

Executive Summary

The Flow

Background

Approach

Design

Key Findings

Conclusions & Recommendations

Annexure

Annexure I: Concepts Exposed In The Research

Background

IRFT has launched a project with Traidcraft UK to promote Fair Trade in India. The focus is likely to be in the area of tea and textiles.

In this context, IRFT had approached Centre Of Gravity to conduct a study among consumers, retailers, domestic marketers of fair trade, corporate, media, experts, producers and marketers of labels.

The objective of the study

To arrive at a marketing strategy for fair trade products in tea and textiles.

The project was commissioned in the month of June 2006 and was completed by September 2006. This document is a summary of the relevant research findings and recommendations.

Centre Of Gravity – An Introduction

Centre Of Gravity is a company that has people with substantial experience in the area of customer research and corporate/ brand strategy consulting. The clients we have worked on include Unilever Plc (cosmetics, beverage, soaps), Reckitt Benckiser, Excel, Asian Paints, Bharat Petroleum, Kotak, Blow Plast and many others. Apart from these we have worked with social organizations like Janaagraha and Loksatta.

Approach

Pre-Project Phase

Before we start any project, we normally spend about a month trying to know the context in as much detail as possible. This we do by reading research reports, interviewing employees of clients, meeting with experts, talking to people in the value chain etc. This helps us get a good touch-and-feel of the category and focus the Strategy Development Research better.

Strategy Development Research

Solution based research: Our approach to research is not just to understand people's attitudes and reaction, but also to arrive at a solution. We normally prefer Qualitative Research as it helps us to experience the world the way customers experience it. The shades and textures that emerge from the research are often central to the decision-making.

Inclusive methodology: The client is normally part of the Strategy Development Process. At every stage, client's inputs are taken and the final strategy recommendations are normally evolved along with the client.

Creative & Evolutionary: We develop creative concepts based on hypotheses. As the research progresses, the concepts are modified and new concepts are added, getting closer and closer to the final solution.

The primary mode of research was Depth Interviews. In some cases, mini-groups were also conducted.

Design

Consumer Research

The Consumer research was done among college students in the age-group of 18 - 22 and married couples in the age-groups of 25 - 30, 35 - 40 & 45 - 50. The research was conducted in three cities – Mumbai, Hyderabad and Delhi.

All belonged to SEC A. (SEC stands for Socio Economic Classification which classifies people based on education and occupation. 'A' is the highest classification in the pyramid representing the well-educated, senior managers/ owners). These consumers were chosen intentionally since we wanted to study the reactions of evolved consumers, who are likely to be the early adopters for fair trade. Research was also conducted among consumers who already shop fair trade products regularly and those who have been exposed to the concept.

Since a large part of the study was about understanding customers as customers, we also bring in wherever relevant, our learning from 600+ Group Discussions and Interviews we have conducted in the last few years across many categories.

Other Research

In addition to the customers, research was also conducted among retailers (small, medium and big), media (TV, Newspaper, Radio), domestic fair trade marketers, corporate (Tea and Textiles) and marketers of labels (Rugmark, Pure For Sure).

Tea and Textiles

In the recent past, we have extensively studied both these categories for our other clients. We have also included relevant and non-confidential findings from those studies.

Key Findings

The overall reaction to the concept of fair trade has to be seen in the context of major changes in people's lives – to understand not just how they react, but also why they react the way they do.

A. Optimism And Confidence In The Air

The general mood is one of optimism. Life has been good in the last 10 years and looks like it will only get better from here. The shift from a 'scarcity mindset' to 'abundance mindset' is quite palpable.

a. Rise Of Materialism

Rich, urban lifestyle, made aspirational by the popular cinema and TV soaps is now the dream of everyone. And with the dramatic rise in income levels, the dreams aren't that difficult to achieve. Whatever one dreamt of, a house or a car, has become a reality much earlier than one would have expected.

b. Greater Self-esteem

With greater success in life, with more opportunities and a better standard of living, there is also more confidence in oneself - what one can do and who one is. No shame in being Indian as more and more Indians and Indian companies excel at the international level. Looking up to the west, almost blindly, is on the wane. There is a coming back to roots, as predicted by John Naisbitt in Mega Trends. People are beginning to balance the Western and Indian influences.

c. Personality Ethic

There has been a shift from 'Character Ethic' (substance and success through hardwork) to 'Personality Ethic' (Style and quick, easy success). Many TV Programs that promise quick, easy success such as Kaun Banega Crorepati (Indian version of "Who wants to be a millionaire?"), Indian Idol, Beauty Contests etc. have become immensely successful.

