

Effect of the Factors of Consumer Behaviour on Purchase of Green Products

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Abstract

Environmental conditions of the globe are getting adverse. Since industrial revolution the natural cycle of the globe has been disturbed imparting changes in the biodiversity, evolved acid rains, greenhouse effect, contamination of water and soil resources. Traditional marketing had valid drawbacks, it primarily focused on consumers, fulfilled their needs to meet their satisfaction level and attain maximum profits. All this led to use natural resources abundantly. As an initiative for improving this situation green marketing is adapted by business entities and their customers. Indian market is characterized by mass consumerism. Gradually due to increased awareness, attitude of consumers towards green products have substantially elevated. Motive of the study is to identify the effect of consumer behaviour factors towards purchase of green products. These factors were regressed simultaneously beta values have been identified to understand their impact on the purchase. This research would give an insight to retailers to understand perceptions and views of consumers purchasing green products which will help them to sell green products. This will create satisfaction of consumers, save environment and give competitive advantage to producers and sellers.

Keywords- Environmental Conditions, Green Marketing, Customer, Awareness, Competitive Advantage.

1. Introduction

Green marketing is a positive outcome of Industrial Revolution. Epoch of marketing started with production phase, consumers were provided with goods that were produced by manufacturers. In the later phase priority was given to consumer's choices which resulted in remarkable increase in their demand, accordingly supply was done tremendously, this accompanied consumption of natural resources leading to unsustainable marketing scenario. Businesses turned themselves into profit making organizations without giving relevance to consumers and environment. Negative impacts on health and environment awakened consumers, citizens and government authorities to acknowledge green marketing. Green marketing was introduced due to diminishing supply and growing demand of resources resulting in an unstable economy. Consequences were greatly observed on the ecosystems which turned out to be polluted and resources exhausted. Resources of the planet were used to such an extent that generated misbalance in the ecological footprint (Walley and Whitehead, 1994). Era of green marketing started in the early sixties with recognition of problems existing in the environment. Succeeding phase in the eighties came up with

innovations to overcome the drastic situations. Culmination of green marketing in the last phase in late nineties was a combination of products and strategies reducing harmful impact, giving competitive advantage to distribution channel of being socially responsible (Peattie, 2001). Business organization should work as a whole system approach where each activity of the business would be conducted for the welfare of the society with profit motive. Consumers on their end must understand their responsibility towards sustainability. There must be mutual understanding between producers, distributors and consumers for retaining sustainability. In this way green marketing would benefit all organizations, supply chain and customers associated with it Gordon et al. (2011).

2. Green Consumer in India

India is massive in area and population with colossal market segment comprising of both organized and unorganized sector. To enter into a market, retailer have to face challenges, to establish themselves is a very tedious task for them. India has 29 states with several market segments consisting of stern rules and regulations. Still despite these difficulties retailers were able to make profits from this sector (Kearney, 2016.) Indian retail market has prospective growth. It is a component which rises GDP, income and purchasing power of consumers (Kearney, 2012). Shopping practice of consumers has changed since the entry of retail formats (SenGupta, 2008). Indian consumers do not want to compromise with their health, quality and value of the product. This would give opportunity to green retailers to rule the market with green products. Green consumers have an impact of 4A's model of critical drivers. The model refers to affordability, acceptability, availability and awareness. Green products must be affordable for every customer living in any place within the country. Products must be accepted by consumer on basis of additional features associated with products. They should be available in the retail stores, making it convenient for consumers to buy these goods. To create awareness retailers must communicate benefits of green products to consumers. Consumers in India have become conscious about green products. Green consumerism has evolved it's in growing stage. A lot of problems relating to poverty, unemployment, population would descend when people would ascend towards green products (Jain and Kaur, 2004).

In early nineties, it was difficult for MNC's to focus on Indian consumers as their attitudes; choices were heterogeneous in nature, creating difficulty in producing goods for them. To sell products seemed to be a tough job. Gradually with entry of several companies into the market, their product lines led Indian consumers to purchase goods and services. Paramount factor was stability of economic conditions among consumers. Urbanization was taking place in India raising consumption of goods and services. They focused on conserving money and expected high benefits from products they had purchased. Expansion of consumption pattern was due to reposition of family structure; joint family structure was converted to nuclear families, making significant upsurge in spending and consumption of products (Singhi et al., 2017). Goods were classified into high, medium and low frequency items, consumers

