

Sustainable Marketing strategies for challenges of Social Entrepreneurship

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Abstract

Implementing practices of sustainability in business strategies is considered extremely beneficial for organizations in particular and society in general as it brings the business organizations more opportunities for development and growth and as well as more sustainable future for society. Social Entrepreneurs today play an important role as an innovative group for the changes in the structure of economy through sustainability and to change the prevailing norms in the society for maintaining the achieved sustainable development as well. This paper shows the general sustainability development goals, the challenges generally faced by the social enterprises in achieving these goals. This paper aims at better understanding of different recent trends in the marketing strategies for sustainable development. It aims to study how making an appropriate marketing strategy can make a way easy to achieve sustainable development.

Key words: Sustainable Development Goals, Social entrepreneurship, Marketing Strategies, Social Sustainability, Green Marketing.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is more important for economic growth in the modern economic scenario than it has ever been. Entrepreneurship, economic and ecological developments are mutually related and essential for sustainability development. Current situations project a clash between ecological and economic system in a global scale. There is rising consumption of natural resources which is not at all proportional to the time required for the replenishment of these resources. So it is very obvious that it cannot be continued in the same manner for a long time and some planned strategic action to turn the adverse situation to more sustainable manner becomes necessary which would otherwise lead to the death of ecology.

Individuals with business insights and who are in social mission and who are able to provide new approaches to contribute to the process of social development are termed as social entrepreneurs. Logical and creative business approaches of social entrepreneurs when Combined with efficient technologies can bring positive transformation in the existing environmental and social problems. In spite of different problems, social entrepreneurs today are successful in formulating as well as implementing perfect solution to their problems. Appropriate support, funding, mentoring to shape the dreams of social entrepreneurs is essential.

Review of Literature

1) A report by Shrivastava, Poldner&Branzei entitled “Embodied Multi-Discursivity: An Aesthetic Process Approach to Sustainable Entrepreneurship” dated 2015 states that there has been continuous effort for interdependence of Nations for growing the awareness which is required for transformation in the consumption of natural resources. Available natural resources must be utilized in a conservative manner to make country competitive in the international scenario .The authors insists on need for growing awareness for transformation in the consumption of natural resources to address environmental challenges such as ecosystems degradation and climate change.

2) According to Ambec&Lanoie in their article titled “Does it pay to be Green? A systematic overview” (2008), the basic notion behind sustainable development is to have a clear idea that natural resources have their limits and are vulnerable to activities of human beings. They have stated that the better environmental performance on part of any organization can lead to improving of revenue through better access to certain markets, differential product advantage etc.

3) Paper entitled “Greening Goliaths versus Emerging Davids – Theorizing about the Role of Incumbents and New Entrants in Sustainable Entrepreneurship” by Hockerts&Wustenhagen dated 2010, states the importance of sustainable development in driving economic and social development creates both opportunities and risks for businesses. Through sustainable production, marketing and consumption approaches the organizations can achieve more opportunities for success. The paper

helps the entrepreneurs for realistic assessment of their strategies and how well it contributes to sustainable development.

4) "Towards Sustainable Development by Creation of Green Social Entrepreneur's Communities" by Ali Zahedia, Ralf Otterpohl dated 2015 states that the enterprises that strive for sustainable development are the one that are much needed today. Though there are barriers to such enterprises, people volunteer for their establishment through different kinds. They researchers conclude that green social entrepreneurs play an important role to change the structure of economy through sustainability.

5) An article titled "Sustainable development and entrepreneurship: Past contributions and future directions" by Jeremy K. Hall, Gregory A. Daneke & Michael J. Lenox, 2010 summarizes recent contributions in exploring the role of social enterprises in the sustainable development. The article highlights the recent research that explores the relationship between sustainable development and entrepreneurship.

Objectives of Study

- 1) To identify the challenges faced by social entrepreneurs in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
- 2) To analyze various sustainable marketing strategies.
- 3) To understand the recent trends in sustainable marketing strategies.

Economic-Environment-Social Sustainability

Quality development depends upon sustainability. Sustainability may be economic sustainability, environmental sustainability and social sustainability. Environmental sustainability is the fastest growing theme which has greater focus on conserving environment to shape a better future like growth of renewable sources of energy. Social and economic sustainability get deeply attached to environmental sustainability. Attaining environmental sustainability helps to contribute to overall progress of people and their society leading to social sustainability. On other side the viability of economy clearly depends on environmental resources, so economic sustainability depends on environmental sustainability.

