

# AWARENESS AND BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF CONSUMER TOWARDS ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY PRODUCTS IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT

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**Abstract:** Over the centuries, the emergence of environmental concern has been at the top of the agenda at both national and international level. However, the era of modern environmentalism came into the picture in 1950s and focus on the environmental issues got sharper in 1960s with the exuberant pressure posed by public. The issue of environmental protection was highlighted more and became a permanent feature of national and international policy with the first celebration of Earth Day in 1970 and first United Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972. The study has been confined to the district of Coimbatore located in the state of Tamil Nadu in India. The sample was selected from this place and was restricted to a number of 60 respondents. The environmental friendly goods alone in terms of environment protection have been selected and the data has been collected through the structured questionnaires from the respondents. The study covers the examinations on the areas of buying behavior among the consumers who are used to environmental friendly products in their day-to-day life. The study further investigates the influencers of the purchase of environmental friendly products along with the obstacles faced by the consumers while purchasing the environmental friendly products. The study would be helpful to academicians, researchers and industrialists in providing the information as they require.

**KEY-WORDS:** Environment friendly products, Awareness, National level, International level.

## I. INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM DISCUSSION

For the last few decades, concerns over the different environmental issues are gaining attention of various groups of the society. Consumers are becoming more aware about the environmental problems and have started realizing that majority of issues are because of increasing population, our consumption habits and are the consequences of technological advancements. These awakened consumers are now ready to change their preferences from mainstream products to greener products which have least impact on the environment. Changing consumption habits and rising preferences of consumers for green products are proving to have greater influence on the corporate world also. In response to this, big corporate houses have now started addressing environmental issues in various manners.

With increasing environmental consciousness, companies need to understand not only green consumers' behaviour but also the factors that influence green purchases and those factors that act as barriers to green purchases. This will not only help the marketers in segmenting the market appropriately and developing strategies to meet green consumers' needs but also the policy makers in enforcing sustainability in marketing of goods and services. With the above settings the present study is intended to find the answers for the following research questions;

1. What would be the Purchase behavior of consumer towards the environmental friendly products?

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Vazifehdust, H & Asadollahi, A. (2017)<sup>1</sup>** in their article have attempted to describe what is meant by social responsibility and explain its relation to marketing of environmental friendly products, take a closer look at green marketing and also the ways of implementing the green marketing concepts in some of Iran's industries. In this context, this paper has highlighted some of the areas like product design, product positioning, packaging material and design, advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, services where the companies could focus on by

re-engineering their production processes, product design and service position, in order to solidify their positions in the competitive market, otherwise being left behind in the green trend. To establish competitive advantage, the paper suggested greening in the production process and reduced expenditure which will cause an enhanced image of the company in the customers' eyes and increased loyalty.

**Phuah Kit Teng et.al (2018)<sup>2</sup>** expressed that societal marketing business ethics and corporate social responsibility has become the guideline for green marketing strategies and practices. Consumer concerns towards the environment are the evidence which steadily increases the ecologically conscious marketplace. Consumers' awareness and attitude on food products which market in green marketing is important in guiding their purchasing intention of environmental friendly food products. Consumer attitude is the moderator in the relationship between subjective norms and their intention to purchase environmental friendly food products. However, attitude is not a moderator variable in the relationship between perceived behaviour control and consumer intention to purchase environmental friendly food products

### III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Based on the aforesaid problem, the following research objective is formulated;

1. To examine the Purchase behavior of consumer towards the environmental friendly products.

### IV. HYPOTHESES FOR THE STUDY

Based on the above objective, the present study attempts to test the following hypothesis

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship in the purchase behavior of environmental friendly purchase among the groups of respondents based on their demographic classification.

### V. RESEARCH DESIGN

#### *Sources of data*

The research work is mainly based on primary data collected from the sample respondents through a structured questionnaire. Other information relevant for the study's analysis and others was collected from secondary sources such as journals, magazines, published and unpublished research works and websites.

#### *Sampling design*

The population targeted for this study consisted of samples from the district of Coimbatore who have purchased at least two product categories out of the five selected for the study. A family was selected as a sampling unit. Any adult member of the family who makes the most purchase decisions for the family was the respondent for this study. A sample size of 65 respondents was chosen to whom the questionnaires were distributed. Hence the sample size of 60 respondents has been taken for the study.

### VI. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. This research was location specific and was confined to the district of Coimbatore in the state of Tamil Nadu in India. Hence the results of this research may not be applicable to other parts of globe and It is one of the pilot study.
2. The study adopted convenient sampling which was one of the methods of non-probability sampling and hence the limitations of this technique are applicable.

