

Ethics In Marketing On Bangladesh Perspective: Study On Few Companies Of Bangladesh

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This research conducted to give some approaches about ethical practices that doing by some of the companies in Bangladesh. One responsibility of business is to satisfy customers by offering them goods and services of real value. Total 100 respondents and three cases were selected for this research. This research focuses on the relationship between marketing and business ethics in the business sector and also the ethics based role of marketing programs that occurred in the organization. After conducting this research, the result is that customer always take the actual product which is perfectly performs and maintain ethics. Companies need to create high ethical standards upon which to approach marketing they are participating in ethical marketing. To market ethically and effectively one should be reminded that all marketing decisions and efforts are necessary to meet and suit the needs of customers, suppliers, and business partners. This paper also informed that companies need to develop customer awareness about ethics in the market sector; improving customer relationship management and capacity building for the company through attaining competitiveness can be attained.

Field of Research: Ethics, marketing, Consumer, deceptive practice, social responsibility.

1. Introduction

These types of study have been taken because these issues are very much new for the present marketing sector in Bangladesh. Three cases based on three companies like Unilever Bangladesh, Square Group and ACI companies have taken for this research. This is an exploratory research and Qualitative judgement also used here. These cases have been chooses because those are popular in this country and maintain competitions among them. So, research has been conducted whether they do ethical practice or not. Marketing ethics in current business attempts to understand the nature of marketing ethics and analyzes the possible impact of ethics in marketing from different viewpoints. It examines the efficacy and impact of popular marketing strategies with ethics, analyzes the role of ethics in advertising, explains the elements of consumer ethics, and discusses the role of legislation to enforce marketing ethics. Ethical marketing describes an approach to marketing in which companies set high ethical standards and communicate those positively. A company that sourced environmentally friendly products from a country or company that practiced

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excellent employee relations would be practicing ethical marketing. Standards for marketing ethics guide companies in their efforts to do "the right thing." These standards help identify acceptable practices, effective internal control, and deal honestly and fairly with customers (Skinner and Ivancevich, 2003). Marketer should not demand or encourage unethical behaviour in the relationship. Consumer Protection laws are a form of government regulation which protects the interests of consumers (Kendall and Kendall, 1998). All the businesses need to disclose detailed information about products—particularly in areas where safety or public health is an issue, such as food. Consumer protection is linked to the idea of "consumer rights" that consumers have various rights as consumers, and to the formation of consumer organizations which help consumers make better choices in the marketplace (Ferrell, Fraedrich and Ferrell, 2008; Kotler, 2003). The research has been undertaken to oversee whether ethical standard and norms have been followed by the local companies of Bangladesh for marketing perspective. This study focuses on understand the ethical procedure that uses in the organization, know the ethics based role of marketing programs that occurred in the organization, examine the relationship between marketing and business ethics in the business sector, find out the procedures that customer focuses on the product.

2. Literature Review

Marketing techniques are sufficiently developed and improving all the time-to maintain a similar level of knowledge of customer expectations as with a single, large customer. They also add that consumer-orientation goes beyond the realm of using geo-demographical information to arouse needs and affect purchasing behaviour (Kendall, 1998; Kendall, 1998). Socially responsible business people behave in an ethical manner. The business environment, the organization, and an individual's own moral philosophy influence ethical and unethical behaviour. Firms can encourage ethical behaviour through education and by developing and enforcing codes of ethics (Skinner, 2003; Ivancevich, 2003).

Brenkert (2008) investigates the basic ethical values and principles central to marketing - freedom, integrity, justice, privacy and welfare - while examining their background assumptions and broader implications for marketing and these are essential to marketing. Punctuated with several in-depth discussions of the specific ethical issues marketers face, essential concepts, principles, and theories to promote a greater overall understanding of the fundamental ways in which marketing and morality are intertwined. A company must continue to develop, alter, and adapt products to keep pace with customers changing desires and preferences; it must also seek to develop long term relationships with customers. For most businesses, both repeat purchases and an enduring

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relationship of mutual respect and cooperation with their customers are essential for success (Ferrell, 2008; Fraedrich, 2008; Ferrell, 2008).

