

CONSUMER'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS GREEN MARKETING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The threat of global environmental catastrophe is imminent with issues like pollution, biodiversity loss, global warming, forest loss, etc, on the rise. As a result, the level of environmental awareness among consumers is increasing. The buyers of today are willing to spend more to purchase eco-friendly products. Brands that want to meet the desires of their customers have begun to produce goods that have a positive impact on the environment. This marketing forces businesses to change every aspect of their supply chain to become more environmentally conscious. When brands set an example for their customers, more people are made aware of the environmental implications of their purchases and have the opportunity to change their purchase behavior. Green marketing is perceived to be a tool towards sustainable development as pollution levels are getting worse day by day, which will eventually lead to the perpetual deterioration of human life. Green marketing is not only a promotional activity. It creates awareness among the people about environmental pollution. People come to know their role in environmental pollution. Green products are healthiest products, because it does not harm people's health and environment. With the help of green marketing people will understand green products are better than existing products. Green marketing is a socio friendly and environment friendly practices. But it also faces some issue. So this study will help in identifying those issues. Previous studies about this area are comparatively less. The study will help in improving and developing the idea of green marketing. Ultimately it will help in protecting the environment.

Key words: Green Marketing, Green Products, Environmental pollution & problems, Customers attitude and perception etc.

INTRODUCTION

Green marketing is the marketing of products that are known to be environmentally safe. This includes a wide range of activities, including product modification, production process changes, sustainable packaging, as well as modifying advertising. Yet defining green marketing is not a simple task with many meanings intersecting and contradicting each other; An example of this would be the existence of different social, environmental and retail definitions associated with the term.

Other similar terms used are environmental marketing and ecological marketing. Green, environmental and eco-marketing are part of new marketing approaches that not only refocus, adjust or enhance existing marketing thinking and practice, but also attempt to challenge those approaches and provide a different perspective. More broadly green, environmental and eco-marketing belong to a group of approaches that seek to address the lack of fit between marketing as it is currently practiced and the ecological and social realities of the wider marketing environment. The legal implications of marketing claims require caution or the claims are overstated, which could lead to regulatory or civil challenges. In the United States, the Federal Trade Commission provides some guidance on environmental marketing claims. The term green marketing came first in the late 1980s and early 1990s due to increasing environmental concerns. In modern times due to the emergence of large number of problems all over the world, green marketing attained an emerging issue and is essential for promotion and advertising of products with keeping natural environment safe and thus it has become the biggest need of time. Consumers all over the world are aware of environmental issues. Companies are adopting green marketing and are producing green products that have less harmful effects on the

environment, than the conventional products. With the acceptance of the idea to conduct business with the motive “to increase profits through service”, a new marketing concept known as green marketing has emerged. The green marketing is the buzzword in the business industry to eliminate negative effect of product or services offered to consumers and making the product eco-friendly. Green marketing involves developing and promoting products and services that satisfy customer’s wants and needs for quality, performance, affordable pricing and convenience without having a detrimental impact on the environment. The products like paper plates and cups, eco paper bags and eco-friendly pest eyes, food product etc. are included in the green marketing. Green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be Environmentally safe. Thus green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities include product modification, changes to the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising. It is the process of selling products and services based on their environmental benefits. Such a product or services which otherwise reduce or minimize detrimental impact or environment. A green marketing approach in productive area promotes the integration of environmental issues on all corporate activities; from strategy formulation, planning reengineering in production process and dealing with consumer. So to remain competitive within the challenge thrown by environment protectionists, the company will have to find out the answer through their marketing strategies, production or service redesign, customer handling. In this Endeavour the company go for new technologies for handling waste, sewage and air pollution; it can go for product standardization to ensure environmentally safe product; by providing truly natural product.