## VII. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

## INCOME-WISE DURATION TO THE PURCHASE OF ENVIRONMENTAL FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

In order to analyze the differences in purchase duration, the respondents were classified into four groups based on their monthly family income. Weighted average scores were calculated for all the four groups and the results were shown in Table 1

TABLE 1

INCOME-WISE DURATION TO THE PURCHASE OF ENVIRONMENTAL FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

Variables	1-2 lakhs		2 - 3		3 - 5		Above 5	
	W.A	Rank	W.A	Rank	W.A	Rank	W.A	Rank
At least once/week	4.16	2	4.10	2	4.29	1	4.20	1
At least once/month	3.82	3	3.75	3	4.11	2	3.34	4
Once half a year	3.45	4	4.30	1	3.66	3	4.05	2
Seldom	4.27	1	3.53	4	3.41	4	3.78	3

**Source:** Compiled and calculated using the primary data

The above table represents the ranks of the occupation-wise duration to the purchase of environmental friendly products based on the mean scores.

**1-2 lakhs**

The first rank has been given to *Seldom* with the mean score of 4.27, the second rank has been given to *At least once/week* with the mean score of 4.16, the third rank has been given to *At least once/month* with the mean score of 3.82, and the last rank has been given to *Once half a year* with the mean score of 3.45.

**2 - 3 lakhs**

The first rank has been given to *Once half a year* with the mean score of 4.30, the second rank has been given to *At least once/week* with the mean score of 4.10, the third rank has been given to *At least once/month* with the mean score of 3.75, and the last rank has been given to *Seldom* with the mean score of 3.53.

**3 – 5 lakhs**

The first rank has been given to *At least once/week* with the mean score of 4.29, the second rank has been given to *At least once/month* with the mean score of 4.11, the third rank has been given to *Once half a year* with the mean score of 3.66, and the last rank has been given to *Seldom* with the mean score of 3.41.

**Above 5 lakhs**

The first rank has been given to *At least once/week* with the mean score of 4.20, the second rank has been given to *Once half a year* with the mean score of 4.05, the third rank has been given to *Seldom* with the mean score of 3.78, and the last rank has been given to *At least once/month* with the mean score of 3.34.

Thus it can be concluded that the respondents whose annual income of 1-2 lakhs ranked *Seldom*, Above 2 – 3 lakhs category ranked *Once half a year*, 3 – 5 lakhs category ranked *At least once/week* and Above 5 lakhs category ranked *At least once/week* as their preferred duration between buying environmental friendly products.

**INCOME-WISE MOTIVATORS TO BUY ENVIRONMENTAL FRIENDLY PRODUCTS**

The income wise motivators of the purchase of the environmental friendly products are made in the present section and presented in the table below.

**TABLE 2****INCOME-WISE MOTIVATORS TO BUY ENVIRONMENTAL FRIENDLY PRODUCTS**

Variables	1-2 lakhs		Above 2 - 3		Above 3 - 5		Above 5	
	W.A	Rank	W.A	Rank	W.A	Rank	W.A	Rank
It will be economical	3.88	5	3.56	5	4.45	4	3.75	5
It will be healthier to me and my family	4.40	4	4.69	3	5.10	2	4.87	3
It will preserve the environment	4.76	3	4.34	4	4.66	3	4.31	4
It's a better product(e.g., better design, higher quality)	5.17	2	5.09	2	3.54	5	5.14	2
It's a way to show others to care about the environment	5.28	1	5.22	1	5.23	1	5.29	1

**Source:** Compiled and calculated using primary data

The above table represents the ranks of the motivators to buy environmental friendly products based on the mean scores.

**1-2 lakhs**

In case of employees having the annual income of 1-2 lakhs, the first rank has been given *It's a way to show others to care about the environment* with the weighted average of 5.28; the second rank has been given to *It's a better product(e.g., better design, higher quality)* with the weighted average of 5.17, the third rank has been given to *It will preserve the environment* with the weighted average of 4.76, the fourth rank has been given to *It will be healthier to me and my family* with the weighted average of 4.40, and the last rank has been given to *It will be economical* with the weighted average of 3.88.

**Above 2 – 3 lakhs**

In case of employees having the annual income of Above 2 - 3, the first rank has been given *It's a way to show others to care about the environment* with the weighted average of 5.22; the second rank has been given to *It will preserve the environment* with the weighted average of 4.34, the third rank has been given to *It will be healthier to me and my family* with the weighted average of 4.69, the fourth rank

has been given to *It will preserve the environment* with the weighted average of 4.34, and the last rank has been given to *It will be economical* with the weighted average of 3.56.

### Above 3 – 5 lakhs

In case of employees having the annual income of Above 3 - 5, the first rank has been given *It's a way to show others to care about the environment* with the weighted average of 5.23; the second rank has been given to *It will be healthier to me and my family* with the weighted average of 5.10, the third rank has been given to *It will preserve the environment* with the weighted average of 4.66, the fourth rank has been given to *It will be economical* with the weighted average of 4.45, and the last rank has been given to *It's a better product(e.g., better design, higher quality)* with the weighted average of 3.54.