purchased them on basis of their spending capacity. Indian consumers were ready to pay more for products which provided additional benefits to them. Focusing on health and situations prevailing in the environment, consumers purchased green products even at high prices. They had trust on eco-friendly goods produced by Indian producers (Gopal and Srinivasan, 2006). Indian consumers were aware of degenerating environment conditions, were ready to consume green products by paying more as an initiative to improve state of environment thereby increasing demand of green products. They were also attached to their roots. From ancient times products were manufactured using natural ingredients. At this alarming state, consumers were keen to purchase products which were organic and eco-friendly. They relied on eco labels on packaged goods. This built trust on products they purchased. One of the important factors of Indian consumers was they are value oriented. To retain green consumers, producers must inculcate new technologies to produce green products. It has been observed consumer alone in India has not been a major cause for emission of greenhouse gases. Successively as income, lifestyle of consumers has improved choices of consumption has also multiplied leading to adverse impacts on the environment. Dynamism by government, green producers, green retailers and green consumers would make India a low carbon and high green economy (Bhatia, 2014).

3. Research Objective

To identify effect of factors that influences consumer behaviour on purchase green products.

4. Review of Literature

To survive in the market, organizations concentrated on customer's preference and strategized to provide value to them. Consumers considered several factors like personal, psychological, cultural and social issues while purchasing a product (Hooley et al., 2008). Consumers demand was increasing drastically, to meet these needs firms had produced and supplied products using resources; consequence was, ecological balance of the habitat was disturbed (Gan et al., 2008). Downturn of resources created a situation which required immediate response from consumers, producers, government and media (Carrette et al., 2012). Conditions of the environment were pushing consumers to buy and consume green products. Value within green products was gaining edge over other non-green products. This would bring in sustainability for future (Rahman et al., 2017). Consumers understood purchase of green products was closely related to their values and lifestyles; this led them to continuously buy green products to maintain their self-image (Kang et al., 2013). Green marketing has strong associations with environment and industrial processes. Information should to be clearly given to consumers about green products. Greater the awareness on how environment could be protected would increase purchase of green products. Cost of green product was phrased as 'cost with positive results'; consumption of green products would result in positive environmental conditions (Oyewole, 2001). Consumers purchased environment friendly products as they were aware of ill effects of consuming non-green products and services. Producers had to integrate green aspects, bring change in features and

quality of the product for improving environmental conditions; resulting in customer loyalty (Kotler et al., 2008). A strong connection between perpetual and contextual factors has been established between consumers. They purchased green products understanding cause and effect along with quality, standard and performance of the product. Additional utility of green products would mould consumers to pay premium for these products (Alshura and Zabadi, 2016; Biswas, 2016). Consumers buying decision depended on present environmental conditions, influence from family and society, income to spend and marketing mix characteristics (Jain and Kaur, 2006; Kirmani and Khan, 2016). Organizations should strategize constructive communication tool to influence consumers to buy green products (Chang, 2015). There was a sudden rise in purchase of green products even though green products were priced high. Benefits of green products would mask the clause of high price of the products. Consumption rate when increased would result in higher sales gradually decreasing price of green products. Consumers greatly relied on eco labels on packages of the product. Consumers depended on retailers to buy green products. Retailers who were responsible towards society would be able to bring differentiation in society by selling green products (Liu et al., 2017). Green space predominantly affected health of consumer. There was a symbiotic relationship between health of human being and environment (Jennings et al., 2016). Since prices of green products were high, consumer's willingness to purchase them decreased. This could be stabilized if government took initiatives to bear a percentage of the price of green products. Positive perception would inflate sales of green products. Slowly consumers were having strong bond towards green products. Rationale was dreadful circumstances of environment. Companies that were not a big shot even they could outshine all competition by producing green products (Sheikh et al., 2014). Nation was rising in GDP with increased development and depleted natural resources. Consumers had to be educated in advance with reference to green products; affirmative perception towards green products would reduce value action gap. Green product execution must be as claimed by producers to meet expectations of consumers. Threatening state could be controlled by indulging green activities from both ends as consumers and producers (Maheshwari, 2014).

