



A Study on Socio- Economic Conditions and Consumer's Environmental Attitude of Green Products in Erode District

KEYWORDS

Green Products, Socio-economic conditions and Consumer attitude

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ABSTRACT *Increasing awareness on the various environmental problems has led a shift in the way consumers go about their life. There has been a change in consumer attitudes towards a green lifestyle. People are actively trying to reduce their impact on the environment. However, this is not widespread and is still evolving. Organizations and business however have seen this change in consumer attitudes and are trying to gain an edge in the competitive market by exploiting the potential in the green market industry. The current study introduces the concept of green products and looks into the various ways in which the different consumers environmental attitudes of green products.. Specifically in terms of green purchasing, while consumers might acknowledge awareness of environmental issues, many do not take the steps to purchase environmentally friendly products*

Introduction

Consumers' concern with green issues is a worldwide subject that continuously changes their lifestyle into becoming more environmentally responsible. One green awareness event jointly observed by the global community is the energy-saving campaign of switching off lights for one designated hour to reduce environmental impact, known as Earth Hour Development has become a necessity for man's survival today and for every step put forward by man, nature has had to take three backwards.. We have managed to put man on moon but not without first putting a hole on the ozone layer. But today the environment has been kicking back stronger and harder than ever, making it impossible for man to overlook it.

Statement of the problem

Awareness about environmental issues is growing day by day. The purchase decision is based on direct involvement in consumption of the products, whereas knowledge and attitude are at the other end in the consumption of products. Hence, the study focuses on examining the problems among consumers to ascertain their perception towards Environmental consciousness, green product awareness, purchase attitude and factors affecting their purchase decision among consumers in Erode District.

Objectives Of The Study

1. To study the socio-economic conditions of sample respondents in erode district.
2. To study the awareness and environmental attitudes of the green products
3. To offer findings, suggestions and conclusions.

Scope of the Study

Eco-friendly products concept is evolving around the world that has come into existence due to the disturbances caused by the pollutants. This has significant effect in the health of the people who suffer with ailments that vigorously affect their natural system. The present study attempts to examine the consumer awareness of Environmental Attitude of green products. which helps to under-

stand the consumers point of view / perception towards the green and organic products in Erode District.

Research Methodology

Research in common parlance refers to the search of knowledge. In this context research may be defined as, "The objective and systematic method of finding solution to a problem i.e, systematic collection, recording, analyzing, interpretation and reporting of information about facts of a phenomenon under study". The success of research depends mostly on the methodology on which it is carried out. The appropriate methodology will improve the validity of the findings. .

Research Design

Research design is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems. The plan is the complete scheme or program of the research. It includes an outline of the research writing the hypothesis and their operational implication to the final analysis of data. The research design here used is descriptive research. In this, the researcher has no control over the variables; that can only be reported what has happened and what is happening.

Pilot Study

Pilot study was conducted taking 10% (60) of the consumers was interviewed to validate the interview schedule. Based on their inputs and suggestions suitable changes were made after conducting the pilot survey.

Sampling Technique

The technique used for the research is Non-Probability sampling. Considering the accessibility and availability of consumers, the sampling technique selected for the study is on a convenience basis. The study area is Erode District which is divided into five zones. Accordingly, Erode East, West, North, South and Central Zones are taken into classification. The questionnaire was equally distributed among 150 respondents in all the five zones (750 questionnaire). The response received from each zone was totaling to 652 numbers. The researcher filtered the same and considered only the complete response which was

found to be 600 in numbers.

Data Collection

The self-prepared interview schedule was developed to study the Consumer's environmental concern and purchase attitude of Green Products in Erode District. The study will assess the consumers' demographic profile and the relative influence of Green products among the consumers based on their environmental concern during purchase of products.

Sources of Data

This research depends entirely on the Primary Data collected for justifying the objectives among consumers in Erode District. However, the Secondary sources were also included based on the information gathered through various sources.

