GREEN MARKETING AND BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF CONSUMERS: A STUDY

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Abstract: *The slogan "Go Green" is used to motivate people to choose environmental friendly attitude and live in the society with less waste and harm to the environment. This awareness has made people to use eco-friendly products and thus a space is being created in the market for the concept called Green Marketing. Green marketing is a strategy used to promote eco-friendly products, which are hypothesized to be environmental safe. It is said the consumers are the king of the market and to maintain stability, it is necessary for the organisation to understand the attitude of the consumers towards the green products. Though there is huge demand for these products and it's available online as well as in brick and mortar, but due to lack of awareness towards green products made many consumers not to buy these products. This paper have used both primary as well as secondary data to know the level of consumer awareness on green marketing and to understand the buying behaviour of consumers on eco-friendly products and also to focus on the success factors of marketers in bringing the green brand awareness in consumers mind. This paper used statistical tools to analyse the collected data.*

Keywords: *buying behaviour, green marketing, eco-friendly products*

INTRODUCTION:

Green environment refers to responsibility towards the prevention of wasteful use of environmental resources and to upgrade the health of environment; due to this reason green movement has been expanding rapidly around the world. A significant economic benefit of going green is that it helps lower costs and save money. Use of renewable energy helps reduce energy consumption which in turn helps save money used on electricity bills. An apparent benefit of going green at home is that it helps reduce water and power bills significantly. Going green helps the environment by reducing the amount of pollution that enters the soil, water and air. By using alternative energy sources and avoiding the burning

of fossil fuels, recycling and reducing waste and driving more efficiently, fewer pollutants are released into the environment.

Consumers' awareness and responsibility towards environment has created new place for eco-friendly products and the practice of using green products also promotes recycling which can reduce the use of raw materials, thus lessening the need for disposal of toxic products and packing materials. Most of not all companies are looking to go green with their packaging nowadays. Helping the environment is simply one benefit of using eco-friendly packaging but the truth is that using eco-friendly packaging products requires fewer materials. This is more sustainable and also gives better results.

Green packaging employs environmentally sensitive methods as a massive amount of energy is used up in the production of traditional packaging materials like plastic, paper, and cardboard. Usually, the source of the energy is fossil fuels that contribute millions of tons of carbon dioxide and methane into the atmosphere while the waste packaging material ends up in landfills or water bodies.

Eco-friendly packaging is a recent phenomenon which has become a rapidly growing trend. By shifting to green materials you can meet or anticipate customer's demands for eco-friendly suppliers.

Shoppers are seeking out greener products, energized by the prospects of healthier alternatives, higher quality, preserving the environment and saving time and money. But the "green wash" phenomenon threatens the green-marketing revolution.

The potential to confuse consumers with misleading green claims is high. Green issues are highly technical, complex and fast moving. When claims are unclear, marketers can be labelled as green washers and their marketing as green wash.

Being perceived as a green washer seriously can damage a company's credibility. Unfair or deceptive advertising can expose marketers to legal risks and accompanying expense. The impact of green wash can hit the bottom line if disillusioned customers shift their purchases to more trustworthy competitors.

In the tradition of green marketing, brands launch eco-friendly products or create the corresponding environment around them by using eco-friendly packaging or refuse from it, make products recyclable and reusable, use green energy for product production, design products from recycled materials to reduce waste, choose local selling to reduce transportation energy, and more. As a part of green marketing, brands also often participate in recycling programs, become more scrupulous about waste disposal practices, donate to different green movements, and don't forget to educate their customers about what they do to protect the environment and why it matters.

Green marketing is not only about promoting products or services with environmental characteristics. It involves brand modification and changes in the manufacturing process. It's about taking a different perspective on marketing, considering the global consequences we have on environmental degradation. It's about a brand's ability to satisfy customer needs with minimum harm to the environment.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

According to Wong FuiYeng & Rashad Yazdanifard (2015), investigated that green marketing covers a wide range of business activities and it is similar to marketing mix. Therefore, marketers should adopt a suitable single green marketing mix and strategy corresponding to company in which they conduct and target consumers' demands and personality. In addition, companies that carry out green marketing in the right place and on the right person may support the company to achieve their competitive advantage.

Ms.Anuradha Gaikwad and Ms.DeepaIngavale (2011), in their research paper "A Study of Awareness for Green Marketing", studied that Overall 60% of the people are aware of the concept of 'Green Marketing'. No significant relationship is visible between income, educational qualification and occupation with respect to awareness about Green marketing. It seems that people who belong to the service category among occupation are more aware and willing to buy eco-friendly products. Consumers who are aware of eco-friendly products and have a preference for eco friendly products are not willing to buy expensive eco-friendly products.