There is nothing to be apologetic about – surely not money or success. In the 70s, the villains in films used to live in big, ostentatious houses. Now, the heroes do.

d. Age Of Experimentation

This mood of optimism and change has also meant people are willing to take greater risk and experiment with new things. One can afford to live for the moment vis-à-vis live for the future.

e. Individualism

With the break-up of the joint family (the first generation who are living away from their parents) and freedom that money brings, there is more room for individualism, for living life on one's own terms.

But, all this has come at a price.

B. Competition And Stress

India's economic turnaround has been so sudden that the intensity of the competition has caught people unawares. The fairly calm and stable landscape one grew up in, has got altered dramatically.

The demands at workplace are rising - longer working hours, tougher targets and higher risk of non-performance. The demands at home are also rising – especially, the pressure from children who are wielding greater power over parents than ever before.

And while things have gotten better at the personal sphere, it is getting worse at the societal/ political sphere. The corruption and criminalization of politics, police force and judiciary is at an all-time high. 100 out of 542 MPs who won in the last elections had criminal records against them. There is also more bad news in the media – partly a true representation and partly mere sensationalism to hold people’s attention. Either way, scams, bombs, murders are what one gets to hear.

It is life lived inside a pressure cooker. And quite naturally, things that help people destress have become huge money-earners. Spirituality and yoga have moved from the fringes to the mainstream in a matter of few years. 4 out of the Top 5 Hindi Films in the last 12 months were based on humour.

And the three major scarcities of our age only add to the stress.

C. Three Scarcities

a. Scarcity Of Time

Every one is busy. The man of the house is trying to juggle the professional and personal lives without much success. The women, working or not working, are busy and feel that there is no time to look after themselves. Even the children are busy. Only the Senior Citizens have time for themselves and for things beyond themselves.

The days are spent in ‘hard time’ - clock-watching, stressful time. There is very little time left for the simple joys of life – playing with children etc. This creates a sense of frustration, as if life has played a trick on them – ‘Now, we have more luxuries, but no time to enjoy them’.

b. Scarcity Of Attention

There are more channels, more magazines, more newspapers to deal with. To work one needs to process more information. To shop one has to process information. One needs to learn more and more just to stay in the same place.

How does the mind deal with it? Out of the numerous messages one receives, the mind filters out what is not simple or relevant and what has no 'interest' value. It is no surprise that mass media and advertising have begun to entertain first and inform next.

Also, it makes 'programmed' decisions, whenever it can afford to or in the case there is a need to reevaluate something that is complex and high-risk, a new car for example, it likes to take the short-cut of talking to experts or those who have already bought one.

c. Scarcity Of Trust

One can't trust the Government, judiciary or police force – many 'sting' operations in the media have only added to this feeling. One can't trust the cricketers – some were involved in match fixing. One can't trust the religious leaders – some have charges of murders and corruption against them.

'You can't trust anybody these days, may be except Abdul Kalaam'.

D. The Contradiction

a. Selfish

There was a time when the World was one's home. As in the words of the Chief Of Seattle, 'The rivers are our brothers...'. But, times have changed. Now, the Home Is One's World. It is through the lens of one's own family, what is good and bad for it, that one sees the world. This is more often than not, a selfish lens.

'If Coca Cola is spoiling the Ganges (one of the concepts exposed in the groups), it doesn't matter as long as the water in my pipe is clean'.

As against those from a village or a small town, the urban dwellers don't have a real relationship with the processes or people involved in the production.

'I am not worried about whether they pay their employees or electricity bills properly'.

But, there is more to the story.

b. Selfless

In India, there is a great deal of interaction between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. Around every family, often an eco-system of 'have-nots' develop. A few relatives from the village/ small towns who are pulled up with help (money for education or jobs). A servant who is given old clothes. A beggar who is offered food everyday. A temple or a religious group that is supported with donations.

But, no big deal is made of this. Helping those in need, in little ways, is not even seen as charity or as a good deed.

It is in the context of these findings that we should understand their reactions to different stakeholders in the society (Governments, NGOs, Corporates and Citizens), and to the concept of fair trade.