Statistical Tools and Techniques

The objectives framed for the present study formed the basis of the identification of the relevant statistical techniques.

- Simple Percentage Analysis
- Weighted Average

Simple Percentage

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{No. of Respondents}}{\text{Total Number of Respondents}} \times 100$$

Mean Score Analysis

Thus we have basic statistical formula

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Where $\sum X$ = Summation of the value of the i th item X , $i = 1, 2, 3, \dots, N$

N = Total number of items

Limitations Of The Study

The study is confined to Erode District and therefore findings may not be related to other areas.

The survey includes all the limitations inherent in the questionnaire

Review of Literature

1. With environmental problems coming to the forefront, by the 1970s, it was possible to identify an evolving conviction based on an ecocentered system, which treats humans as a part of the environment and thus endows them with certain limits.

2. It is observed that the variables showing the high level of perception among respondents towards environmental concern "Human ingenuity will insure that we do not make the earth unlivable and the lowest mean was towards "Humans are severely abusing the environment". The cronbach's alpha highly supports the reliability of the variables.

Demographics

The demographics of the consumers are analysed taking Age, Gender, Marital Status, Educational Qualification, Occupation, and Monthly Income are taken into consideration to analyse the Environmental Consciousness and Purchase Attitude.

Table 1 : Demographics of the Respondents

S I . No.	Demographics	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Age		
	Below 25	128	21.33
	25 to 40 years	172	28.67
	40 to 55 years	115	19.17
2.	Gender		
	Male	279	46.50
	Female	321	53.50
3.	Marital Status		
	Married	464	77.33
	Unmarried	136	22.67
4.	Educational Qualification		
	School Level	17	2.83
	Under Graduate	66	11.00
	Post Graduate	159	26.50
	Professional Course	194	32.33
	Others	164	27.33
5.	Occupation		
	Government Employee	79	13.17
	Private Employee	242	40.33
	Business	167	27.83
	Home Maker	27	4.50
	Others	85	14.17
6.	Income		
	Upto Rs.200000	74	12.33
	Rs.200000 to 400000	228	38.00
	Rs.400000 to 600000	130	21.67
	Above Rs.600000	168	28.00
7.	Type of Family		
	Joint	316	52.67
	Nuclear	284	47.33
8.	Type of Family		

2 to 3 members	185	30.83
3 to 6 members	320	53.33
Above 6 members	95	15.83

Type of Family

Interpretation

Majority (30.83%) of the respondents belongs to the age above 55 years .More than half of the respondents are female .Majority (77.33%) of the respondents are married Maximum (32.33%) of the respondents qualified professionals. Less than half (40.33%) of the respondents are working in private limited companies .Maximum (38%) of the respondents are having income between Rs.200000 to 400000 .More than half (52.67%) of the respondents are from joint type of family .More than half (53.33%) of the respondents size of the family is between 3 and 6 members. Most (58.5%) of the respondents are residing in urban areas. Maximum (27.17%) of the respondents are aware about the environment through print media.

Measure Of Consumers Environmental Attitude

The mean scores of the respondents based on their environmental concern are taken for the study that reveals the 15 items of the NEP Scale. With environmental problems coming to the forefront, by the 1970s, it was possible to identify an evolving conviction based on an eco centered system, which treats humans as a part of the environment and thus endows them with certain limits. This approach became known as the New Environmental Paradigm, which is based on the assumption that environmental problems pose a challenge to the basic way people think about the environment and their relationship with it (Dunlap and Van Liere, 1978)¹. The reliability statistics was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha for the 15 NEP Scale variables for conducting the study in Erode District.