Dr.Shruti P Maheshwari (2014) researched that, consumers generally trust the performance of well-known brands, so green products that work well and do not make over inflated green claims could sell successfully under well-known brands. The Indian market for greener products is under-exploitation by marketers within consumer groups with pro-environmental values. This finding suggests the there is greater use of marketing brands to sell green products that are genuinely environmentally friendly.

Bhatia, Mayank;Jain, Amit (2013), stated that the study has implications for marketers as well as consumers and makes a good case for start of an era of green marketing in India. The study since focused on a limited geographical area has limited generalizability but provides good insights regarding behaviour of consumers towards green products. Future research could focus on psychographic segmentation of consumers in terms of assessing their green values and preferences. The study can be replicated at a larger scale to get more insights into the behaviour of consumers and understand more about green phenomenon.

Dr M. Mary Anbunathy (2016) in the research paper, "awareness among consumers about green marketing in Tanjore district", investigated that the opinion of the retailers is green products are liked by consumers but because of poor awareness and high prices have not been fully adopted by them. The intermediaries should include consumer's attitude measurement programme in their marketing plan and adopt all aspects of green marketing, then only they can achieve their goal and fulfil the social responsibility of their business concern. There is a need in this situation to save earth in joint hands actions from Government, NGOs, Manufactures', retailers regulators, scientific community and environmental education groups should create an awareness programmes among the consumers at regular intervals for reviving, maintaining and safeguarding the earth's eco system.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To study Consumer buying behaviour towards green products.
2. To identify Consumers level of awareness on the accessibility of eco-friendly products.
3. To analyse Marketing strategies made by the marketers to reach consumers

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

To analyse the objectives of the study, both primary and secondary data have been collected. In the first stage a research of articles were made to know the marketing strategies used by companies to reach consumers and in the next process primary data were collected with the help of questionnaire by convenience sampling method to gain knowledge about consumer buying behaviour and awareness towards eco-friendly products. The study was carried out in Karnataka state with an online survey with a sample size 100.

The questionnaire contains the questions related to demographic factor, environmental belief, consumer environmental behaviour and consumer buying behaviour towards green products.

Statistical Methods

The statistical methods used in the analysis were: Means, Coefficient of Variation - to analyze the Average level of perception of the Respondents and multiple regression analysis is used to explain the variation in the dependent variable, given a set of independent variables.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS:

First part of the questionnaire contains the demographic factors of consumers, second part on environmental beliefs of consumer, then on consumers' environmental behaviour and last part on consumer buying behaviour.

TABLE 1:

Sl.No	Demographic factors	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Coefficient of variation
1	Gender	1.78	0.416	17.30
2	Age	2.74	0.630	39.60
3	Education level	3.60	0.667	44.40

Source: Primary data

Out of 3 premises, 1st premise state that majority of the respondents are female as the mean score is 1.78, 2nd premise shows that majority of the reactions from 25-30 years of age group and 3nd premise has in majority graduate and post graduate respondents a average value is more than 3 and is supported by SD and CV.

TABLE 2:

Sl.No.	General environmental beliefs	mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Coefficient of variation
1	Humans have the right to modify the natural environment to suit their needs	2.65	1.438	206.8
2	When humans interfere with nature it often has disastrous consequences	4.72	0.451	20.40

Source: Primary data

Out of 2 propositions on general environmental beliefs, 2nd propositions mean score is more than 4 on likert-5 point scale (coded as 1,2,3,4 & 5), which means most of the respondents are strongly agreed to this statement and same is supported by relatively less SD and lower value of CV and for proposition 1 mean score is 2.65, which means respondents responses varied a lot to this statement and is well supported by SD with 1.438 value and high CV.

TABLE 3

Sl.No.	Environmental buying behaviour	mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Coefficient of variation
1	Regularly take your own bags to supermarket	1.37	0.485	23.50
2	Buy products which are made or packed in recycled materials	4.08	0.677	45.80
3	It is necessary to read labels to see if the contents are environmentally safe	4.46	0.501	25.10

Source: Primary data

Out of 3 propositions, 2nd and 3rd mean score is above 4, which means most of the respondents strongly agreed to both the statements, but reaction of respondents of 2nd proposition varied as CV is high. 1st proposition mean score is above 1 and it states that only majority of respondents accepted the statement and is well carried by SD and CV.

