

Consumer Awareness On Environmental Issues And Its Impact On Purchasing Behaviour Of Green Products

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Abstract- Consumers are becoming more economically conscious and desirous of purchasing background friendly products i.e. green products. The present study is an attempt to investigate consumer perception and purchase intention towards green products. The data has been collected from 120 people of different areas of Salem city. The findings of the study reveal that 71 percent respondents perceive green products as environment friendly products while 12 percent respondents take it as energy saving products. Male respondents are more aware about green products and also consider it while making shopping in comparison to female respondents. Majority of the respondents are ready to pay 11-20 percent more prices than the prices of non-green products. Thus, researchers conclude that the consumers does not have environment concern only, but also have positive and high intentions to buy green products. The study brings out interesting insight that, though consumer were environmentally worried and ready to pay high yet they were not aware as to what constitutes environmentally friendly products. Hence, sellers need to consider efforts that are required to convert the environment concern into environmental utilization activities.

Keywords- Environment fortification, Green Product, Marketing approach, purchasing performance.

I. INTRODUCTION

Environmental issues like global warming, reduction of natural resources, changing weather, are most talked about issues now a day. This may directly or ultimately affect the way one behaves, especially while making a purchase decision. A new sense of urgency about Indian environmental degradation has compelled a number of ordinary individuals to make eco-conscious life style changes (Jain & Kaur, 2004). The environment has become a mainstream issue and consequentially consumers are becoming more concerned about their habits and the effect that these have on the environment (Krause, 1993). There are evidences in various researches to suggest that consumers are increasingly choosing or avoiding products based on their environmental impact

(Coddington, 1993; Davis, 1993; Grove et al, 1996; McDougall, 1993; Ottman, 1992). A study established that 69 percent of the general public believes that pollution and other environmental damage are impacting their everyday life (Schlegemilch, 1996). Hence, the impact of environmental problems now more clearly visible to one and is resulting into desire to do something in one form or the other.

With a tidal wave of interest focusing on ways to reduce energy consumption and at the same time to be ecologically and environmentally, Green marketing has fast emerged as a worldwide phenomenon which interests both the marketing practitioners as well as the consumers. According to American Marketing Association “Green marketing is the marketing of product that are presumed to be environmentally safe. Green marketing includes the developing and marketing such product & services that satisfy the customer requirement for quality, reliable price and easy availability of the product without having a harmful impact on the environment (Mishra and Sharma, 2010; Polonsky, 1994 and Rakshita, 2011). In business, the terms —Green product and Environmental product are used commonly to describe those that strive to protect or enhance the natural environment by conserving energy and/or resources and reducing or eliminating use of toxic agents, pollution, and waste (J. Ottman,1997). It is also referred as a product that is environmentally preferable relative to comparable products. Thus, green marketing approach is largely used as a tool by the gigantic corporate houses in order to make a difference in the consumer’s point of view when it comes to making market decisions. All this prompts the present study. Therefore, in the present study an attempt has been made to analyse the youngster’s perception regarding the purchase decision of green products in India.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine consumer awareness and behavior towards green products.
2. To evaluate consumer purchase purpose towards green products.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is a descriptive cum exploratory in nature and is based on primary data. The data has been collected with the help of questionnaire. The questionnaire has been designed with the help taken from existing studies. The questionnaire was pre-tested on sample of 35 respondents and revised again with the help of optional change. The population comprised of people age group of 18-58 living in Salem city. Since, the population was varied and difficult to approach, hence purposive sampling was used. In all 150 respondents were contacted, out of which 120 were patient enough to complete the task of meeting. So in all, a sample consisting of 120 respondent was finalized for further analysis which was run into two phases. In first phase, all 120 questionnaire were evaluated to assess the consciousness of green products.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Awareness and perception about green products among respondents

To get the deeper insight about the perception regarding green products it is essential to know consumer awareness of green products and what they understood by green products.

1. Understanding the Meaning of Green Products

What is your opinion hearing the term of green product	Frequency	Percent
Environmental friendly	70	70.1
Bio-degradable	4	4.0
Recyclable	9	8.9
Energy saving	12	11.9
Green in colour	5	5.0
Total	101	100.0

The table 1 shows that 70 percent of respondents were aware of as to what makes green product. 12 percent respondent thinks green products as energy saver, whereas 9 percent respondents meant them to be recyclable products. However, 5 percent respondents were not at all clear of the meaning of green products as to them green products are the products which are green in color.