As of present scenario, social entrepreneurship is mainly limited to elite class of people who has surplus resources, but it has to spread to rural areas and interest has to be promoted in rural volunteers also. Those social entrepreneurs whose talent remains unnoticed and unpolished must be brought to lime light. Various social business have been successful in rendering service by equally making profit like providing better health care service, setting up of affordable housing facilities, promoting of educational programs, reduction of poverty etc.

General Sustainability Development Goals

The goals of organizations which are striving for sustainable development are different compared to any organization that has commercial profit motive. The motives will be:

Make towns and society a safe and sustainable place to live for many more generations.

Reduction in poverty in all the forms that exist everywhere in the society.

Promoting well being and healthy lives of people of all ages.

Proper improved nutrition with healthy food, reduction of hunger and to promote sustainable agriculture.

Promotion of learning opportunities to all and to achieve quality education.

Ensuring sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Promotion of inclusive and sustainable industrialization with proper infrastructure development.

Ensure access to reliable, affordable, sustainable and modern energy to all.

Empowerment of women in the society through equal opportunities.

Necessary actions for combating climate change and solutions for reduction of global warming.

Appropriate use of natural resources to ensure sustainable consumption as well as production

Sustainable use of seas, oceans and marine resources.

Restore, promote and protect eco system, managing of forests through elimination of deforestation, land degradation.

Provide access to justice to everyone; build accountable and inclusive institutions for promotion of peaceful and inclusive sustainable development.

To strengthen the means of reviving global partnership with other countries for sustainable development.

Challenges of Social Entrepreneurship for Sustainability in India

The sole purpose of existence of any human being is development and improvement. Each and every human being want to uplift their standard of living. But there are several problems that are encountered in the process of social development by every human being like the natural calamities, inefficient Government policies, drawback in society, resource deprivation.

Social Entrepreneurship faces the same issue as any kind of normal traditional enterprises in matter of growth as well as operations. in addition to this social entrepreneurs also face unique challenges in delivering the social value to the enterprise along with commercial value.

Funding: Social entrepreneurs can run their organization both as for profit and non-profit organization. Some organizations can generate sufficient funds through their goods or services which are socially helpful. But its not a cake walk for many organizations due to trust issue on part of investors on these social organizations. They always opt to invest in a business whose major focus is on wealth generation than on social value.

Long-term focus with appropriate strategy:It is important on part of any business organization to define their long term strategies in a sustainable manner. But these kind of social organizations mean to be working for social benefits have multiple goals. A strong focus on strategy to reinforce the multiple goals is very difficult.

Truthfulness of mission: Establishment of good long term strategy is good to mitigate any mission changes in the organization, without which it may lead to undesirable shift in th social value which it wishes to give to the society .Changes in the mission of organization may dilute its impact and cause confusion in the society.

Communication of objectives: The social enterprises often strive to deliver more social value than the commercial value. However the social value is not easily measured which may make it difficult to communicate its objectives to the donors or investors, stakeholders and as well as the community.

Public Acceptance: Lack of commercial motives that directly project in case of other organizations leads to least acceptance from public at the initial stages of their establishment itself. Hence its difficult to earn income for any further goal achievements without public acceptance.

No supportive framework: there are any hard and fast rules legally to regulate the social enterprises. Appropriate funds are not available at the time of necessity since they are generally not for profit organizations.

Different kinds of Sustainability oriented enterprises

Ecoprenurship: It is an enterprise concerned with creation of economic value through solving environmental problems.

Social Entrepreneurship: An organization which creates value to the society through solving societal problems.

Institutional Entrepreneurship: The core goal of these enterprises is to change regulatory, market and societal institutions.

- a. Sustainable Entrepreneurship: It is concerned with solving of environmental as well as social problem along with commercial success to business.
- b. Green Entrepreneurship: It stands for making changes in the relationship between economy, ecology and society towards sustainable approach.

Marketing techniques for Sustainability

At the organizational level, marketing is a vital business function that is necessary in nearly all industries whether the organization operates as for - profit or as a not – for - profit. For a for-profit organization, marketing is responsible for most tasks that brings revenue to an organization. For the

non-profit organization, marketing is responsible for attracting customers needed to support the non-profit organization's mission, such as raising donations or supporting a cause, contributing to the green environment etc.