E. Reactions to Stakeholders

a. Government

Government is synonymous with ‘corruption’ and is not respected. For most people, Government represents all that is wrong with India. Also, now that many of the public services such as Telephones, Airways have been privatized and become more effective, the tag of ‘inefficiency’ attached with the Government has only got worse.

People feel that it is the Government’s role to eradicate poverty. But, they don’t have any hope that it will in the near future. In fact, the inefficiency and corruption in the Government are seen to be the root causes for poverty.

b. Corporates

Corporates on the other hand represent all that is right with India. For most people, their lives have changed for good post liberalisation and the corporates are seen as the real agents of this change.

The corporates are seen to be selfish, but honest (as against Government which talks grand selfless values but is corrupt) – ‘When I work, they pay me for my work’ ‘When I buy a product, they offer me value for money’. Even the lying ads are forgiven – ‘They exaggerate everything, but you would be a fool to believe them’.

The values that mattered in the past such as integrity and humaneness have lost their relevance as they are not necessary for success in life. The values that seem to help them become successful such as aggression, greed, flamboyance, meritocracy and efficiency are the new-age Indian values.

If we look closely, we can see that these are also the values of the corporates. Whenever a finger is pointed at a corporate for unethical practices it is a finger pointed at them as well and hence they defend it.

Even if there is a practice that upsets them, such as child labour, they feel powerless. 'If we can't buy Brooke Bond, then what can we buy?'. Once again, it is seen as the failure of the Government – not being able to police the corporates properly.

They feel that companies are not the cause of poverty. In fact, they are seen to be the ones who eradicate poverty from the society by creating employment, though it is not even their duty.

However, recent instances such as pesticides in colas have shaken them up a bit. But, even then what upsets them is the fact that they and their children are the victims.

c. NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations)

Most people are aware of NGOs, but the feelings about NGOs are mixed. They are not sure about their integrity - 'Some NGOs are good like CRY and HelpAge, but there are many corrupt ones'. Some, who are associated with NGOs have an overall positive outlook towards them.

When they give money to an NGO, they are not sure whether the money will actually reach those in need. In comparison, the trust in corporates is so much more, they ask – 'Who are you to certify the corporates in terms of fairness. Why should I trust you?'.

While the Government and Corporate are also seen to be responsible for grand changes in society, the NGOs are seen as someone doing work in the fringes of the society.

d. Citizens

In a moment of honesty, occasionally someone might accept that as a citizen one is responsible for what goes around – the good and the bad. But, by and large, no one feels directly responsible for anything wrong with the society - including poverty.

Handling their life, meeting the demands of life makes on them exhausts them to the point, where they can't take on anything more. Surely, not a role in a grand movement to transform the society. Also, they feel that whatever they can do in their own little way, they are already doing – by helping those who enter their eco-system.

Now, let's move on to the real issue at hand – Fair Trade.

F. Reactions to the Fair Trade Concept

There is no awareness of Fair Trade as a concept. The term is also confused with Trade Fairs etc. Also, Fair Trade as fairness to the producers, environment etc. is not something that they can easily grasp. There are many reasons for this.

1. The way people understand fairness in trade is in terms of what is fair to them as consumers - the value for money equation. It is not in terms of whether the company is being fair to its people including the producers. On this count (fairness to consumers), they feel that most companies are fair. They are outraged only when they are the victims – as in the case of pesticides in Colas or worms in chocolates.

2. In the companies where they work, they get paid according to their performance – ‘They make you work more. But, they also pay you more’. Added to this is the kind of respect they have for companies such as Hindustan Lever. Hence they naturally assume that the companies will be paying others also what they deserve.

3. They do not feel in anyway connected to the people or things behind a product. For them, the products come from shelves.

4. Their world-view is neatly divided. There is business – which is about profits and therefore everyone will act in a selfish manner – “They sell Rs. 5 potato as chips for Rs. 1000. But, even I will do the same”. And then there is charity – which is about helping those in need and therefore everyone will act in a selfless manner.

G. Nature of Choice & Fair Trade

Product

The first and the foremost parameter in considering any product is quality. In fact, the consumer awareness and insistence on quality is greater than before. They are not willing to accept a product of inferior quality vis-à-vis the competition just because it is fair trade. They would rather buy a good quality product and help someone separately by way of donations.

In fact even customers who are buying Fair Trade products are buying primarily because of the quality of the product and not because it is a social cause (the fact that they are supporting something by buying the product is an add-on benefit).

The parameters of product based choice for tea and textiles are discussed below in detail. Customers will not compromise on these parameters while evaluating fair trade tea or textiles.