In this regard company should be concerned with what happens to product during and after its useful life. Company may manifest these concerns through experimentation with ways to reassess the product life stages. Green marketing is the promotional tool that influences the consumer attitude towards changing the brand. Green marketing is the process to promote and advertise a specific product to ensure environmental safety and also attempts to make aware about the consumption and disposal of product and services in the manner which do not influence the environment adversely. Green marketing also imparts awareness about global warming, bio degradable products and harmful effects of pollutants to marketers as well as consumers and enforces them to switch to green products and services. Moreover, man has limited resources on the earth, with which man must attempt to provide for the worlds unlimited wants. There is extensive debate as to whether the earth is a resource at man’s disposal. In market societies where there is “freedom of choice”, it has generally been accepted that individuals and organizations have the right to attempt to have their wants satisfied. The present study describes the concept of green marketing and its influence with consumers. It is based on the data collected through a field survey of consumers to assess their attitude towards green marketing.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As the world’s economy is rapidly developing, the global environment is increasingly deteriorating. Environment has become one of the most important concerns of consumers. Green marketing generally aims to promote environment friendly products and a safe environment where people could stay. At present green marketing is widely becoming a phenomenon throughout the world as concerns towards green brand or environment friendly products are increasing. Thus this study has much relevance in the today’s economic scenario.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To study the consumer’s attitude towards green marketing.

To identify the consumers awareness on green marketing and the availability of eco-friendly products.

To study the effect of green products on consumers.

To study the challenges in green marketing.

To know the benefits and opportunities of green marketing strategy.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study mainly focuses on green marketing and green products and the level of awareness and attitudes among the

consumers. The aim is to educate the consumers about green marketing and make them aware of the green products. It also helps understand the decisions made by the consumers while purchasing green products and their willingness to pay. It helps to find the problems faced by the consumers towards green marketing and products and tries to solve it.

The data collected during the project include both primary and secondary. The primary data was collected by using questionnaire. The questionnaire was prepared to check consumer awareness and attitude about green Marketing and green product. Cochin area was selected for data collection for the study using random sampling method.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyze information about a topic.

Research Design

Research design is the framework of research methods and techniques chosen by a researcher. The design allows researchers to hone in on research methods that are suitable for the subject matter and set up their studies up for success.

The study requires a descriptive style research design. A descriptive study refers to study which wants to portray the characteristics of a group of individual or situation.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Time constraints were the major problems to this project, because the stipulated time was insufficient to carry out a detailed study.

Due to paucity of fund the size of the sample is restricted to a few. This study covers youngsters only

The answering of questionnaire could also influenced by the cultural factors. Since it is an attitude towards green products.

The accuracy of the report depends upon how honestly or sincerely the respondents have answered.

HYPOTHESIS

H0: There is significance difference between education and level of awareness of Green Products. H1: There is no significance difference between education and level of awareness of Green Products. **REVIEW OF**

LITERATURE

Green Marketing has been an important academic research topic since the subject evolved in the late 1970s. From then on, there have been numerous research studies undertaken to address the issues of marketing of eco- friendly commodities and behavior of consumers with respect to such products. This chapter is aimed at providing a conceptual understanding on the research problem, by presenting some of the theoretical and methodological contributions on this area. The study has drawn inspiration and information from an exhaustive review of relevant literature from across the world. A few of them are presented in this chapter.

Shukla, S., Shah, D., Mehra, P., Muralikrishna & Gupta, A.K. (1998) in their research paper have presented their findings of an action research experiment conducted in their campus to find out the response of their own colleagues to certain products such as organically grown wheat, pulses, oil seeds etc. The study was undertaken to test issues such as the image of eco-friendly products which consumers have in their minds, attributes that consumers look into in green products, factors influencing the purchase of green products, actual purchase behavior and the premium they were willing to pay for green products. The study suggested that only about one fourth of the respondents were concerned about environmental safety and the rest were either concerned about their health and also about cost which became a crucial factor when the willingness to pay a premium for green products is concerned. Brand awareness of eco-friendly products was generally low and many of the eco-friendly brands were not necessarily so.