Once consumer understood conditions of the environment, they inherited pro environmental behaviour to make right decisions in purchasing green products (Mostafa, 2009). Environmental awareness played a very important role in consumption of green products. Green consumers were concerned for welfare of the civilization and environment; they not only purchased green products which cause fewer damaging effects also motivated other consumers to buy green products (Grant and Berry, 2011). Reference groups could influence consumer with features, vulnerability of the product and finally forceful capacity to buy green products (Hoyer and MacInnis, 2007). Attitude converted beliefs into action. This goes with environmental concerns; consumers interested in saving the environment took effort to overcome prevailing deteriorating situations (Fisher et al., 2012). Promotion gave chance to consumers to choose between green and non-green products. Highly environment sensitive consumers would purchase goods with quality, safe for their health and environment (Phau

and Ong, 2007). Purchasing green products involved concern, attitude and behaviour of an individual. These factors had a direct role in creating perceived consumer effectiveness (Kang et al., 2013). To stimulate environmental behaviour of consumer, there should not be any shortfall in availability of products at the retail store. In certain circumstances consumers were aware of green products and purchased them. Other consumers who had less knowledge of eco-friendly products; when saw these products on the shelf while shopping became inquisitive to purchase them. Promotion of these products should be done at a large scale to elucidate advantages of using green products (Ismail and Panni, 2008).

5. Analysis of Data

Demographic profile of consumers as per age includes female respondents comprised of 56.8% whereas male respondents comprised of 43.2% of the total frequency of 472. It was evident that female respondents were more involved than male respondents in purchasing green products. As per age predominance was observed between 25 to 34 years with frequency 144 consisting of 30.5% of the total respondents, 25.8% with frequency 122 were between 35 to 44 years, 18.9% with frequency 89 were amidst 45 years to 54 years, 14.6% with frequency 69 fell in the age category of 55 and above. Lowest number of respondents was pertaining to 15 to 24 years with frequency of 48 constituting 10.2% of the total respondents. As per age 59.3% of the study group were graduates, 34.7% were post graduates, 3.4% were with higher secondary degree and 2.6% were matriculation with frequency 280, 164, 16 and 12 of the total respondents. This implied consumer purchasing green products were mostly educated. As per occupation 88.7 % of the respondents were employed with frequency of 419, 8.3 % of the respondents were retired with a frequency of 39, 3% were under the category of unemployed with a frequency of 14 respondents.

As per income 277 respondents was highest with 58.6% of the study group having monthly income of Rs. 40,001 and above. Similarly, 123 respondents with 26.1% had month long revenues between Rs. 30001 to Rs. 40000, 49 survey participants with 10.4% had monthly earnings betwixt Rs. 20001 to Rs. 30000, 18 respondents with 3.8% had monthly earnings within Rs. 10001 to Rs. 20000 and 5 respondents with 1.1% had monthly income between Rs. 10000 and below respectively. The research is carried from August 2016 to November 2017.

Factors affecting consumer behavior were identified through a survey done for green food products purchased by consumers in Delhi Region; factors identified were Consumer environment consciousness, Promotion for public awareness, Retail store attributes, Environmental outlook, Compassion for green products, Eco label, Recognition of customer advantage, Retailer as intermediary, Demographic variables, Product accessibility, Product differentiation, Consulting group, Energy saving and Green price.

5.1 Consumer Environment Consciousness

It was observed from the survey that consumers of Delhi Region were conscious because of the harmful effects on the environment due to consumption of non-sustainable goods. They emphasized on purchasing green products. Perceived knowledge of environment has given positive outcomes; consumers were focused to buy green products.

5.2 Promotion for Public Awareness

Most important aspect for creating awareness of consumers towards green products was promoting the product through several mediums. Green promotion distinguishes the green product. Highly environment sensitive consumers would purchase goods those are good in quality, safe for their health and environment.

5.3 Retail Store Attributes

Consumers get convinced through attributes of retail stores to purchase green products giving them a feeling of responsibility to purchase green products to save the environment. Retail store should be designed with green attributes persuading consumers to purchase ecofriendly products.

5.4 Environmental Outlook

Consumers after understanding disastrous conditions of the environment have focused on purchasing products which could be easily recycled without affecting health and environment. Attitude measured behaviour of a consumer. Consumers having environmental attitude would take initiative to protect the habitat.

5.5 Compassion for Green Products

Present situations have touched consumers' emotional points triggering them to purchase green products. They have started giving value to their health and preservation of natural resources which has led them to purchase green products. Green consumers seeing the disastrous conditions of the environment have strong feeling to purchase green products.

5.6 Eco-Label

While purchasing green product, consumers look for labels on the products. These labels increased reliance of consumers on green products. Eco label instilled on packages promotes products which have been manufactured using renewable resources.