Gilbertson (2008) said that Ethics are our belief about what is right and wrong. Although these beliefs may vary from one individual to another or one company to another, ethics and business responsibility are an important part to any company's marketing department. The goals of the marketing department are to target an audience, appeal to that audience, and get the audience to purchase that particular product or service. In doing this, a company must make sure that they are first abiding by all laws and regulations, but they should also strive to be sure that they are acting ethically and honestly. One interpretation of morality may vary greatly among individuals, but it still exists. Marketing ethics as principles that one principle states that such issues should be decided by the free market and legal system and another principles puts responsibility not on the system but in the hands of individual companies and managers (Kotler, 2008; Armstrong, 2008).

3. Methodology and Research Design

The research aimed to investigate the activities related to the marketing ethics as reported in various company. The study was conducted in three popular Bangladeshi Companies, focussing on the ethical perspectives through three case studies. Mainly this is a qualitative research, for this reason Opinion pool survey has been done and Likert scale is used for data analysis that include, a measurement scale with five response categories ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree and it requires the respondents to indicate a degree of agreement or disagreement with each of a series of statements related to the stimulus objects. This research is based on the questioning of respondents. Each respondent are asked a variety of 15 questions include each questionnaire regarding their behaviour, intentions, attitudes, awareness, motivation, demographic and lifestyle characteristics. Total numbers of responses are 100, due to time and budget constraint and they have been selected randomly in the Dhaka City. The response rate was 100%. This survey was conducted from 1st July 2009 to 30th September 2009. Both primary and secondary sources are used. Some books, journals, papers, etc are used for this paper.

4. Case based on Ethical Marketing

Marketing ethics is a sub-set of business ethics and examines the moral issues relating to marketing decisions made by organizations. Although its roots can be traced back to the 1960s, marketing age is believed to have come of age only in the 1990s, thanks to extensive research on the subject carried out in the decade before. Several topics make up the fabric of marketing ethics: product quality, safety and liability, fairness in pricing, honesty in advertising and selling, privacy in internet database and marketing. According to Kotler (2003), in recent years,

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people have started questioning the value of marketing concept, when the world is faced with environmental degradation, resource shortages, hunger and poverty and neglected social services." Conscious Consuming is a social movement that based around increased awareness of the impact of purchasing decisions on the environment and the consumer's health and life in general. It is also concerned with the effects of media and advertising on consumers. Many aspects of Conscious Consuming have been practiced throughout the world but not in a cohesive form. In Bangladesh there are various types of companies that perform ethical procedure in their business. They maintain some rules and have mission to reach to the top of the country. Three cases were selected for this study.

1. **Case study: 1 ACI Company of Bangladesh** (Source: http://www.acigroup.info/home_care_product.html).

Advanced Chemical Industries (ACI) Limited is one of the leading conglomerates in Bangladesh, with a multinational heritage. They have a mission to achieve business excellence through quality by understanding, accepting, meeting and exceeding customer expectations. They follow International Standards on Quality Management System to ensure consistent quality of products and services to achieve customer satisfaction. They are focusing on improving the food habit of consumers through providing more ready to cook products and ready to eat as well. Their visions are to establish harmonious relationship with the community and promote greater environmental responsibility within its sphere of influence. Their Values are Quality, Customer Focus, Fairness, Transparency, Continuous Improvement, and Innovation.

Societal Development through Educational Programs: ACI's guiding principle in all its operations is to be a 'responsible corporate citizen'. Thus, Social Responsibility is a top priority for every individual at ACI. Their Initiatives significant contribution to societal development is Continued Medical Education (CME) for medical professionals and Children's Education Programs. ACI has also undertaken an English Education program in Faridpur, one of the remotest districts of Bangladesh. This provides support to teach English Language to school going children.