2. Consideration Regarding Green Products while going to buying.

Category	Male	Female	Total
Yes	36 72.0%	24 47.1%	60 59.4%
No	14 28%	27 52.9%	41 40.6%
Total	50 100%	51 100%	101 100%
Pearson chi square	6.513a	1	0.011

Table 2 presents that 60 percent of the respondents take in consideration of green products while going to buying and 40 percent respondents never considered the same. So, it reveals that though awareness level is quiet high yet its conversion in to purchase intention is low. While discriminating the respondents among male and female, male respondents (72 percent) and female (14 percent) take into consideration green products while making purchase decision, meaning thereby that male respondents were more considerate toward green products and environmentally friendliness, probably due to the fact that males are generally more outgoing and hence more exposed to environmental concern than females. Furthermore, Pearson chi-square test also shows a significant association between male and female with their shopping decision.

3. Green Products Purchased by Respondents

Product name	Frequency	Product name	Frequency
CFL Pulps	8	Money plant	1
Recyclable paper	8	Neem	1
Green eggs	2	Solar cooker	1
Stationary	2	Spinach	1
Use disposal items	1	Wall paints	1
Aloveera gel	2	Cycle	1
Use jute bags	1	5 star laptops	1
Wooden toys	1	Energy saving laptop	1
Green tea	1		
Total response	34		

The table 3 reveals that only 34 respondents gave the response of this statement. It means that only 50 percent of the respondents among out of those who consider green products while making a purchase decisions could response to this question and out of these too, many respondents gave superfluous answers as if they are not aware what green products constitutes. So, a deeper analysis tells that those who claim to be environment friendly are infact superfluously considerate about green products. In totality only 40 percent (34 out of 120) respondents were able to recall shopping of green products which also includes the products which are not green products. So, actual purchase and awareness comes out be much less. CFL tubes and recyclable papers are the most preferable green products among respondents. But, apart from that there are lot of misconception among respondents regarding green products.

4. Perception Regarding Green Product Prices as Compared to Non-Green Products

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Higher	35	34.7
Average	32	31.7
Don't know	20	19.8
Lower	14	13.9
Total	101	100%

Table 4 reveals that 35 percent respondents perceived the prices of green products as higher in comparison to other products and another nearly 20 percent respondents were unaware about price differentiation and surprisingly 14 percent respondent believed low price of green products in

comparison of its benefits. This again speaks about the misconception and lack of awareness regarding green products. But at the same time, only 32 percent respondents think that on an average price of green products and non-green products is almost same.

5.Green product purchase behavior of respondents and Anova test over income groups.

Category	Over all mean value	F Value	Significance
1. I would like to buy environmentally friendly products because they are less polluting.	3.93	.909	.044
2. I would like to buy them because these products are healthier, of better quality and safer than non green products.	4.21	4.947	.003
I would like to buy green products even if they are more expensive than the non-green	3.27	1.392	.250
I would like to green product as it gives me the pleasure of being environment friendly	3.85	1.489	.222
I would like to buy green products as it gives me a positive attitude towards environment	4.15	.352	.789

Furthermore, tree plantation and preservation of natural resources like water, energy are the major steps taken by the respondent to save the environment. The table quite clearly indicates towards a deeper issue as respondents do not see that they can make any contribution towards environment protection by the way of environmentally responsible shopping and consumption behavior. As only 6 percent respondents think buying green products as an effort towards environment protection.

Table 5 presents the finding regarding purchase intention and their readiness to buy green products for various reasons. Majority respondents across all demographic categories are willing green products even on high price feel that buying green products is less polluting and healthier and make them feel a sense of contribution towards environment protection. The results of one way ANOVA test did not confirm any difference regarding green products being healthier and less polluting, their willing to buy even at a higher price and a feeling of contribution they get from buying green products across all demographic variable expect income in case of statement, "I would like to buy them because these products are healthier, of better quality and safer than non green products".

V. CONCLUSION

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that though majority respondents claim to be aware of green products, but the awareness seems superficial and over-claimed. The deeper analysis reveals clearly that majority respondents, who claimed to be aware of green products, actually did not know as to what green products constitutes,

exactly. Furthermore, the respondents did not understand that buying green products also contributes towards environment protection. The study also shows that people in general have lot of concern and strong desire to do something towards environment but they did not know how they can contribute. Hence marketers and Government cannot be individually held responsible but environmental protection agencies, media, must create awareness about green products as a mean to save the environment. Marketer should take initiative keeping in the mind that consumer are concerned and willing to do their bit towards environment protection. Marketers by satisfying this urge and desire of consumer towards environment through effective promotional strategies to educate them about green products, their usage and resultant impact on the environment protection will in long run help enhance their goodwill and building strong brand image in the eyes of consumers. Similarly the study points towards the need for an active role on the part of government and various stakeholders in educating the consumers towards being a green consumer.

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