### Above 5 lakhs

In case of employees having the annual income of Above 5, the first rank has been given *It's a way to show others to care about the environment* with the weighted average of 5.29; the second rank has been given to *It's a better product(e.g., better design, higher quality)* with the weighted average of 5.14, the third rank has been given to *It will be healthier to me and my family* with the weighted average of 4.87, the fourth rank has been given to *It will preserve the environment* with the weighted average of 4.31, and the last rank has been given to *It will be economical* with the weighted average of 3.75.

Thus it can be concluded that the respondents whose annual income of 1-2 lakhs ranked it's a way to show others to care about the environment, above 2 – 3 lakhs category ranked it's a way to show others to care about the environment, 3 – 5 lakhs category ranked it's a way to show others to care about the environment and above 5 lakhs category ranked it's a way to show others to care about the environment as their preferred motivator to buy environmental friendly products.

### INCOME-WISE DETRIMENTS TO BUY ENVIRONMENTAL FRIENDLY GOODS

The ranks based on weighted averages of income wise detriments in the purchase of environmental friendly products are featured below.

**TABLE 3**  
**INCOME WISE DETRIMENTS TO BUY ENVIRONMENTAL FRIENDLY GOODS**

Variables	1-2 lakhs		Above 2 - 3		Above 3 - 5		Above 5	
	W.A	Rank	W.A	Rank	W.A	Rank	W.A	Rank
Higher price	5.16	2	5.24	2	4.38	5	5.23	2
Non availability	5.08	3	5.14	3	5.21	2	5.14	3
Limited choice	3.46	6	5.32	1	5.10	3	5.29	1
Confusing range of eco-labels	4.84	4	4.83	4	5.30	1	4.38	5
Obtaining information about the eco-friendliness of the goods	5.28	1	4.53	5	4.82	4	3.62	6
Lower quality	4.45	5	3.72	6	3.57	6	4.76	4

Source: Compiled and calculated using primary data

The above table represents the ranks of the detriments to buy environmental friendly goods based on the mean scores.

### 1-2 lakhs

In case of employees having the annual income of 1-2 lakhs, the first rank has been given *Obtaining information about the eco-friendliness of the goods* with the weighted average of 5.28; the second rank has been given to *Higher price* with the weighted average of 5.16, the third rank has been given to *Non availability* with the weighted average of 5.08, the fourth rank has been given to *Confusing range of eco-labels* with the weighted average of 4.84, and the fifth rank has been given to *Lower quality* with the weighted average of 4.45, and the least rank has been given to *Limited choice* with the weighted average of 3.46.

### Above 2 – 3 lakhs

In case of employees having the annual income of Above 2 – 3 lakhs, the first rank has been given *Limited choice* with the weighted average of 5.32; the second rank has been given to *Higher price* with the weighted average of 5.24, the third rank has been given to *Non availability* with the weighted average of 5.14, the fourth rank has been given to *Confusing range of eco-labels* with the weighted average of 4.83, and the fifth rank has been given to *Obtaining information about the eco-friendliness of the goods* with the weighted average of 4.53, and the least rank has been given to *Lower quality* with the weighted average of 3.72.

### Above 3 – 5 lakhs

In case of employees having the annual income of Above 3 – 5 lakhs, the first rank has been given *Confusing range of eco-labels* with the weighted average of 5.30; the second rank has been given to *Non availability* with the weighted average of 5.21, the third rank has been given to *Limited choice* with the weighted average of 5.10, the fourth rank has been given to *Obtaining information about the eco-friendliness of the goods* with the weighted average of 4.82, and the fifth rank has been given to *Higher price* with the weighted average of 4.38, and the least rank has been given to *Lower quality* with the weighted average of 3.57.

### Above 5 lakhs

In case of employees having the annual income of Above 5 lakhs, the first rank has been given *Limited choice* with the weighted average of 5.29; the second rank has been given to *Higher price* with the weighted average of 5.23, the third rank has been given to *Non availability* with the weighted average of 5.14, the fourth rank has been given to *Lower quality* with the weighted average of 4.76, and the fifth rank has been given to *Confusing range of eco-labels* with the weighted average of 4.38, and the least rank has been given to *Obtaining information about the eco-friendliness of the goods* with the weighted average of 3.62.