Outcome: Doctors in Bangladesh who are not living in the metropolitan cities have very limited access to the Internet or any other sources of information. In order to keep them updated on the developments in the medical practices regularly, the CME program has been proven highly effective. ACI believes that by promoting education of children, they are contributing to societal development by shaping the minds of their future leaders.

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Educating the farmers, with a focus on E *Educating the farmers, with a focus on Environment Friendly Practices*: ACI has undertaken extensive programs to educate crop farmers all over rural Bangladesh in Good Agricultural Practices. They have a team of agricultural experts working at the field level all across the country, holding a range of technical trainings and field demonstrations. ACI also has similar education programs for animal and poultry farmers. These include, Technical trainings on diverse aspects of farming, and on application of new technologies, Farmers' group meeting for sharing of learning and experience, Free visits to farms by veterinarians, to identify problems and give advices to individual farmers. *Outcomes*: Farmers are mostly illiterate having learnt the art and science of farming by assisting their family on the fields. ACI continuous endeavours to educate farmers have given significant benefits on three fronts: 1. Raising the level of awareness among farmers on improving their agricultural output through application of new technology, encouraging them to share experiences with neighbouring farmers and, in the long run, developing educated farmers. 2. Raising the educational level and technical knowledge of channel partners and third parties who act as advisors to the farmers. 3. Most importantly, making the farmers aware of ways to protect the environment from hazardous uses of chemicals on their farms, allowing them the opportunity for *informed decision-making*. ACI hopes to continue to play a leading role in promoting greater environmental responsibility among farmers in Bangladesh.

Case Study: 2 Unilever Bangladesh

http://www.unilever.com.bd/our_values/environmental_and_society/FAL_foundation.asp>

Over the last four decades, Unilever Bangladesh has been constantly bringing new and world-class products for the Bangladeshi people to remove the daily drudgery of life. Over 90% of the country's households use one or more of unilever products. They aim to give everybody a little something to celebrate about themselves every day. Fast Moving Consumer Goods Company with local manufacturing facilities, reporting to regional business groups for innovation and business results. *Purposes*: Unilever's mission is to add Vitality to life. They meet everyday needs for nutrition; hygiene and personal care with brands that help people feel good, look good and get more out of life. Their deep roots in local cultures and markets around the world give them their strong relationship with consumers and are the foundation for their future growth. They will bring their wealth of knowledge and international expertise to the service of local consumers – a truly multi-local multinational. Their long-term success requires a total commitment to exceptional standards of performance and productivity, to working together effectively, and to a willingness to embrace new ideas and learn continuously. To succeed also requires, they believe, the highest standards of corporate behaviour towards everyone they work with, the communities they touch, and the environment on which they have an impact. This is their road to

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sustainable, profitable growth, creating long-term value for their shareholders, our people, and our business partners. *Principles*: Their code of business principles describes the operational standards that everyone at Unilever follows, wherever they are in the world. It also supports their approach to governance and corporate responsibility. Code of business principles are Standard of conduct, Obey the law, Employees, consumers, shareholders, Business partners, community involvement, public activities, the environment, innovation, competition, business integrity, conflict of interest, compliance, reporting, monitor. Unilever Bangladesh creates some foundations for women. They are Fair & Lovely Foundation: Unilever Bangladesh provides Fair & Lovely Foundation which is related to business ethics or corporate social responsibility. Unilever Bangladesh's social initiative to encourage women's economic empowerment through information and resources in the areas of Career, Education and Enterprise, has created waves across the country. *Empowering Women* In Bangladesh, like many other developing countries, women facing the same poverty issues as men are subject to additional social and policy biases. For this, they remain backward in terms of education and economic independence. Unilever strongly believes in the importance of empowering women in Bangladesh, because the progress of any society will be constrained if a significant part of its population is neglected and excluded from the benefits of development. It is therefore necessary that women be progressively brought into the main stream of economic activities. They believe, with economic and educational empowerment, women can become more vocal about their rights and become stronger in withstanding repression in any form. The mission of the Foundation is to "Encourage economic empowerment of Bangladeshi women through information and resources in the areas of Education, Career and Enterprise". It is this realization that has brought about the Fair & Lovely Foundation Scholarship Program. Fair & Lovely Scholarship Program: under this scholarship scheme, women who have passed their HSC each received a Taka 25,000 scholarship to support her tertiary level education. The subjects covered under this scholarship program are: Medicine, Engineering, Science, Arts/Social Science, Commerce, and High Agro-Science.

