

India Is Ready For Sustainable Consumption

Round-Table brings out critical connection between climate change, consumers, community and consumption

By A Business Reporter

A "Better Products. Better Practices. Better World." round table was organised by Typhoo Tea Ltd, a company which has a long 110 years of heritage of blending, packing and selling quality tea in the UK. With a portfolio of 10 brands and over 600 products in Mumbai last week, following closely on the heels of the launch of its globally certified teas, India's first environmentally sustainable teas to be marketed across the country.

Organised in collaboration with Rainforest Alliance, a global non-profit organisation that works to conserve biodiversity and ensure sustainable livelihoods by transforming land-use practices, business prac-

tices, and consumer behaviour, the round table brought out the need to create awareness and understanding of how consumers in India can use their purchasing power to support their environmental sustainability concerns.

Subrata Mukerji, Business Head of Typhoo India and Dominique Gangneux, Vice President, Markets Transformation, Rainforest Alliance shared their views on the need to service the growing community of socially conscious consumers and nurture all consumers towards understanding the social impact of their buying behavior.

Emphasizing the role of brands, private companies and the consumers in building a sustainable fu-

ture, the Round Table threw up three contentious issues – was there a demand among Indian consumers for brands to have a broader purpose than its product offering; was it primarily the responsibility of the brand to push sustainability sourced products to consumers, or is the responsibility for consumers to pull brands in the direction of sustainable and responsible sourcing and What opportunity does responsible sourcing present to brands to position themselves in the Indian market, to innovate and deepen their engagement with consumers, helping to build loyalty and brand equity.

"While we announce the start of our plan to offer certified teas pan

India, we seek to spark a debate on the connection between Climate, Community, Consumption and Consumers. Its an important connection for all involved to understand and will make for Better products, Better Practices by every company and ultimately for a Better World. It is for this reason that Typhoo has adopted the frog!" Mukherji said,

Gangneux revealed that, "There is a growing community of socially conscious consumers in India who want to purchase brands that enable their commitment to a more sustainable world to be realised. Current market estimates put this segment of consumers between 30 and 35% and this segment is growing at an estimated 5 CAGR per year. We are

happy that Typhoo has joined us in leading this important debate in India and we hope that many more brands will join us by August 2015 as we plan to intensify our work in the Indian sub continent".

The round table was aimed at starting conversations in the areas of consumer concerns for sustainability and a brand's ability to deliver solutions. It arrived at the consensus that the consumers can indeed demonstrate their concerns through the purchasing decisions they make provided they are educated and informed about the role that globally benchmarked certifications play and why Indian brands must display certifications prominently on product packs as many do globally.