In a marketing context, sustainability means any business organization that maintains brand visibility and keeps sales humming through contributing to society equally and letting the people know through its innovative marketing strategies like customer referrals, viral marketing, social media trends etc.

Three questions to decide a marketing strategy for sustainable development: What the enterprise is going to do; why is it planning to do a course of action and how is it going to win in the market with that strategy to its ultimate goal to achieve sustainability development.

The words Sustainability marketing and green marketing are used synonymously which mean the main focus of company is on social and environmental investments as a marketing strategy Sustainability marketing is a way to form relationships with customers while letting them know that they are important and so are future generations.

Macro and micro environmental factors to marketing strategy for sustainable development.

- 1) The changes in the Government Policies, foreign direct investment policies, and greater frequencies in changes of the political parties that may have an effect on the marketing strategies.
- 2) Different views from the customers and society should be an important matter of concern before framing any strategy.
- 3) Bargaining power of customers as how the slight increase in prices due to adoption of Sustainability Development Goals may lead to changing the buying behavior.
- 4) A consideration as to new entrants and their marketing strategies for sustainability development.
- 5) Any threat of substitute products or services that may be offered at a better place through lesser price must be considered.
- 6) Any legal modifications and policies that may affect environmental sustainability.
- 7) How risks are caused by shifts in current technology and how the investment in technology today can have an influence on sustainable marketing strategy.

The Green Marketing Strategies

In an attempt to increase the demand for goods and services companies have employed tactics to ensure that their products are green. Green issues are highly technical and often very complex. Many consumers are unknowingly persuaded into buying products that are mislead to be advertised as sustainable products. A company that is genuine and honestly committed to sustainability can earn the loyalty and respect of consumers.

- 1) Green Design- Designing products and services that are green to begin with is the important marketing strategy. It is necessary to see that product or services are environmentally-friendly from the ground level.
- 2) Green Positioning-Any company undertaking sustainable activities has to promote its sustainability performance. Everything a company does must reflect its sustainability values. They cannot simply claim that they are doing sustainable while actually not.
- 3) Green Pricing- A social enterprise should highlight how their product or service can help in achieving sustainable development of nation through key resources. The prices should convince the customers even if they are high they are contributing to the sustainable development.
- 4) Green Logistics: Packaging is the first important thing that consumer sees. Green packaging contributes to sustainable development. This may save the consumers from misleading unsustainable products.
- 5) Green Disposal: Every aspect of product life cycle must be considered in green marketing strategies. Disposal practices that are unsustainable are hazardous to both human health and environment.

Different forms of sustainable marketing strategies:

Social marketing is designing, implementing and controlling of programs to influence the social value contribution involving the considerations of product, pricing, placement and promotion. Various practices of social marketing which are recently in trend are as follows:

- 1) Corporate Social Marketing – The corporate governance and the behavioral change in the company through campaigns are projected.
- 2) Cause Marketing – It encompasses a wide variety of commercial activity that aligns a company or brand with a cause to generate business and social benefits.
- 3) Cause Related marketing- It deals with donation of certain percentage of revenues to a specific cause which is based on product sales during certain period of time.
- 4) Corporate Philanthropy: It is form of social marketing that deals with direct contributions to a cause or charity in form of donations or grants.
- 5) Community Volunteering: Companies itself engages its employees by providing voluntary services to the community.
- 6) Responsible Business practices: This form adopts discretionary business and investment practices that support social causes.
- 7) Ecological Marketing: It is concerned with all marketing activities that may help to provide remedy for environmental problems

Conclusion

An entrepreneurship cannot be named as social if it does not allow individuals and communities to influence their future lives. A new framework is needed for social entrepreneurship to contribute to the big challenges of our society and planet. In today scenario the expectations from society are very high and for any organization to survive and maintain growth, it must align the way they work to the demands of society by adopting suitable marketing strategies. The challenges faced by the social entrepreneurs are either different compared to other enterprises or when it is similar the level of challenges are high. Employing sustainability marketing strategy is necessary in order to contribute to sustainable development. But any organization before framing marketing strategies for sustainable development it has to frame in a way that gains competitive advantage.

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