Das, J.K. (2002) in his article has presented the emerging issues and ideas on environmental pollution and also the role of the government and business organizations in India to mitigate the effects of environmental degradation. Balanced growth with environmental conservation is difficult even for the most economically powerful nations. It requires not only high investments but also effective governance. A plan that addresses these issues for the consumers of today through the promotion of ‘green activities’, meaning environmental- friendly activities, should be developed with a marketing perspective – for it is the marketing concepts that focus on needs and wants of consumers. The article also presents an idea of the concepts such as environmental goods, environmental services, green marketing, and green consumers. Environmental consumerism today represents deep psychological and sociological shifts from the conventional marketing strategies and, therefore, green consumers need to be addressed differently. Marketers are, thus, facing tough new challenges. Giving a brief account of international green practices, the article has envisaged the emergence of green initiatives in India and how the govern me.

Sandeen, C. (2009) has presented in her research article a working knowledge of green marketing and practical applications of the concepts. Programmatic responses to sustainability within continuing higher education encompass four categories. Many units incorporate sustainability topics throughout course offerings. Sustainability content may be addressed in other courses not devoted entirely to sustainability topics. A second approach is integrating sustainability throughout the curriculum by asking all instructors and faculty to address sustainability in some way within all classes. A third approach is to design a sustainability program in the same way as other academic programs. Finally, many continuing higher education programs are developing targeted, quick-response classes and programs to assist adult student in making transitions to new green-collar jobs or in direct response to new federal grant programs. The key insights of this research are though a sustainable lifestyle is limited to innovators and early adopters, the mainstream has accepted sustainability on a conceptual level and only a small percentage has rejected it. In order to solve the risk of green washing, sustainability claims should be based on adequate data.

Philip Kotler (2011) recognized that the Companies need to make drastic changes in their research-and- development, production, financial, and marketing practices if sustainability has to be achieved. The several environmental challenges to be considered in the sustainability are change in the composition of the atmosphere, depletion of the ozone layer, soil degradation & increased desertification, increased air and water pollution.

Mishra, P. & Sharma, P. (2010) in their article have discussed how businesses have increased their rate of targeting green consumers, those who are concerned about the environment and allow it to affect their purchasing decisions. The paper has identified the three particular segments of green consumers and has explored the challenges and opportunities businesses have with green marketing. The paper has also examined the present trends of green marketing in India, described the reason why companies are adopting it, future of green marketing and has concluded that green marketing is something that will continuously grow in both practice and demand. The need for standardization and authenticity, lack of awareness, lack of patience and perseverance on the part of the marketers who expect immediate results were found to be the major challenges of green marketing.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1

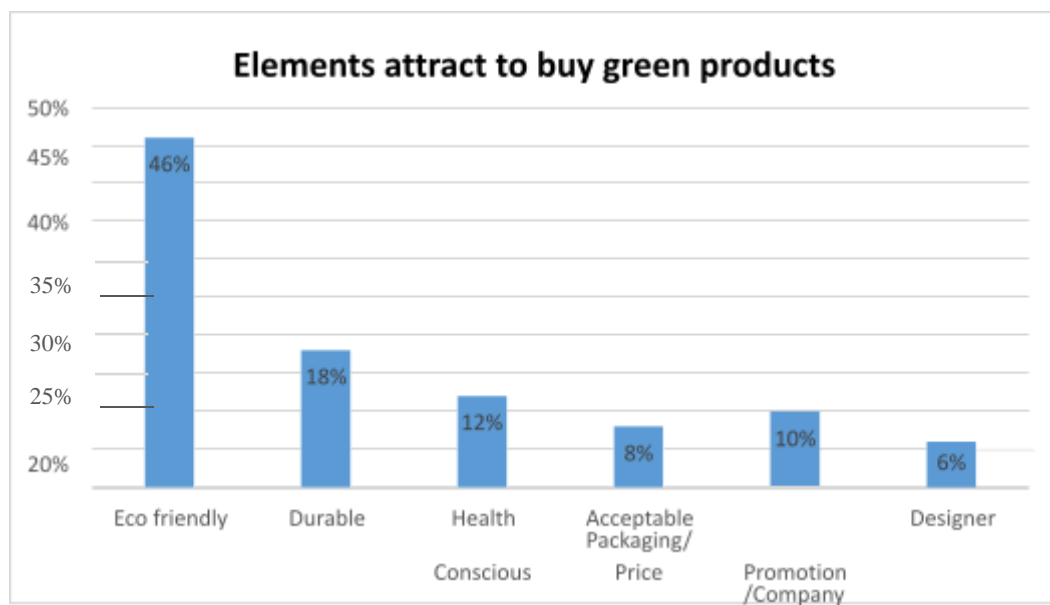
Table showing elements attract to buy Green products