TABLE 5:

Sl. No.	Consumer buying behaviour	mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Coefficient of variation
1	It feels good to buy brands which are less damaging to the environment	4.63	0.485	23.50
2	Level of awareness towards eco-friendly products	1.90	0.522	27.30
3	Media used to become aware of green products	1.20	0.603	36.40

4	Will you pay more if green features increases the price of the products	1.92	1.002	100.40
5	Enough information is given in the package description	1.63	0.485	23.50
6	Main reason to buy eco-friendly products	1.72	0.451	20.40
7	Opinion about "green marketing is in headline now a days"	1.90	0.905	81.80
8	Marketing element strongly influence buying behaviour of green products	3.62	1.830	334.90

Source: Primary data

Out of 8 propositions, 1st proposition states that majority of the respondents strongly agreed as it mean score is more than 4, 2nd propositions analysed that most of the respondents have medium knowledge about eco-friendly products with above average mean score, 3rd proposition have awareness of green products through social media with below average mean core, 5th proposition states that majority of the respondents feels description of green features in package is not enough with above average mean score, 6th proposition respondents gave below average mean score, which mean they opinion that responsibility towards environmental protection is the reason for purchase, 7th proposition respondents gave above average mean score, means respondents thinks that due to company's attempt to address society's new concern, green marketing is in trend. As 4th and 8th proposition are above average mean score and SD are 1.002 and 1.830 respectively with high CV states that there is lot of variation in the opinion of respondents.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONSUMERS' ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOUR AND ENVIRONMENTAL BELIEF

TABLE 6:

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.870509714
R Square	0.757787163
Adjusted R Square	0.752793084
Standard Error	0.24125918
Observations	100

Source: Primary data

TABLE 7:

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value
Intercept	1.684715453	0.31673837	5.31894969	6.7E-07
VAR00002	0.345446871	0.023724947	14.5604909	3.82E-26
VAR00003	-0.26062493	0.075608729	-3.4470217	0.00084

Source: Primary data

Results of Regression Model between Consumer Environmental Behaviour and Consumer Buying Behaviour

Correlation between Environmental beliefs and Consumer environmental behaviour:

The degrees of freedom v=n-2=98

The observed value of r= 0.870509714 falls inside the critical region

P-value is 0.00084

Therefore, Consumer environmental behaviour is significantly affected by environmental beliefs.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONSUMERS BUYING BEHAVIOUR AND ENVIRONMENTAL BELIEFS

TABLE 8:

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.846775
R Square	0.717027
Adjusted R Square	0.711193
Standard Error	0.26077
Observations	100

Source: Primary data

TABLE 9:

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value
Intercept	1.382171227	0.342353202	4.037267	0.000108
VAR00002	0.111209179	0.025643598	4.336723	3.54E-05
VAR00003	0.625661959	0.081723255	7.655862	1.43E-11

Source: Primary data

Results of Regression Model between Consumer Buying Behaviour and environmental beliefs

Correlation between Environmental beliefs and Consumer environmental behaviour:

The degrees of freedom v=n-2=98

Critical region at 1% is IrI<

The observed value of r= 0.846775falls inside the critical region

P-value is 1.43E-11

Consumer buying behaviour is significantly affected by environmental beliefs, as even the majority of the respondents' demographic factors influenced the regression analysis.

FINDINGS:

1. Majority of the respondents are concerned towards environmental safety.
2. Majority of the respondents taking initiative to retain the green environment.
3. Majority of the respondents are not well aware of green products. Consumers prefer to use green product but lack of effect from green marketers created a gap to reach end consumers.

SUGGESTIONS:

1. As market plays a very significant role in creating awareness, green marketers need to use different attractive marketing strategies, but should not provide fake information just to increase their sales, as people do not have much knowledge about green product.
2. Marketers have a great space in the market to promote green products, because consumers prefer as it does not harm the environment.
3. All reputed brands need to use green features in their products as a beginning to new green era.
4. Consumers' environmental beliefs should be reflected in their environmental behaviour as well as in their buying behaviour.

CONCLUSION:

For clean and safe environment pressure on consumers mind has created a demand for eco labelled products. The study reveals that environmental thought of consumers given beginning to "go green" concept. The paper highlights the belief and behaviour of consumers towards environment and its effect on buying behaviour. The current low level of awareness about green products, India's brands need to help raise the consumer consciousness. Green manufacturer have to find their market, even consumers are less aware of products because of the insufficient efforts made by marketers.

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