The fair and lovely uttoron enari program: brought the opportunities of computer education - essential knowledge in today's world - to girl students, for whom such education was socially inaccessible. The Fair & Lovely Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme was set up to explore the endless possibilities that lie in this sector for women. This Programme assists both urban and rural women by providing practical knowledge as well as business expertise. Small and medium enterprises are crucial for the economic development of Bangladesh. The Fair & Lovely WEALTH program has tapped in to the immense potential of women irrespective of educational backgrounds in this sector. A post training follow up programme has proven that most of those trained women have turned the fate of herself and her family by establishing themselves as successful entrepreneurs. LUX : Lux has covered various aspects of beauty and stardom.

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But now Lux feels that women have forgotten that beauty should be fun. And looking great is an integral part of being a woman. Lux is here to remind, encourage, inspire women and have fun with them. Lux is celebrating the femininity and playfulness to remind women to enjoy absolutely everything about becoming and being beautiful. *Celebration of femininity by Lux*: In recent times, Lux has embraced beauty and femininity of the 21st century women. That's why Lux celebrates the pleasure of being a woman today by encouraging women to feel and look beautiful, be individualistic about their self-expression and indulge in the rituals of beautification in an unapologetically feminine way. Lux beautifies in a playful way, letting women express their feminine spirit without constraints. Lux is taking the new philosophy "Play with beauty" to the most rural, conservative consumers at the bottom of the pyramid through activation called "LuxMatoRuperRonge" activation has been carried out in 31 districts. About a million women were contacted and awareness created about the new philosophy of Lux. The Lux Superstars met and visited consumers. It has been instrumental in spreading the Lux touch of stardom to millions of women in Bangladesh. In rural areas, where the reach of conventional media is limited, activation such as this was a brilliant way to connect with the consumers and embed in them that they too can 'Play with Beauty.' Lux has been associated with endeavours to provide a platform for young females to bring out the 'star' in them. In Bangladesh, Lux has discovered and promoted some of the finest talents gracing the national media today. The prime focus of Lux Channel I Superstar 2008 was to take the philosophy "Play with Beauty" to higher grounds.

Case Study: 3 Square Consumers Limited Bangladesh (Source: <http://www.squareconsumersltd.com>)

In 2001, **SCPL** (Square Consumers Product Limited) started its operation as an individual company. Within a very short span of time **SCPL** has already drawn the attention of the consumers by providing quality products and preferred services. Their dedication to quality, uniform products, customer service and competitive prices has given them unique position in the market. New products are continuously being developed and evaluated for their growing market. Their objectives are-

- To continue to provide the very best of what the consumer wants
- To explore new segments of market and to cater to it
- To identify what the consumer needs and providing it to them
- To continue to assure intrinsic quality of hygienic food products with authentic taste
- To enhance customers' standard of food habit
- To expand distribution network to make the products available at customers' doorsteps
- To enhance the strength and skill of the organization that will contribute to

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company's increasing growth both in domestic and global markets

