. Consumers in Thailand applied the appliance-labeling program's information to encourage the use of energy-efficient single-door refrigerators. The usage rose from 12 percent in 1996 to 96 percent by 1998.

6. Need for almost 40 medium coal-fired power plants has been abolished worldwide by consumers who have embarked on energy-saving compact fluorescent lamps.
7. The installation of solar grid or wind turbine by governments, organizations, and homeowners instead of relying on the main power grid

Green Marketing Strategies

The following are strategies that could earn consumers' trust in greenery conservation.

1. Being transparent

This entails being radical and exposing any bad news. Organizations need to find a competitive edge by exposing as much

information as possible about their sourcing and production processes. For instance, sustainability pathfinders like Patagonia have reported with transparency through its “Footprint Chronicles.” Access to the corporate practices and details of products and services should be provided to the consumers as part of a green marketing strategy.

2. Walking the talk

Companies are well graced by consumers when they gain a perception of sustainability and commitment. Companies holding advocacy for greening the environment should employ a clear vision of pro-green product and service solutions.

The companies should be proactive in sending leadership messages that assure investors of minimized environmental damage risks. The corporate social responsibility strategy and values also need to be communicated and advanced to establish emotional connections with consumers.

3. Focussing on pro-environmental solutions and benefits

Since buyers want information about the personal benefits of products provided, companies ought to focus on incorporating more pro-environmental benefits of products. For instance, organizations should question whether their products save the consumers’ money or if the products are appealing to the style-conscious of the consumers.

For example, American Apparel is one company that has profited from marketing itself as an enterprise that ensures good working conditions for its employees and the use of organic cotton.

4. Producing durable products that ensure extended utility over their life cycle

Companies that have taken the responsibility of minimizing the life cycle impacts of their products have attained noticeable benefits as green consumers always want a product that not only provides value for their money but also lasts longer in their lifetime use. A good example is Toyota vehicles, which are touted to last longer and breakdown less owing to their lean manufacturing and Kaizen principle.

5. Cause marketing, eco-labels, and environmental product declarations (EPDs) through third parties’ support

Cause marketing, eco-labels, and environmental product declarations (EPDs) are among the common forms of third-party support today. Promotional efforts or cause marketing in which an organization channels part of the product’s profits into an essential non-profit, cause-related marketing can bring about differentiation of brands within a marketplace.

Eco-labels such as Energy Star (93 percent), USDA’s Certified Organic (75 percent), and the chasing-arrows recycling

logo (93 percent) have been able to gain influence on products' purchase. In addition, EPDs have issue detailed explanations of products' life cycle impacts to consumers.

References:-

1. Banbury, Catherine; Stinerock, Robert; Subrahmanyam, Saroja (April 2012). "Sustainable consumption: Introspecting across multiple lived cultures". *Journal of Business Research*. **65** (4): 497–503. doi:[10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.02.028](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.02.028).
2. A. Bayley, T. Strange, 2008, Sustainable development. Linking economy, society, environment, OECD INSIGHT.
3. Green Consumers - Green Business: Sources of Information - Research Guides at Library of Congress (loc.gov).
4. Advameg, Inc. (2019). Green marketing. Retrieved from <https://www.referenceforbusiness.com/small/eq-inc/green-marketing.html>.
5. The Global Development Research Center. (2019). Some examples of green consumerism. Retrieved from https://www.gdrc.org/sustbiz/green/doc-cons_examples.html.

6. "The benefits and values of green lifestyle consumers." *International Journal of Marketing Studies*; 7, no. 1 (2015).
7. <https://www.csmonitor.com/1999/0331/p5s1.html>