

## Awareness of Green Marketing and Its Influence on Buying Behaviour of Consumers in Kerala

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### **Abstract**

*The green movement has been expanding rapidly in the world. With regards to this consumers are taking responsibility and doing the correct things. Consumer awareness and motivation continue to drive change in the marketplace, notably through the introduction of more eco-friendly products. Compared to consumers in the developed countries, the Indian consumer has much less aware of environmental issues like global warming. Successful marketing has always been about recognizing trends and positioning products, services and brand in a manner that supports buyer intentions. Today, many companies have accepted their responsibility to protect our environment. So, products and production process become cleaner. More companies introduce green products and it helps to change the polluted world. "Go green", because they realize that they can reduce pollution and increase profits at the same time. Green marketing is a creative opportunity to innovate in ways that make a difference and at the same time achieve business success. This paper investigates consumer perception and attitude of purchasing eco-friendly products.*

**Keywords:** *eco-friendly products, green products, green marketing, perception.*

### **Introduction:**

Green marketing is a modern concept which evolves in recent years. But Marketing is the holistic approach towards identifying and satisfying need and wants of consumer and potential consumer. Green Marketing means manufacturing and marketing of products and services which are manufactured through green processes. According to the American Marketing Association, "green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe". Thus green marketing incorporates a wide range of activities such as modification of product, changes to the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising etc. Green Marketing is also known as Environmental Marketing and Ecological Marketing. Thus Green Marketing is a holistic marketing concept wherein the production, marketing consumption and disposal of products and services happen in a manner that is less detrimental to the environment with growing awareness. Green Marketing is not limited to adding green theme to brand name or making websites or product/packaging design with green colour. It is the overall efforts of a company to eliminate processes which are detrimental to the environment and use environmental friendly processes and packaging for manufacturing and presenting the products. By doing this a firm may have to spent few extra bucks initially but in the long run this will pay in terms of increased sales. Recently due to changes in policies for corporate results compliance procedure by SEBI all companies are using e mail channels for reporting of

financial results which has saved lot of paper and trees. The firms benefited in terms of reduced cost. Such innovative practices can reduce waste, greenhouse gas emission and cost also.

Today we all face a lot of environmental problems, one of the reasons why the green marketing emerged. Green marketing has now evolved as one of the major area of interest for marketers as it may provide competitive advantage. Green marketing will be successful only if the marketer understands the consumer behaviour. Hence it is essential to conduct a study on attitude and awareness of customers towards green products and factors influencing the buying behaviour of customers. So this study is conduct to find out the attitude and awareness level of customers and there buying behavior of eco- friendly product.

### **Objectives of The Study:**

- To study the consumers' awareness and attitude towards eco-friendly products.
- To find out the factors influencing the consumers on purchase decision of eco-friendly products.
- To know the importance of green marketing.
- To find out the most familiar eco-friendly product among the customers.

### **Literature Review:**

R .Maheswari and G Sakthivel (2015), made a study on the customers' attitude, perception and awareness and satisfaction level towards green marketing products in Coimbatore city. The study revealed that as Coimbatore an educational background city, due to that all respondents are aware of green products. But at the same time, the utility score of the respondents are average in Coimbatore city.

SuboohYusuf and Zeenat Fatima (2015) made a study to explore the concept of green marketing, or green products in relation to consumer behavior. They identified that the major Sources from where the people get information about green products are school/university. 60% of the people under study are aware about green practices.

Anu Varghese and Santhosh J (2015), made a study on consumers' perception with reference to Kollam district in Kerala. 80 consumers were selected on a convenience basis. According to the study the majority of the respondents are aware about eco-friendly products. Organic vegetables and food products were mostly preferred by customers. The major factor influencing the buying behaviour of consumers is quality of the product, and the problem faced, by the consumers are lack of availability of products, high price and low promotion.

Dr. Bhagwan Singh and Sachin Kumar (2015) in their study revealed that most of the respondents from North India are familiar with Green Marketing. Respondents, income, occupation, marital status and district have a strong relationship with awareness about Green Marketing, irrespective of their age, education, area and state. The marketers should plan out the strategies as per the respondent's characteristics to achieve better results. The genders from North India possess similar awareness about Green Marketing, so the gender specific strategies perhaps may not work in India. Rather, other demographic variables like income, occupation, marital status and district of respondents, if focused and targeted may provide better results. The study also explored that customer rising awareness about green or eco-friendly products; promotion of green or eco-friendly products by Web Based Marketing/ Internet; consumer focus on the environmental issues and necessary initiatives taken by the government and corporate are the main reasons for highlighting Green Marketing. They also suggest that customers at the time of purchase must consider the environmental

benefits of the products and if not, at least those products should be bought which do not harm the environment. The customer must check the eco-benefits by visiting the websites of the company before purchasing. The Web Based advertising media can be a good tool to direct people towards eco-friendly products.

Dr. SeemaLaddha and Prof. MayurMalviya (2015), conducted a small survey of 150 samples from Navy Mumbai. Questions related to Environment and buying behaviour were asked to the respondents. The survey revealed that there is growing concerns about environment and increasing. It is revealed that Indian consumers' pro-environmental concerns, knowledge of environmental issues, awareness of eco-friendly products, and educational levels effect on green buying behaviour. The awareness about the products should be done through advertising so that individual buying behaviour can be changed which can have an impact on the welfare of the environment. It is also important that companies aiming at developing new eco-friendly products should ensure that products perform competitively. Green marketing is still in its infancy and a lot of research is to be done on green marketing to fully explore its potential.