Product and Choice - Tea

Over a period of time, customers get accustomed to a certain brand of tea as it is a promise of familiar combination of experiences to their senses (flavor and color). And hence it is very difficult for them to let go off a brand.

However, one gets a taste of other tea brands/ product type quite frequently at a friend's/ relative's/ colleague's houses, hotels, offices and kiosks at public spaces. And this could cause a shift.

The key parameters are strength and taste. The consumer at the lower socio-economic segment lays a greater emphasis on strength. As one moves up, strength gets taken for granted, flavor and taste becomes more important. Among the elite, lighter teas, leaf teas and even specific ones like Assam/ Darjeeling tea are quite well-known.

Product and Choice – Textiles

Two major categories within Textiles – Apparels and Home Accessories.

In apparels, there is a great amount of experimentation in terms of products and brands – the same wardrobe will have clothes from Flea Market and Hypermarket. Also different clothes are bought for different occasions as people begin to lead multiples lives – office, home, semi-formal meetings, partying etc.

Compared to tea, there is a greater flexibility in the choice of brands/ product types. What makes customers choose one product over the other are design, style and fit. Durability and colour steadfastness are hygiene parameters.

In the case of home accessories, the hygiene parameters remain the same. The parameters of choice are design and what fits the theme of the house.

Imagery

The choice is obviously not just based on product, but on brand imagery. Time and again, one has seen that even products that score much better on blind tests will not be chosen in real life due to the image. This image that people carry in their minds and what it makes them feel about themselves is often a more powerful defense against any arguments than the functional parameters.

Different brands have hooked onto different motivators that are available within Tea and Textiles.

Image and Choice – Tea

Tea is a mood-regulator. It can kick-start a day, get creative juices flowing or help one relax. Tea is a social lubricant. A visitor is normally offered tea and many relationships are built over cups of tea. Tea, in the upper-segment, also stands for taste, it is used to express how good a connoisseur one is. Beyond these, Trust is a critical parameter, since consistency of Tea is an important and a difficult parameter to adhere to.

Many brands are very strongly positioned on these key parameters. As a fair trade brand, we would be up against these images that have been built up over decades.

Overall, in India, Coffee has become more aspirational than tea. In fact, the Tea Board is currently running a campaign, which is attempting to make Tea aspirational.

Image and Choice – Textiles

Clothes maketh the man holds true. More than a car or a watch or a bag, clothes continue to be the primary mode of self-expression. It can be used to transform oneself from student to an executive. It can be an expression of confidence, of status, of power, of sensuality and sexuality.

For many, openness to experimentation is often limited to set of brands and retail outlets. Not having an aspirational brand image could leave a fair trade brand out of the considered set.

c. Price

Due to intense competition between brands and between retail showrooms, there is always a sale happening in most categories. This has turned many brand conscious customers into bargain hunters. And no customer will compromise on price, just because it is a fair traded product.

Price and Choice – Tea

Considering the fact that customers are attached to specific brands of tea to a great extent, conversion itself is difficult to happen. Considering it is a price-sensitive category, where price-off and gifts are used for conversion, a price-premium will damage any slim chances of conversion.

Price and choice - Textiles

In comparison, textile is less price-sensitive. In the sense that when they like something, they usually don't mind paying a little more for it (They are mostly aware of the price range for a particular product and know how much premium they are paying).

But, if they are aware that they will get a better deal (same quality at a considerably lesser price) somewhere else, they would surely buy from that place. In fact, even regular customers of NGOs such as Shurjan or Dastakar, buy them because they get good value for money.

d. Place

India has seen a retail revolution in the last decade. Cities abound with different retail formats – supermarkets, hypermarkets etc.

Big Retail Outlets

As far as the big retail outlets are concerned, they are new, have sunk in a lot of money and are fighting out an intense battle with many others who have jumped onto the bandwagon. They feel that the competition will only get more intense and things might stabilize in 8 to 10 years time. Till then, it will be a 'dog-eat-dog' as they fight it out between themselves.

For some time to come, all their actions would be geared to consolidating themselves and trying to earn customer loyalty by passing on whatever benefits they can. Their attitude towards Fair Trade has to be seen from this context.

