

GREEN CONSUMERISM- A PANACEA TO ENERGY CRISIS

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ABSTRACT

Green consumerism is the practice of purchasing products and services that actively seek to minimize social or environmental damage, and the avoidance of products that have a negative impact on society or the environment. The idea of green consumerism has more relevance in this decade, for countries across the globe have paid little heed to the ethical stand point of their actions. As such they have paved the way for economic development at the cost of the environment. Green consumerism, contrary to popular beliefs is not a concept that had evolved in the 21st century, but originated way back in 1980's in Britain. However the outreach of green consumerism and acceptance of green products is yet to proliferate to other nations. In India, the concept of green consumerism is still in its nascent stage. At a time when the whole nation and the state are reeling under a massive power crisis, it is most essential to take a concentrated effort in promoting green consumerism in India. All products big or small have a huge environmental impact; it is therefore the responsibility of consumers to make informed and pro-environment decisions with regard to their consumption.

KEYWORDS: cost of the environment, Green consumerism

INTRODUCTION

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Alsmadi (2007) in his study observed that though consumers had a high level of environmental conscience this did not influence them in purchasing green products due to their preference for traditional products and lack of confidence in green products.

Donaldson (2005) in his study stated that consumers were much more comfortable with known brands than unknown green products and hence were reluctant using them.

Hartmann et al (2005), in his study of eco-labeled and energy efficient products demonstrated that green consumerism was related with the market for the products.

Grail (2010) in his study proved that consumers who never bought green products were deterred from purchasing them because they perceived it to be too expensive. Price was an important reason that discouraged consumers from purchasing green products.

Aracioglu and Tathdil (2009) in their study found that environmental pollution and awareness of environmental protection, affected consumer behavior.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the availability of energy saving green products in Chennai
- To assess the awareness levels that exist among consumers with regard to energy saving green products
- To analyze the factors that influence consumer's choice of eco-friendly products.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As the study is empirical, it mainly depends on primary data. The primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire which was distributed among 100 people residing in Chennai. Secondary data was used, to study the availability of green products in Chennai. Data were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0 for analysis.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES AND ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistical techniques such as frequency and percentage, Chi square test and Garrett Ranking techniques were used for analyzing the data.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1: Demography

Variables	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
AGE	21 to 30 Years	62	62
	31 to 40 years	26	26
	41 to 50 years	10	10
	51 to 60 years	2	2
GENDER	MALE	34	34
	FEMALE	66	66
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION	HSLC	1	1
	UG	26	26
	PG	55	55
	Professional	18	18
MONTHLY INCOME	Upto 10000	17	17
	11000 to 20000	24	24
	21000 to 30000	15	15
	31000 and above	44	44
OCCUPATION	Self Employed	4	4
	Business	11	11
	Salaried	39	39
	Student	44	44
	Unemployed	2	2

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents Based on Purchasing Behaviors

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Purchased Green Products	Yes	76	76%
	No	24	24%
Willingness to Purchase in Future	Yes	86	86%
	No	14	14%

Recommend to others	On use	91	91%
	Without Use	6	6%
	Never	3	3%
Awareness	TV	41	41%
	Radio	4	4%
	Magazine	4	4%
	Newspaper	17	17%
	Internet	5	5%
	Friends	29	29%
Willing to pay Premium	Yes	57	57%
	No	43	43%
Seen Advertisements	Yes	66	66%
	No	34	34%
Source: Primary Data			

Table 3: Energy Saving Green Products that are Available in Chennai

PRODUCTS	ECO-FRIENDLY FEATURES	PRODUCT	ECO-FRIENDLY FEATURES
TELEVISION i) Panasonic Eco-navi ii) LG 3D iii) Samsung Plasma Series iv) Sony Bravia	30% energy saving 37%energy saving Consumes less than 60% of the energy. automatic power off	WASHING MACHINE i) Whirlpool Aquasteam 9769 ii)Panasonic Eco navi iii) LG- eco steam iv) Samsung Eco-bubble	50% savings on water and energy top energy rating of a+++ 50% energy savings 15°c eco bubble wash reduces energy use by 70% compared to a normal 40°c wash.
REFRIGERATOR i) LG bottom freezer ii) Whirlpool Prottonelt iii) Panasonic Econavi iv) Samsung	Power saver 6th sense electronic control Panasonic Led lightings thus less energy	AC i) Whirlpool ii) Voltas iii) Panasonic Econavi	Saves 20-37% of energy. energy efficient and eco-friendly 30% energy saving
GEYSERS i)Racold Solar ii)HavellsGero	Uses solar power Energy saving temperature setting	LIGHTS i) PhilipsEndura Led ii) Havells Lilliput, dwarf	Saves energy Uses least possible power

Source: Secondary Data**Null Hypothesis (Ho):** There is no association between gender of the respondents and purchasing behavior.