Elements	No. of respondents	Percentage
Eco friendly	23	46%

Durable	9	18%
Health Conscious	6	12%
Acceptable Price	4	8%
Packaging/ Promotion	5	10%
Designer /Company Image	3	6%
Total	50	100%

Source: Primary data

Figure 1
Graph shows elements attract to buy Green products



Source: Primary data

Interpretation:

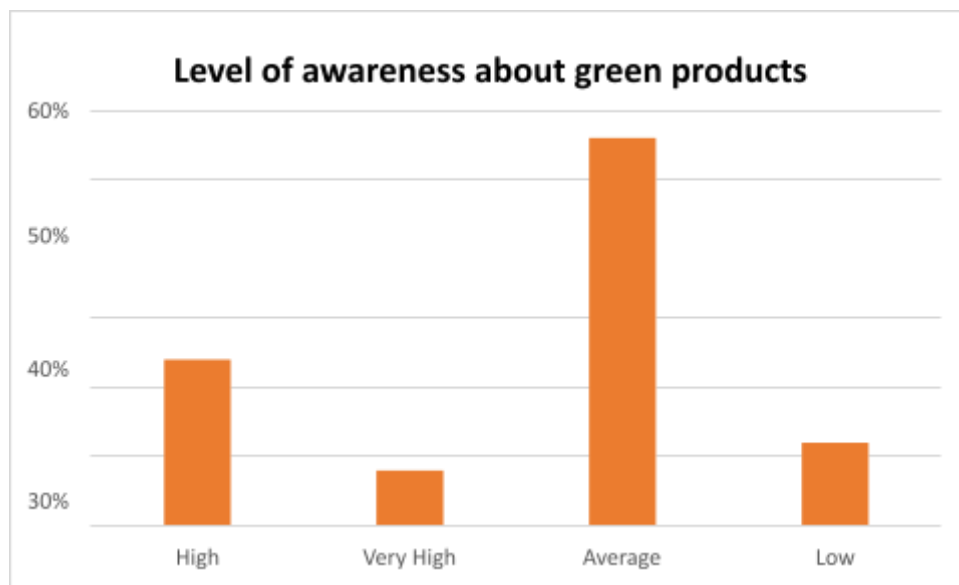
From the above table it is understood that, most of the respondents i.e.; 46% were attracted due to the actual eco-friendly nature of the product, 18% were attracted due its durability, 12% were attracted due to their health consciousness, and 10% were attracted due to its packaging/promotion, 8% were attracted due to its acceptable price and only 6% of the respondents were attracted due to the designer/company image.

Table 2
Table showing level of awareness about green products

Details	No: of Respondents	Percentage (%)
High	12	24%
Very High	4	8%
Average	28	56%
Low	6	12%
Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

Figure 2



Graph showing the level of awareness about green products

Source: Primary data

Interpretation:

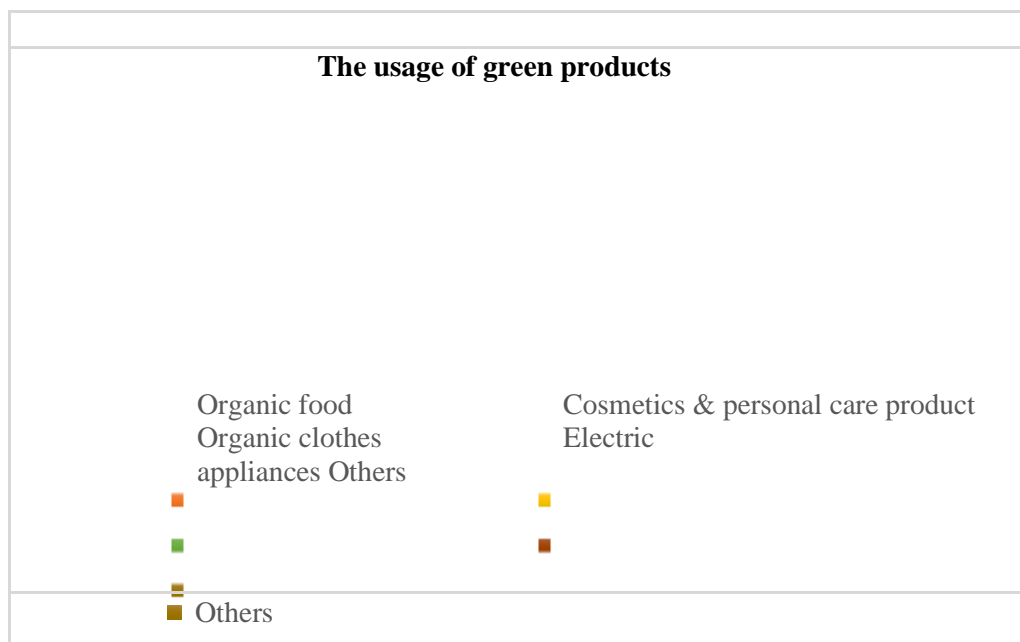
Table 2 and the figure 2 visualizes that, 56% of the respondents have an average level of awareness about the green products, 24% were highly aware about green products, 12% have a low level of awareness about green products and only 8% have a very high level of awareness about green products.

Table 3
Table showing usage of green products

Products	No. of respondents	Percentage
Organic food	20	40%
Cosmetics & personal care product	7	14%
Organic clothes	6	12%
Electric appliances	10	20%
Others	7	14%
Total	50	100%

Source: Primary data

Figure 3



Graph shows the usage of green products

Source: Primary data

Interpretation:

The table 3 and figure 3 reveal that, the data collected from the total respondents shows that 40% of the respondents uses organic foods, 20% uses electric appliances, 14% uses cosmetic & personal care products and others and 12% uses organic clothes.

TEST CONDUCTED

Chi-square test and association of attribute is conducted for better analysis of the data.

1. CHI-SQUARE TEST:

X^2 test is a statistical test, which test the significance difference between observed frequencies and the corresponding theoretical frequency of a distribution without any assumption about the distribution of the population.

With the help of X^2 test the attributes, Education and level of awareness was foundout to know whether this two attributes are associated or not.

TESTING THERE IS SIGNIFICANCE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EDUCATION AND LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF GREEN PRODUCTS

The following steps are used to find out whether this two attributes are independent (i.e.not associated)

LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF GREEN PRODUCT					
EDUCATION	HIGH	VERY HIGH	AVERAGE	LOW	TOTAL
PLUS 2	1	1	5	3	10
UNDER GRADUATE	2	1	5	1	9
POST GRADUATE	3	1	8	1	13
PHD	6	1	10	1	18
TOTAL	12	4	28	6	50

Step 1:

H0: There is significance difference between education and level of awareness of Green Products. (The two attributes are independent)

H1: There is no significance difference between education and level of awareness of Green Products (The two attributes are not independent)

Step 2:Compute test statistic by formula:

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

E

Where ‘O’ refers to the observed frequencies and ‘E’ refers to the expected frequencies. Observed frequencies: 1,2,3,6,1,1,1,1,5,5,8,10,3,1,1,1

Expected frequencies are obtained by formula:

$$E = \text{Row total} \times \text{Column total} \div \text{Grand total}$$

LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF GREEN PRODUCT				
EDUCATION	HIGH	VERY HIGH	AVERAGE	LOW
PLUS 2	2.4	0.8	5.6	1.2
UNDER GRADUATE	2.16	0.72	5.04	1.08
POST GRADUATE	3.12	1.04	7.28	1.56
PH.D	4.32	1.44	10.08	2.16

Computing test statistic:

O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	X ²
1	2.4	-1.4	1.96	0.816667
2	2.16	-0.16	0.0256	0.011852
3	3.12	-0.12	0.0144	0.004615
6	4.32	1.68	2.8224	0.653333
1	0.8	0.2	0.04	0.05
1	0.72	0.28	0.0784	0.108889