5.7 Recognition of Customer Advantage

Customers feel satisfied while consuming green products over non-green products. These customers involve in sharing their positive feedback to inflate sale of green products. Satisfaction of customer was obtained through personal evaluation based on their expectations in availing green products. It is that consideration where customer feels that he or she has received added benefits upon cost they have paid for purchasing green products.

5.8 Retailer as Intermediary

Retailer bridges gap between producers and customers while selling and purchasing green products. Retailers have been a connecting link between consumers and manufacturers to bring the product on shelves of the stores.

5.9 Demographic Variables

Demographic variables influenced psychology of consumers to purchase green products. Age, gender and qualification impacts purchase decision. Demographic variables greatly impact purchasing behaviour of a consumer to be eco-friendly in nature.

5.10 Product Accessibility

Green products should be easily available in the retail stores. Consumers should not find difficulty to pick the product positioned on shelves on the retail stores. Green products that can be easily seen on the shelves have more potential to get sold.

5.11 Product Differentiation

Green products can be demarcated from non-green products due to labels instilled on the package, ingredients mentioned on the outer cover of the products and recycling process of the products.

5.12 Consulting Group

Consumers were aware of green products, to convert their awareness into purchase they are influenced by people who already purchased green product like friends, relatives and family members.

5.13 Energy Saving

Green products claimed to be beneficial for the environment and people. Consumption of these products saved a lot of energy and resources ultimately reducing spending pattern of the consumers.

5.14 Green Price

Price of green product has been comparatively high. Consumers might be ready to purchase green product, but high price could be a constraint. Measures must be implemented to reduce price simultaneously increase sales of the product. On the other hand, consumers to overcome the alarming situation agreed to pay a little more for green products.

Multiple regression (Table 1) has been applied on these attained individual factors to know their collaborative relationship with the independent factor which is purchase of green products by consumers.

Table 1. Multiple regression analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Consumer Environment consciousness	0.507	0.163	0.422	3.120	0.002
Promotion for public awareness	0.048	0.024	0.051	1.981	0.048
Retail store attributes	0.062	0.024	0.060	2.601	0.010
Environmental outlook	0.070	0.023	0.076	3.039	0.003
Compassion	0.062	0.023	0.063	2.696	0.007
Eco label	0.250	0.076	0.242	3.291	0.001
Recognition of customer advantage	0.346	0.076	0.339	4.572	0.000
Retailer as intermediary	0.052	0.025	0.052	2.076	0.038
Demographic variables	0.056	0.025	0.058	2.267	0.024
Product accessibility	0.060	0.025	0.055	2.364	0.019
Product differentiation	0.058	0.027	0.051	2.125	0.034
Consulting group	0.873	0.040	0.631	21.885	0.000
Energy Saving	0.079	0.030	0.064	2.662	0.008
Green price	-0.486	0.160	-0.407	-3.035	0.003

Regression analysis showed that all the factors had significant association with dependent variable that is purchase of green product at significance level of 0.05, p- value for all the factors were significant (p- value < 0.05). Dependent variable for the study was purchase of green product (PGP) and independent variables were consumer environment consciousness (CEC), promotion for public awareness (PPA), retail store attributes (RSA), environmental outlook (EO), compassion (C), eco label (EL), recognition of customer advantage (RCA), retailer as intermediary (RI), demographic variables (DV), product accessibility (PA), product differentiation (PD), consulting group (CG), energy saving (ES) and green price (GP). Beta value for consumer environment consciousness was 0.422 and p value was 0.002 ; beta value and p value for promotion for public awareness was 0.51 and 0.048; beta value for retail store attribute was 0.060 with significance value 0.010, value of beta for environment outlook was 0.076 and p value was 0.003, beta value compassion for green products was 0.063 at significance value 0.007, beta value of eco label was 0.242 with significance 0.001, beta value of recognition of customer advantage was 0.339 and p value 0.000, value for beta and significance for retailer as intermediary was 0.052 and 0.038, beta value and p value for demographic variables was 0.058 and 0.024, beta and p value for product accessibility was 0.055 and 0.019, beta value for product differentiation was 0.51 with significance value 0.034, beta value of consulting group was 0.631 and corresponding p value is 0.00 , beta value of energy saving was 0.064 and p value was 0.008. All these factors had positive impact on purchase of green product. Green price had beta value -0.104 with p value as 0.003

which signifies it was in the negative direction. It measured consumers do not wish to pay more for purchasing green products. It had negative impact on purchase of green product.

$$\text{PGP} = 0.422 \text{ CEC} + 0.051 \text{ PPA} + 0.060 \text{ RSA} + 0.076 \text{ EO} + 0.063 \text{ C} + 0.242 \text{ EL} + 0.339 \text{ RCA} + 0.052 \text{ RI} + 0.058 \text{ DV} + 0.055 \text{ PA} + 0.051 \text{ PD} + 0.631 \text{ CGO} + 0.064 \text{ ES} + (-0.407) \text{ GP}.$$

The adjusted R^2 value was 0.767 which depicted 76.7 percent of variation in purchase of green product was explained by the independent variables. Independent factors had significant coefficient values implying that these factors collectively had strong impact on dependent factor purchase of green product.