For agri-based products or greens, they directly source their products from wholesalers. And whatever money they save on the procurement side is critical for earning profits or for earning customer loyalty. But, in the case of textiles, some do buy from certified manufacturers to ensure good product quality and to avoid any ethical hassles in the future. They will not give away shelf-space if it doesn't bring in good returns. They will not compromise their systems or processes to accommodate fair trade. They are not likely to promote fair trade on a regular basis in their outlet as a gesture. And they will surely not compromise on their margins.

Net-net, it is as good as any other product.

Small/ Medium Retail Outlets

The feeling here is not much different. They also will not compromise on their margins or give prominence without returns. In fact, if they feel that there may not be a strong demand (for example, if there is no advertisement etc.), they may not feel confident of stocking it. Especially in the case of tea, where they say, it might become dead stock as freshness is important.

Place and Choice - Tea

Customers usually buy Tea along with other grocery from a regular shop. If it is not available there, one is unlikely to travel an extra mile for it. However, there is a lot of tea consumption outside home – hotels, offices and public spaces such as malls. They could become effective places for sampling and creating awareness.

Place and Choice - Textiles

Customers travel an extra mile to go to a textile showroom they like, but will not travel many. Increasingly, textile purchase is not a planned one. As one goes for a movie to a mall, one ends up buying many clothes. Either way, wide availability is an important factor.

e. Promotion

Message and Choice

Getting them to accept fair trade is a process of modifying their current attitudes. From a communication perspective, this means that we need high-impact creative and sustained presence in the media (mass or otherwise).

A message that opened their mind to considering fair trade products – ‘You (as a customer) have nothing to lose. But, the farmer has everything to gain’.

Media and Choice

Presence in the mass media is critical to enter the consideration set. As far as PR goes, Indian Media is open to an idea of this nature, but will take some effort from our side to sell it to them. The trend is to towards stories rather than plain facts, stories that have interest value to their audience – For example, the transformation of a village through fair trade is an interesting story. But, the philosophy of fair trade, by itself is not. Also, it would have to be tailor-made to suit the tone of the specific media group (For Example, The Hindu would

directly carry Fair trade as an article, while a Hindustan Times (another leading daily) would focus on the story and how it affects the farmer as well as the consumer, while Mid-Day, a tabloid, might require a twist to the whole thing).

We should also be able to get media sponsorships as most TV channels and Newspapers have special incentives for social organizations.

I. Trust and Fair Trade

There is lack of trust in general with NGOs. In the case of fair trade, they feel that the benefits may not reach those who really need them. From their experience and hearsay, they believe that the money may be lost along the way. Earning the trust is central to the success or failure of the program. There are two labels that have earned people's trust in the recent past. Here are the key learnings from them.

a. RUGMARK

A label for carpets that promises no child labour and has become very popular.

Inclusivity: From the beginning, all the stakeholders, especially the media and the Government were turned into partners. The media even promised to be not too critical of them for a while till they completely get their act together.

Low-Cost Administration: To assure the customers of the genuineness of their intention, they kept and continue to keep the administration cost very low. The directors don't even take salaries.

Transparency: Complete, absolute transparency between all those involved. A customer can directly visit any of the facilities of the carpet makers and check it out for themselves. Also, the accounts and practices are open for everyone to see.

b. Pure For Sure

A label for petrol pumps that sell petrol of good quality and quantity. An extremely successful program that has transformed the petrol category in India (known for adulteration and meter tampering).

Rigor of the Program: Due to the extent of malpractices, very few pumps were selected and they had to withstand rigorous checks bordering on madness. For example, if the industry standard were to check one sample pump out of 100, under Pure For Sure program all the 100 pumps were checked.

Transparency: The customers were provided with the facility to check for themselves whether the fuel was of the right quantity and quality.

Third Party Certification: While the company certified petrol pumps, a neutral certifying agency, TUV SUDDEUTSCHLAND certified the program in turn.

Tone Of Communication: The tone was intentionally not moralistic. It was a honest, straightforward, efficiency argument that customers warmed up to.

J. Fair Trade & Corporate

For corporates, profits come first and fairness come next. But, Corporates are still more open to fair trade than customers, though for selfish reasons: They want to be seen as socially responsible, though no one is asking them to be (Seems more like a trend picked up from what goes on in the west and from multinationals in India).

Also, if it is a trend that will promise a better image for the brand or lower the risk to reputation, it is not something they want to miss out on. At the same time they believe that if the entire process has to be accelerated, it would have be consumer led.