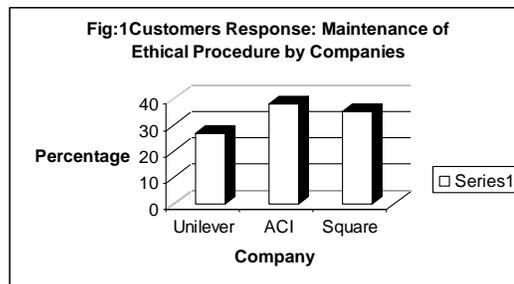
Vision: SQUARE CONSUMER PRODUCTS LTD. introduce itself as a member of SQUARE Group of Companies, a leading corporate house in Bangladesh engaged in manufacturing and marketing of pharmaceuticals, toiletries, consumer goods, textiles, spinning, knitting, packaging, printing etc.

Mission: They want to be the world class food products manufacturer in Bangladesh by ensuring intrinsic quality products and customer service with state of the art technology and motivated employees.

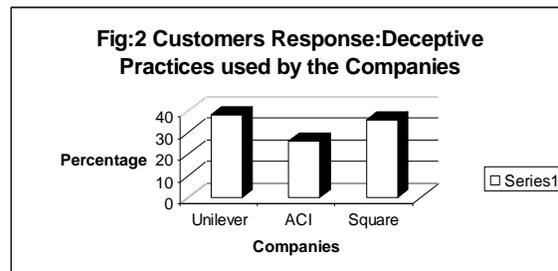
5. Findings

After conducting the survey on various respondents I have found various types of situations based on ethical marketing. I have made various questions and respondents answer those questions. Customer responses are shown in different figures as below,

In figure-1, Customer response on maintenance of ethical procedure by companies, Unilever is 27%, ACI is 38%, Square is 35%.

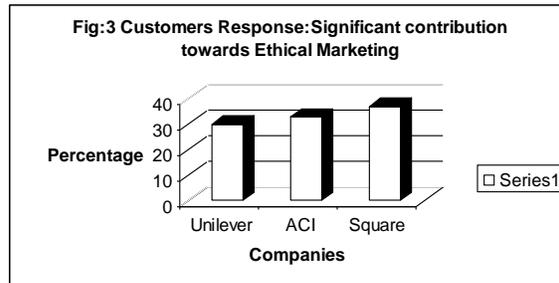


In figure-2, Customer response on deceptive practices used by the companies, Unilever is 38%, ACI is 26%, Square is 36%.

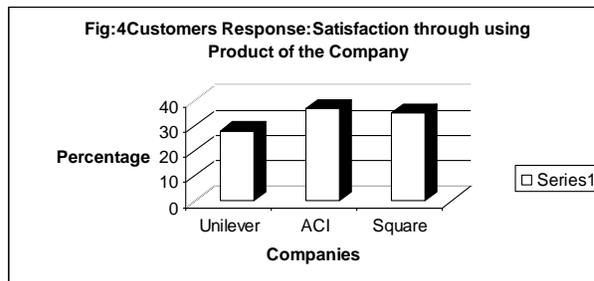


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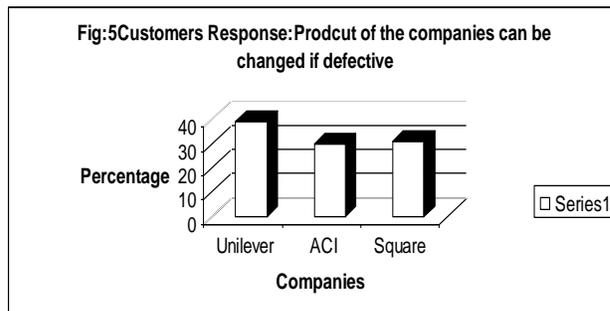
In figure-3, Customer response on significant contribution toward ethical marketing, Unilever is 30%, ACI is 33%, Square is 37%.



In figure-4, Customer response on satisfaction through using product of the company, Unilever is 28%, ACI is 37%, Square is 35%.