6. Limitations of the Study

(i) Interpretations are resourceful, creating awareness among consumers in Delhi region. Still while conducting the research lot of restraints and constraints were observed. The research work was not funded by any funding agency so there was no financial support to conduct the entire research.

(ii) Distribution of questionnaire could be refined. Since most of the respondents were middle aged, conclusions were more appropriate for this age group of consumers and retailers.

(iii) The study was limited to only Delhi region and sample size was fixed. Factors obtained that influenced consumer behavior were confined to this specific region. It could not be generalized for rest of the regions.

(iv) Again, while performing the research it was felt as limitation that Delhi is massive and highly populated. Instead of focusing on all regions East, West, North and South Delhi; to understand in-depth factors that influence consumer behavior could be performed region wise to get more accurate data from the regions.

(v) Prior appointment was not fixed with consumers. It was sometimes difficult for researcher to compel consumers to fill the questionnaire as it required designated time to fill it. Consumers were reluctant to give so much time to fill the questionnaire.

(vi) Consumers were asked to fill the questionnaire while they were shopping. Sometimes consumers did it so fast that made researcher speculate whether they read the questions properly. Continuous reminders were given to consumers while they were filling the questionnaire to mark appropriate options.

7. Scope of the Study

The study should be administered in rural areas to know perception of consumers towards

eco-friendly products.

A study can also be performed between consumers purchasing green products and consumers purchasing non-green products. This would give line of difference in terms of benefits for non-green consumers for knowing and understanding advantages of purchasing green products.

The study is performed in Delhi region, so results obtained are specific to this region. Again, comparative study between Delhi and other metro cities can be conducted to understand whether same factors affect consumers buying green products.

A comparative study can be materialized between consumers purchasing green products and consumers purchasing green services. It would give a clear picture whether same factors influence consumers while purchasing the products and services.

8. Conclusion

This study reveals factors that influence consumer behaviour towards green products. Consumers in India are aware of environmental degradations which is not only harming the habitat along with it is affecting health and depleting resources from the planet Earth. Consumers are taking efforts individually to stabilize the present situation. They are showing interest in purchasing green products are focused to bring green products as a utility to be used in day to day lives. This gives an implication that consumers are becoming socially and environmentally responsible.

Marketers have a strong hold in influencing consumers to purchase green products. Manufacturers and retailers spread awareness, knowledge and outcome of purchasing green products. They promote these products to increase sales, bring stability, sustainability and competitive advantage. Consumers when take green aspects into account, purchase these products, share their experiences, give positive word of mouth to others, they can without any doubts purchase green products. Store attributes also strikes minds of consumers. Efforts of retailers to be energy efficient, use for recycled material for store ambience save resources convince consumers to purchase green products. Retailers are a strong link to sell green products to consumers. Consumers initially had no clue how environment was affected while disposing a non-green product. With rising environmental consciousness, they prefer to purchase green product which can be easily degraded causing fewer ill impacts on the surroundings. Consumers associate themselves with brands which claim to be responsible towards environment. Brands when deliver green products with specified quality and standards gain trust of consumers. Eco labels on packages have a strong positive impact on consumers. These symbols are certified by government and external agencies, increases confidence of consumers while purchasing green products. Existing environmental conditions make consumers to be pro environmentally active. Purchasing green products at regular basis

will increase self-respect of consumers. Educated consumers with moderate to high income take efforts to purchase green products. Though both males and females are aware and purchase green products, percentage of females is comparatively higher. Retailers must place green product on shelves to make products easily available, accessible for consumers. Promotion, knowledge, placing of green products makes it easier for consumers to differentiate between green and non-green products. Consumers purchase green products based on their personal experiences, persuasion by family members, nongovernmental organizations, corporate and leaders. Green product on consumption saves energy, resources and ultimately money of consumers. Green products are in the inception stage, are priced high which affects wallet of consumers. Continuous purchase and production will reduce the additional prices of green products.

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