Conclusions & Recommendations

- In the last 10 years, things have gotten better for people in India, especially those in the upper rung of the society. There are better opportunities, higher incomes and more choices. The prevailing mood is one of optimism and confidence. But, this prosperity and progress have come at a price.
- The pace of change and competition keeps people on their toes. The stress levels have increased dramatically. One is left with no time or emotional energy to enjoy the luxuries that money brings or the simple joys of life, like playing with one's children. Life seems to have become 'machine-like' all of a sudden.
- The world around them is falling apart – the corruption and criminalization of politics, judiciary and police force, bomb blasts, sensational media with stories of murders and rapes have created a sense of uncertainty.
- There is not much one can trust – not politicians, not cricketers, not religious leaders and not NGOs (except a few). Companies, though selfish, are seen to be more trustworthy. They are seen to be more honest and meritocratic.
- There is a deep identification with the values of corporates – aggression, greed, flamboyance, meritocracy and efficiency are also the values every one aspires to.
- Home has become their world. It doesn't matter so much if someone is spilling chemicals into Ganges as long as water in one's pipe is clean. It doesn't matter if some company is exploiting employees as long as one gets the packaged goods.
- But, behind the veil of selfishness exist kind hearts. Almost everyone helps those they come in touch with - such as poor relatives, friends, servants etc. Some even give money to NGOs or Temples, who take care of the poor.

Conclusions & Recommendations

- In this context, fair trade is not a concept that they can easily grasp. For starters, they feel that the current trade is fair. It doesn't cross their mind that the companies may be exploiting people or environment. They feel that companies are actually helping to eradicate poverty by creating employment.
- Fairness is what is fair to them, companies offering them right value for money. They are outraged only when their self-interest is at stake – such as pesticides in colas or worms in chocolates.
- Their world-view is neatly divided between business and charity. Mixing the two confuses them or leaves them cold, simply because they don't easily see the connection.
- They wouldn't mind supporting a fair trade product. But, they will not pay a premium for it. They will not compromise on quality. They will not walk an extra mile. Even the current customers of fair trade buy fair trade product because it is better value for money. In short, if it is as good as any other product and if it still helps someone, then and then only it will enter their considered set.
- There is also a serious lack of trust about the certifying organization and whether the money will reach the right people.
- Even retailers wouldn't compromise on their margins or shelf-space to support a cause of this nature as they struggle to survive in the middle of intense competition.

Conclusions & Recommendations

- There are two broad routes to promoting fair trade – By improving fairness in existing trade through certification or by promoting our own Fair trade products.
- Based on our research, we are outlining the implications for each route in the following pages. However, the final recommendation would be evolved at the workshop along with the client and other stakeholders.

Route 1 – Certification Of Existing Trade

- Certifying corporates on fair trade standards is an easier task given the findings. From the customer's perspective, it is the same brand they buy, now with an additional psychological benefit – the good feeling that comes from having helped someone.
- Corporates are more open to fair trade than customers, though for selfish reasons: They want to be seen as socially responsible, though no one is asking them to be. Also, if it is a trend that will promise a better image for the brand or lower the risk to reputation, it is not something they want to miss out on.
- The key to conversion will be breaking up their current world-view that goodness and good business can't go hand in hand. If we were to make them realize that it is possible to bridge the two, they are likely to be more open.
- If one brand joins the fair trade movement in a category, others will follow suit, as it would make them look unfair. In each category, we can identify companies that are already close to fair trade, such as Fab India in textiles and start by certifying them.

Conclusions & Recommendations

- Also, companies will not be able to comply with all regulations straightaway. Certification can be offered at different levels, helping corporates convert and evolve over a period of time.
- While riding on top of existing brands will surely help build trust, it will have to be earned still - through complete transparency and through the rigor of the certification process.

Route 2 – Promoting Fair Trade Products

- Launching and promoting fair trade products ourselves is surely a worthwhile task since it would accelerate the conversion process for corporates. But, it is not an easy task.
- The customers/ retailers will expect us to compete with others on equal terms with other brands – on quality, price, image, availability etc. We will be up against the big brands that have the advantage of scale, deep pockets, built-in momentum and reputation.
- While we would have to meet the corporates head to head on quality and price, we can find innovative ways to create awareness and distribution.
- For example, we could choose to go down the path of Network Marketing (much like Amway) or Catalogue Marketing and use that as the channel to distribute and to create awareness. Or in the case of tea, we could form alliances with hotels, corporates, malls etc. to create opportunities for sampling and awareness.