In figure-5, Customer response on product of the companies can be changed if defective, Unilever is 39%, ACI is 30%, Square is 31%.



6. Discussion of Findings

Ethically thinking is responding to situations that deal with principles concerning human behaviour in respect to the appropriateness and inappropriateness of certain communication and to the decency and indecency of the intention and results of such actions. In other words, ethics are distinctions between right and wrong. In the cases, there are two companies that followed ethical rules and social responsibilities, but, ACI Company produces such products but it does not

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work properly, Like ACI Aerosol. It mainly produces for killing mosquitoes, but that's not true. Most of the mosquitoes go away for few times but not killed. Other types of products like ACI Atta, ACI Maida, etc contains 1975 grams instead of 2000 grams but they fixed their price for 2kg of the product. These are unethical for their marketing practices. Sometimes most of the companies did not follow laws. Their advertisement is most of the times deceptive in different cases. Unilever produces Fair and lovely fairness cream, lotion, etc and they claim that skin colour will be white after using this product. But that it is not true. There are no scientific values about whiteness. This is totally unethical performance in marketing activities of this company. Unilever produces Lux beauty soap that contains various types of natural ingredients, but it does not work effectively as they claim on their product. Most of the persons misguided after using this product. This is unethical activities of this company. Businesses are confronted with ethical decision making every day, and whether employees decide to use ethics as a guiding force when conducting business is something that business leaders, such as managers, need to install. Marketers are ethically responsible for what is marketed and the image that a product portrays. With that said, marketers need to understand what good ethics are and how to incorporate good ethics in various marketing campaigns to better reach a targeted audience and to gain trust from customers. Marketing ethics, regardless of the product offered or the market targeted, sets the guidelines for which good marketing is practiced. When companies create high ethical standards upon which to approach marketing they are participating in ethical marketing. To market ethically and effectively one should be reminded that all marketing decisions and efforts are necessary to meet and suit the needs of customers, suppliers, and business partners. Ethical behaviour should be enforced throughout out company culture and through company practices. Marketing ethics overlaps with environmental ethics in respect of waste problems associated with the packaging of products. Some, such as members of the advocacy group No Free Lunch, have argued that marketing by pharmaceutical companies is negatively impacting physicians' prescribing practices, influencing them to prescribe the marketed drugs rather than others which may be cheaper or better for the patient. Business ethics has been an increasing concern among larger companies, at least since the 1990s. Major corporations increasingly fear the damage to their image associated with press revelations of unethical practices. Marketers have been among the fastest to perceive the market's preference for ethical companies, often moving faster to take advantage of this shift in consumer taste. This results in the expropriation of ethics itself as a selling point or a component of a corporate image.

7. General observations

In marketing there are some critics that claim certain marketing practices hurt individual consumers, society as a whole and other business firms. There are some marketing impacts on individual consumers. High cost of distribution; Complaint: Intermediaries mark up prices beyond their value due to inefficiencies

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and unnecessary or duplicative services. Response: Mark-up's reflect the cost of the services that consumers expect Convenience, Larger stores and assortments, more service, Return privileges High advertising and promotion costs; Complaint: Prices are inflated to absorb advertising and sales promotion costs, and packaging only adds to the psychological, not functional, value of the product. Response: Advertising does add to product cost but also to product value by informing potential customers of the availability and merits of the product—Brand. Excessive mark-ups; Complaint: Companies mark up products excessively. Response: Most businesses try to deal fairly with consumers because they want to build relationships and repeat business. Deceptive practices; Complaint: Companies use deceptive practices that lead customers to believe they will get more value than they actually do. These practices fall into three categories:

Deceptive pricing includes practices such as falsely advertising “factory” or “wholesale” prices or a large price reduction from a high retail list price

Deceptive promotion includes practices such as misrepresenting the product's features or performance or luring the customer to the store for a bargain that is out of stock. *Deceptive packaging* includes exaggerating packaging contents through subtle design, using misleading labelling or describing size in the misleading terms. *Others deceptive practices*: Deceptive practices - high-pressure selling; Complaint: Salespeople use high-pressure selling that persuades people to buy goods they had no intention of buying. Response: Most selling involves building long-term relationships and valued customers. High pressure or deceptive selling can damage these relationships.