Table 4: Indicating Chi Square Test for Gender and Purchasing Behaviour

Gender	Purchased Green Products		Total
	Yes	No	
Male	33	1	34
Female	43	23	66
Total	76	24	100
Pearson Chi-Square Value	12.525		
Degree of Freedom	1		
P value	0.000**		
** Significance at 1% Level Source: Primary Data			

It can be observed from the table that the p value is 0.000 and hence null hypothesis is rejected at one percent level of significance. Thus there is an association between gender and purchasing behaviour of respondents.

Null Hypotheses (Ho): There is no association between Monthly Income and purchase behaviour of respondents

Table 5: Indicating Chi- Square for Income and Purchasing Behaviour

Monthly Income	Purchased Green Products		Total
	Yes	No	
Upto 10000	11	6	17
11000 to 20000	20	4	24
21000 to 30000	13	2	15
31000 and above	32	12	44
Total	76	24	100
Pearson Chi-Square Value	3.091		
Degree of Freedom	3		
P value	0.378		
* Significance at 5% Level Source: Primary Data			

It is observed that the p value is 0.378; hence null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. Hence there is no association between monthly income and purchasing pattern of green products.

Null Hypothesis (Ho): There is no association between past purchase pattern and future purchase pattern of green products

Table 6: Indicating Chi Square for Past Purchase of Green Products and Future Purchase

Purchased Already	Planning to Purchase Green Products		Total
	Yes	No	
Yes	73	3	76
No	13	11	24
Total	86	14	100
Pearson Chi-Square Value	26.579**		
Degree of Freedom	1		
P value	0.000		
** Significance at 1% Level Source: Primary Data			

Since p value is 0.000 null hypothesis is rejected at 1% significance level. Thus there is an association between past purchasing pattern and future purchasing pattern of green products.

Table 7: Garrett Ranking to Analyze the Factors that are Given Preference While Purchasing Green Products

S.No	Statement	Mean Score	Rank
1	Quality of the product	57.55	I
2	Price of the product	55.95	II
3	Easy availability of the product	50.73	III
4	Brand Value of the product	48.38	IV
5	Eco-friendly features of the product	45.95	V
6	Information about the product	42.81	VI

Source: Primary Data

The importance's of factors perceived by the respondents were analyzed by Garrett's ranking technique. It is found from the above table that quality of the product is given higher importance than price of the products. The other options namely easy availability, brand Value, eco-friendly features and information about the product are ranked Third, Fourth, Fifth and sixth respectively.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The outcomes of the study and their implications are given below:

- The results of the study revealed that Gender does have an impact on the purchasing behaviour of the respondents. However monthly income of the respondents does not have an impact on the purchasing pattern of respondents.
- The results of the study reveals that 73% of the respondents who have already purchased a green product are likely to purchase a green product in future, while only 3% of the respondents are not likely to buy one.
- Quality of the products is given higher priority than the price, since majority of the respondents have high purchasing power. This is however not in conformity with the results of Grail (2010) where price was a major deterrent. The eco-friendly features of green products were not given much importance by the respondents as it ranks fifth in their criterion for purchase.
- It is found that among the ways of creating awareness of green products, TV has helped spread maximum awareness for 41% of the respondents came to know about green products through TV, while 29% came to know through their friends and 17% through newspapers. The other mediums- Internet and Radio have not helped in creating awareness.
- Results show that 57% of the respondents are willing to pay a higher price for the green products.
- Results revealed that 91% of the respondents will recommend green products to others only upon use.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Consumers are aware of the existing energy saving green products, however there is a need to increase the awareness of green consumerism, for although 73% of the respondents have purchased green products it was not the environmental concern that influenced them to purchase them. There is a need to educate consumers about the importance of making environmental friendly purchases and benefits that would accrue with it. Marketing strategies should be developed to improve the consumers appeal for environmentally friendly products. Consumers must look at the larger picture and act in the wider interest of the environment and not be guided by personal short term gains. Unless collective

efforts are taken, environmental issues will pose to be a grave problem in the years to come.

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