1	1.04	-0.04	0.0016	0.001538
1	1.44	-0.44	0.1936	0.134444
5	5.6	-0.6	0.36	0.064286
5	5.04	-0.04	0.0016	0.000317
8	7.28	0.72	0.5184	0.071209
10	10.08	-0.08	0.0064	0.000635
3	1.2	1.8	3.24	2.7
1	1.08	-0.08	0.0064	0.005926
1	1.56	-0.56	0.3136	0.201026
1	2.16	-1.16	1.3456	0.622963
TOTAL				5.4477

Therefore, $X^2 = \sum (O - E)^2 = 5.4477$

E

Step 3:

Degree of freedom = $(r-1) \times (c-1) = 6$

Step 4:

Obtain table for the degree of the freedom 6 and the and the desired level of significance Level of significance = 5%; .05
Table value X^2 for 6 degree of freedom at 5% level of significance = 12.592

Step 5:

If the calculated value of X^2 is less than the table value accepts the null hypothesis. Otherwise reject it.

Table value = **12.592**
Calculated value = **5.4477**

INTERPRETATION:

As calculated value is less than table value so the null hypothesis (H0) is accepted i.e., There is significance difference between education and level of awareness of Green Products. (Two attributes education and level of awareness are independent.)

SUGGESTIONS

The marketer using a wide range of media and also ads using green themes in combination to communicate eco-friendly approach could be done and finally marketers should deliver what they promise. Consumers must take a lead and make others understand the benefits of green products and minimize the use of scarce material resources, recycle the recyclable waste material, also suggested to use social networking sites to make influence on

sustainable consumer behaviour. The government should work closely with its stakeholders to follow the international standards to make trust towards them.

By implementing the marketing strategies, such as; the green products should be marketed in environmental friendly manner i.e. no print ads, recycled packaging etc. and also the product labels are good source of information for making awareness to consumers.

Some important suggestion as given by respondents are using eco-friendly products, regular vehicular pollution check-ups, avoid using plastics, gather and spread environment information, water harvesting, NGOs should come forward for environment protection and recycling scrap etc. are some green movements to be implemented strictly.

The misleading and availability of imitate products in the market by some companies get enforced by strict laws and get paid.

Every producer and even consumers also have the social responsibility to save the environment from the harmful effect. So the companies must adopt better marketing plans and there must be need of the management support.

Promote the objective of supporting local frames and reducing the carbon footprint by the companies in the field of food industry.

The companies offering green products should be priced according to its quality and also understand the consumer needs and wants.

Company activities must be transparent to educate and inform all stakeholder groups and also promote the benefits for consumers to use a product rather than to own a product.

CONCLUSION

A Study on Consumer's attitude towards Green marketing points out to know the perception of people towards green products and its effect on consumers. The study is conducted by selecting "fifty" of sample size and I got those respondents attitude, their opinion and suggestions towards this topic. Green marketing is one important concept which marketers are using these days as a key strategy for sustainable development.

As a philosophy, green marketing runs parallel to the societal marketing concept and espouses the view that satisfying customers is not enough and marketer should take into ecological interest of the society as a whole. It is a part of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). In fact, government is also taking all possible steps to protect the consumers and the society by licensing for environmentally safe products and imposing restrictions on harmful products. The green marketing approach to marketing responsibility is to make aware of the need and advantages of green products.

The result shows that consumers see green products as safer than ordinary products. Moreover, the added value of green products is a feeling of having done something good for the environment. Thus, the pressure from others to behave in a certain way can affect consumer to buy green products. This study shows that consumers would prefer if companies start to provide more information about the products by using stamps saying where it is provided and by when. Consumer purchasing green products because of the belief that the products are higher in quality as compared to normal products and the consumers who are not ready to pay higher prices for the green products are generally because, they are more expensive than normal product and also the environment issues are gimmick for commercial only in the view point of consumers. So the green products should be priced according to its quality as green marketing is going to be cleaner and greener environment. There is a great need to educate consumers and raise their level of concern about the problem that mankind is facing. The passive concern needs to be converted into active concern.

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