Table 2 : ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
We are approaching the limit of the number of people the earth can support.	4.11	.931	0.869
Humans have the right to modify the natural environment to suit their needs.	3.88	.985	
When humans interfere with nature it often produces disastrous consequences.	4.19	.880	
Human ingenuity will insure that we do not make the earth unlivable.	4.33	.964	
Humans are severely abusing the environment.	3.47	1.247	
The earth has plenty of natural resources if we just learn how to develop them.	4.08	.865	
Plants and animals have as much right as humans to exist.	4.17	.913	
The balance of nature is strong enough to cope with the impacts of modern industrial nations.	4.01	.974	
Despite our special abilities humans are still subject to the laws of nature.	3.61	1.032	
The so-called "ecological crisis" facing humankind has been greatly exaggerated.	4.12	.916	
The earth is like a spaceship with very limited room and resources	3.88	1.077	
Humans were meant to rule over the rest of nature.	3.70	1.157	
The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset.	3.79	1.067	
Humans will eventually learn enough about how nature works to be able to control it.	4.27	.945	
If things continue on their present course, we will soon experience a major ecological catastrophe.	4.16	1.005	

Interpretation.

It is observed from the table _2, that out of the fifteen variables showing the perception of respondents towards environmental concern details the mean from highest to

lowest from which the highest perception was towards "Human ingenuity will insure that we do not make the earth unlivable., M=4.33, SD:0.964, followed by Humans will eventually learn enough about how nature works to be able to control it., M=4.27, SD:0.945, When humans interfere with nature it often produces disastrous consequences., M=4.19, SD:0.88, Plants and animals have as much right as humans to exist., M=4.17, SD:0.913, If things continue on their present course, we will soon experience a major ecological catastrophe., M=4.16, SD:1.005, The so-called "ecological crisis" facing humankind has been greatly exaggerated., M=4.12, SD:0.916, We are approaching the limit of the number of people the earth can support., M=4.11, SD:0.931, The earth has plenty of natural resources if we just learn how to develop them., M=4.08, SD:0.865, The balance of nature is strong enough to cope with the impacts of modern industrial nations., M=4.01, SD:0.974, Humans have the right to modify the natural environment to suit their needs., M=3.88, SD:0.985, The earth is like a spaceship with very limited room and resources, M=3.88, SD:1.077, The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset., M=3.79, SD:1.067, Humans were meant to rule over the rest of nature., M=3.7, SD:1.157, Despite our special abilities humans are still subject to the laws of nature., M=3.61, SD:1.032 and finally, the least score was towards Humans are severely abusing the environment., M=3.47, SD:1.247". The cronbach's alpha (0.869) highly supports the reliability of the variables.

FINDINGS

§ Majority (30.83%) of the respondents belongs to the age above 55 years

§ More than half of the respondents are female

§ Majority (77.33%) of the respondents are married

§ Maximum (32.33%) of the respondents qualified professionals

§ Less than half (40.33%) of the respondents are working in private limited companies

§ More than half (52.67%) of the respondents are from joint type of family

§ More than half (53.33%) of the respondents size of the family is between 3 and 6 members

§ Most (58.5%) of the respondents are residing in urban areas.

§ Maximum (27.17%) of the respondents are aware about the environment through print media

To sum-up, it is observed that the variables showing the high level of perception among respondents towards environmental concern "Human ingenuity will insure that we do not make the earth unlivable and the lowest mean was towards "Humans are severely abusing the environment". The cronbach's alpha highly supports the reliability of the variables.

Conclusion and Recommendations

One thing that is being reiterated is that the current consumption levels are too high and are unsustainable. Therefore there is a need for green marketing and a need for a shift in the consumer's behavior and attitude towards more environmental friendly life styles. This research exam-

ines the influence of consumers' environmental concerns, awareness of green product, price and brand image on their purchasing decision of green products. From the results, it is interesting to note that consumers' awareness of price and brand image significantly influenced their purchasing decision of green products. Awareness of brand image is the strongest factor that has positively influenced their purchasing decision. This study confirmed that a person who has some concern for the environment and its brand image would have a stronger preference in purchasing a green product. This research is useful for business, government, and also researchers those who are involved in the field of green marketing and buying behavior and conservative environmental behavior of the students.

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