Deceptive practices - Shoddy, Harmful, or Unsafe Products; Complaint: Products have poor quality, provide little benefit, and can be harmful. Response: Today's marketers know that customer-driven quality results in customer value and satisfaction that creates profitable customer relationships. There is no value in marketing shoddy, harmful, or unsafe products. Deceptive practices - Planned Obsolescence; Complaint: Producers follow a program of planned obsolescence, causing their products to become obsolete before they actually need replacement. Producers also continually change consumers' concepts of acceptable styles to encourage more and earlier buying. Response: Planned obsolescence is really the result of competitive market forces leading to ever-improving goods and services. Marketers know that customers like style changes and want the latest innovations even if older models still work. False Wants and Too Much Materialism; Complaint: The marketing system urges too much interest in material possessions. People are judged by what they own rather than who they are, creating false wants that benefit industry more than they benefit consumers. Response: People do have strong defences against advertising and other marketing tools. Marketers are most effective when they appeal to existing wants rather than creating new ones. The high failure rate of new products

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shows that companies cannot control demand. Cultural Pollution; Complaint: Marketing and advertising creates cultural pollution. Response: Marketing and advertising are planned to reach only a target audience, and advertising makes radio and television free to users and helps to keep the cost of newspapers and magazines down. Today's consumers have alternatives to avoid marketing and advertising from technology.

8. Concluding Remarks

Companies are responding to the need to provide company policies and guide lines to help their manager's deal with questions of marketing ethics. There are some principles that managers can use for their ethical decisions. One principle states that such issues should be decided by the free market and legal system. A second and more enlightened principle puts responsibility not on the system but in the hands of individual companies and managers. Kendall explains that marketing techniques are sufficiently developed and improving all the time to maintain a similar level of knowledge of customer expectations as with a single or large customer. Skinner and Ivancevich (2003) described that socially responsible business people behave in an ethical manner. They also claim that firms can encourage ethical behaviour through education and by developing and enforcing codes of ethics. There are some stages in the evolution of Business Ethics that can be maintained by the all companies. They are- Environmental management plan- Environmental benchmark, Sustainability, Social ecological and economic targets; Customer orientation- Investment in people, fair organization; Supply chain management- Corporate governance, Stakeholder dialogue.

9. Recommendations

Each firm and marketing must work out a philosophy of socially responsible and ethical behaviour. Under the social marketing concept, managers must look beyond what is legal and allowable and develop standards based on personal integrity, corporate conscience, and long term consumer welfare. There is some code of ethics. This will be helpful for every company those who doing ethical activities. The six pillar of marketing's code of ethics are- Honesty represent trustworthy – do not deceive, cheat or steal. Be reliable – do what you say you will do. Have the courage to do the right thing; Responsibility represent Do what you are supposed to do. Always do your best. Think before you act - consider the consequences. Be accountable for your choices. Sell products and services that are beneficial. Provide living wages. Curb child labour. Eliminate sweatshop labour practices. Consider the environment. Limit carbon emissions. Uphold product safety; Caring means do not take advantage of others. Do not charge exorbitant prices – strive for a fair profit. Share is opening minded. Listen to others. Doing no harm; Respect represent threat others with respect. Follow the golden rule –unselfishly treating others in the manner you would like to be

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treated. Respect human rights. Heed labour relations. Be tolerant of differences; Fairness to be open. Share the hard facts – the good, the bad and the ugly. Do not sugar-coat reality. And listen. Strive for a fair profit; Citizenship shows Co-operate, Stay informed, Help others in need, and create a good reputation.

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