Introduction

The colour green is an off shoot of the English verb ‘growan’ which means ‘to grow’. Green has traditionally been associated with hope and growth and also represents nature. Over a period of time, the colour has virtually become a synonym for environment. As resources are limited and human wants are unlimited, it is important for the marketers to utilize the resources efficiently without waste as well as to achieve the organization's objective. So green marketing is inevitable. Green marketing is the process of developing products and services and promoting them to satisfy the customers who prefer products of good quality, performance and convenience at affordable cost, which at the same time do not have a detrimental impact on the environment. It includes a broad range of activities like product modification, changing the production process, modified advertising, change in packaging, etc., aimed at reducing the detrimental impact of products and their consumption and disposal on the environment. Companies all over the world are striving to reduce the impact of products and services on the climate and other environmental parameters. Marketers are taking the cue and are going green.

Our high-rises in factories and farms, freeways and power plants were conceived before we had a clue how the planet works. They are primitive inventions that have been designed by people who didn’t fully grasp the consequences of their actions. But as comprehension has grown, a market has emerged for more sensible alternatives. As global warming becomes a real threat, it is time to upgrade technology to tackle the issue in various streams of Agriculture, Automobiles, Batteries, Electricity, FMCG goods, Electronics etc. Among all these streams one such field is the agriculture where it is highly essential to focus in increasing the productivity by safeguarding the environment. As a result, green marketing has emerged, which aims at marketing sustainable and socially-responsible products and services. Now is the era of recyclable, non-toxic and environment-friendly goods. This has become the new mantra for marketers to satisfy the needs of consumers and earn better profits.
Rationale of the Research

The research on “A Study on Attitudes & Perception of the Consumers & Marketers towards Green Marketing with special reference to Fertilizer Industry” focuses in understanding the attitudes and perception of the consumers towards Green Marketing with reference to fertilizer industry. In the present competitive scenario, most of the companies were shifting their focus from producing traditional products to green products. Since agriculture is one of the backbone of the Indian economy, the agricultural output also depends on the type of fertilizers used. Fertilizers are the most important constituent of the agriculture sector. It is desirable to search the alternatives for the growth of agricultural marketing by involving the various stakeholders of the Indian Farming Society through the ‘green’ concept.

In view of the close and inseparable relationship between fertilizers and agriculture, an overview of Indian agriculture would be very essential for a proper understanding of the problems involved in the marketing of fertilizers in the country. The importance of agriculture in the overall economic structure of a country like India can never be over emphasized. Agriculture forms the backbone of the Indian economy. The agriculture has the strength and ability to feed its large and growing population. In addition, it is the agriculture that acts as a source and contributes to the growth of the other sectors of the economy.

Fertilizer industry is highly capital intensive. It requires huge production facilities to be set up. India is yet to master the process and it is importing the process from the outside countries. Fertilizers are produced at a certain cost. Farmers are not able to bear the cost. Farmers have to use the fertilizers for increasing the productivity for their crops. In this sector, it requires higher productivity to meet the needs of the farmers.

There is a huge gap between the acceptability and the cost of the production. The government has to bear the cost burden of the fertilizers manufacturing in the form of subsidy. The current burden on fertilizers is around 22,000 crores which is highest subsidy given to any sector. There is a gap between supply and demand of the fertilizers. The supply from the government or company side is less and demand from the farmers side is more. Our country never matches between the resources and expenditure.
Fertilizer burden is a major burden to the Indian economy. To meet this, why not look at other options. Among the available options, is the least cost option. We can look forward to produce the fertilizers at easily understandable and producible which is safe for individual concern and also safe for environment. It can be done by producing Organic fertilizers or Green fertilizers. This is the reason the current topic on green fertilizers was selected to explore the effectiveness of Organic fertilizers over Inorganic fertilizers from the attitudes and perception of the farmers. The current study also provides an opportunity to design marketing strategy for Green Fertilizers called as Organic Fertilizers from the opinions of the executives of the fertilizer companies for benefiting the farmers and the society as a whole towards environment protection and sustainability.

**Utility of the Study**

The utility of the study can be summarized as follows:

- If the marketers focus in producing green products, there will be a sustainable competitive advantage, as our Indian consumers are becoming global with the entry of multinationals. The generation of eco-friendly or green products will be mutually beneficial to both company and the consumer.
- This study throws light in understanding the attitudes & perceptions of the farmers & marketers towards ‘Green Marketing’, by eliciting their opinion on chemical fertilizers Vs eco-friendly green fertilizers.
- It also facilitate in understanding the awareness level of the farmers towards green fertilizers called as organic fertilizers.
- Through this study, it will make inroads into developing the variables of the ‘Green’ Marketing mix for fertilizer industry in terms of Product, Price, Place, packaging and Promotion and their impact on purchase decision.
- The research tries to investigate the extent to which the farmers are aware of using the fertilizers which are eco-friendly. This study specifically focused on the fertilizer industry which is the backbone of the Indian agriculture system. Through evaluating the consumer attitudes and perceptions of the farmers regarding eco-friendly or green products, it creates a roadmap for suggesting the green Marketing strategies which is very crucial in promoting the green products called as Organic or Green fertilizers.
• By developing environmentally safe or eco-friendly products/green fertilizers, it benefits the Indian agriculture system as a whole. Farmers are the major idea generating sources in using fertilizers, that is why their attitudes and perceptions towards using green products forms the basis to reap the rich benefits for the Indian economy. The concept of ‘Green Marketing’ can be induced with the marketing dimensions so that it will create sustainable advantage to both company and farmers.