**Thus it can be concluded that the respondents whose annual income of 1-2 lakhs ranked obtaining information about the eco-friendliness of the goods, above 2 – 3 lakhs category ranked limited choice, 3 – 5 lakhs category ranked confusing range of eco-labels and above 5 lakhs category ranked limited choice as their chief detriment to buy environmental friendly products.**

## DEMOGRAPHICS WISE PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR OF CONSUMERS TOWARDS THE ENVIRONMENTAL FRIENDLY PRODUCTS– CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

**H<sub>04</sub> (v):** There is no significant relationship in the purchase behaviour of environmental friendly products among the groups of respondents based on their education

**H<sub>04</sub> (vi):** There is no significant relationship in the purchase behaviour of environmental friendly products among the groups of respondents based on their occupation

**H<sub>04</sub> (vii):** There is no significant relationship in the purchase behaviour of environmental friendly products among the groups of respondents based on their annual income

TABLE 4

**DEMOGRAPHICS WISE PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR OF CONSUMERS TOWARDS THE ENVIRONMENTAL FRIENDLY PRODUCTS– CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS**

REASONS	EDUCATION		OCCUPATION		ANNUAL INCOME	
	$x^2$	Sig	$x^2$	Sig	$x^2$	Sig
Paper /Jute /Cotton carry bags, eco-friendly plates and cups	47.466	0.024*	24.686	0.426	38.869	0.535
Recycled paper and stationery	39.121	0.642	66.631	0.732	40.584	0.022*
Energy saving lamps	60.437	0.643	48.675	0.041*	22.239	0.854
Organic food products	55.311	0.423	55.730	0.003**	37.887	0.329
Natural soaps, herbal cosmetics & other personal care products	66.421	0.083	47.466	0.024*	28.674	0.023*

\*\* Significant at 1 per cent level \*Significant at 5 per cent level

The Chi-square analysis of demographics wise purchase behaviour of consumers towards environmental friendly products in the Coimbatore district is depicted in the above table. The variables in the categories namely; **EDUCATION:** Paper /Jute /Cotton carry bags, eco-friendly plate and cups. **OCCUPATION:** Energy saving Lamps and Organic food products. **ANNUAL INCOME:** Recycled paper and stationery and Natural soaps, herbal cosmetics & other personal care products are significant at 5 per cent and 1 per cent respectively. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected for these variables and concluded that there is a significant relationship in the purchase behaviour of environmental friendly products among the groups of respondents based on their education, occupation and income.

**DETERMINANTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL FRIENDLY PURCHASE: MEAN SCORE ANALYSIS**

In order to assess the degree to which the determinants influence environmental friendly purchase of the respondents, their mean scores were calculated and presented in Table

TABLE 5

## DETERMINANTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL FRIENDLY PURCHASE - OVERALL MEAN SCORES

Determinants of Environmental friendly Purchase	Mean	Std. Deviation	Coefficient of Variation
Selflessness	3.48	.866	24.57
Selfishness	4.15	.518	13.06
Appreciation	3.02	.688	21.61
Obligation	2.59	.839	27.52
Other reasons	2.80	.751	26.84

**Source:** Compiled and calculated using the primary data

From the above table it was clear that, in general, among the five factors which are likely to influence environmental friendly purchase, *selfishness* has the highest mean score of 4.15 and it was the most influencing factor. This was followed by *Selflessness* which has a mean score of 3.48. The next factor was the *appreciation* (mean score 3.02) the respondents get, that influence them to buy the green commodities. The least influencing factors are *obligation* with a mean score of 2.59 and finally *other reasons* with a mean score of 2.80.

The coefficient of variation indicated that there was a high degree of convergence of responses in the factor *selfishness*, followed by *appreciation*, *selflessness* and *other reasons*. The lowest degree of agreeability of responses was with the factor *obligation*.

## VIII.CONCLUSION

Sustainability is the joint responsibility of government, producers and consumers. Consumers may adopt sustainability practices in their day-to-day life by showing their preference towards environmental friendly products. However, the complex and erratic behavior of consumers pose challenges to the government and producers in addressing their issues and fulfilling their needs. In this context, this research was undertaken to understand the consumer awareness, attitude and purchase behavior towards environmental friendly goods in the district of Coimbatore. Organic food products are the top preferred environmental friendly products that are often bought by the respondents. Energy saving Lamps and Organic food products are the products which are significant among the groups of respondents based on their gender. Recycled paper and stationery are the products which are significant among the groups of respondents based on their marital status.

Energy saving Lamps is the products which are significant among the groups of respondents based on their age. Recycled paper and stationery and Energy saving are the products which are significant among the groups of respondents based on their number of members in the family. Paper /Jute /Cotton carry bags, eco- friendly plate and cups are the products which are significant among the groups of respondents based on their education. Energy saving Lamps and Organic food products are the products which are significant among the groups of respondents based on their occupation. Recycled paper and stationery and Natural soaps, herbal cosmetics & other personal care products are the products which are significant among the groups of respondents based on their annual income.



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