### **Research Methodology:**

Analytical research methodology is used for the study. In order to investigate the research objectives; both secondary and primary data have been collected and analyzed. Secondary data collected through articles, reports and professional information concerning eco-consumer studies and eco-marketing strategies in general using the internet and academic databases. The analysis of secondary information provided the general context for initiating the collection, analysis and the interpretation of primary data. The primary data was collected through questionnaire. From the population investigator selected 100 samples in Thrissur district by applying convenience sampling. Statistical methods are used in this analysis such as mean and standard deviation.

### **Green Marketing**

Green marketing refers to the process of selling products and/or services based on their environmental benefits. Such a product or service may be environmentally friendly in it or produced and/or packaged in an environmentally friendly way. "Marketing products and services based on environmental factors or awareness. Companies involved in green marketing make decisions relating to the entire process of the company's products, such as methods of processing, packaging and distribution".

### **Evolution of Green Marketing**

The term Green Marketing came into prominence in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

- The green marketing has evolved over this period of time. The evolution of Green marketing had three phases. First phase was termed as "Ecological" green marketing, and during this period all marketing activities were concerned to help environment problems and provide remedies for environmental problems.
- Second phase was "Environmental" green marketing and the focus shifted on clean technology that involved designing of innovative new products, which take care of pollution and waste issues.
- Third phase was "Sustainable" green marketing. It came into prominence in the late 1990s and early 2000. This was the result of the term sustainable development which, is defined as "meeting the

needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

**ECO-Friendly Products:**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cloth Napkins</li> <li>2. Reusable Water Bottles</li> <li>3. Cloth or Cotton Shopping Bags</li> <li>4. Recycled Fabric Clothes</li> <li>5. Rechargeable Batteries</li> <li>6. Solar Powered Outdoor Speakers</li> <li>7. House Cleaners</li> <li>8. Solar Phone Charger</li> <li>9. Water Powered Clock</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Eco-Friendly Kettle</li> <li>11. Recycled Cutting Board</li> <li>12. Bamboo Desktop Dry-Erase To-do Board</li> <li>13. Moss Carpet</li> <li>14. Eco-friendly Umbrella</li> <li>15. Green Finger Rings</li> <li>16. Biodegradable Pots</li> <li>17. Organic foods.</li> </ol> |
|--|---|

**Data Analysis And Findings:**

Table No 1 shows perceptions of customers about eco-friendly product with possible responses of strongly agree, agree, slightly agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

**TABLE NO 1**  
**PERCEPTION OF CUSTOMERS ABOUT ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS**

| No. | Variable   | Mean | S.D. |
|-----|--|------|------|
| 1   | It is important to me that the products I use do not harm the environment                          | 4.44 | 0.81 |
| 2   | I consider the potential environmental impact of my actions when making many of my decisions       | 3.81 | 0.66 |
| 3   | My purchase habits are affected by my concern for our environment.                                 | 3.75 | 0.74 |
| 4   | I am concerned about wasting the resources of our planet   | 4.07 | 0.86 |
| 5   | I would describe myself as environmentally responsible   | 3.91 | 0.76 |
| 6   | I am willing to be inconvenienced in order to take actions that are more environmentally friendly. | 3.41 | 0.90 |

**Interpretation:**

Out of 6 propositions on perception of customers about eco-friendly products the propositions 1 and 4 have a mean score of 4 or above on likert-5 point scale. (Coded as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), which means most of the respondents are having strongly agreed for these propositions and same is supported by relatively less SD (0.81 and 0.86). For the propositions 2, 3, and 5 respondents gave good mean score ranging from 3 to 3.91 (coded as 1,2,3, 4 and 5), which implies respondents more agreed on these propositions the SD of these propositions are also relatively less. For proposition 6 respondents gave mean score of 3.41 and they also agreeing on this proposition but this proposition have a SD of 90. That means respondents have varied opinions on these proposition which is well supported by its SD. From the above table it's clear that respondents have a positive perception towards eco-friendly products.

Table No 2 included questions about buyer's seriousness on environmental concerns. The results were measured on a 5 point scale used for the comparison of the data.

**TABLE NO 2**

**Buyers' Seriousness On Environmental Concerns**

| No. | Variable                     | Mean | S.D. |
|-----|------------------------------|------|------|
| 1   | Destruction of Ozone         | 4.50 | 0.84 |
| 2   | Industrial Water Pollution   | 4.72 | 0.61 |
| 3   | Industrial Air Pollution     | 4.74 | 0.53 |
| 4   | Pesticides on Food           | 4.59 | 0.70 |
| 5   | Hazardous Waste              | 4.56 | 0.64 |
| 6   | Drinking Water Contamination | 4.49 | 0.71 |
| 7   | Warming up of Earth          | 4.49 | 0.72 |
| 8   | Ocean Contamination          | 4.26 | 0.88 |
| 9   | Endangered Species           | 4.10 | 1.04 |
| 10  | Destruction of Rain Forest   | 4.41 | 0.75 |

**Interpretation:**

Out of 10 propositions on buyers' seriousness on environmental concerns all propositions have a mean score of 4 or above on likert-5 point scale, (Coded as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), which means most of the respondents are having strongly agreed for these propositions and same is supported by relatively less SD. Except in the case of proposition 9 respondents have an opinion of strongly agree but shows a SD of 1.04 which respondents have varied opinions on these proposition which is well supported by its SD. From the above table it is clear that majority of the respondents are aware about the seriousness of these environmental problems. That is why they pointed the problems as extremely serious.

TABLE NO 3

**Importance Of Green Marketing Practices From Environmental Point Of View**

| No. | Variable  | Mean | S.D. |
|-----|---|------|------|
| 1   | Manufacturing Eco-friendly Product                                  | 4.52 | 0.65 |
| 2   | Manufacturing products through eco-friendly process                 | 4.31 | 0.58 |
| 3   | Promoting products through eco-friendly modes of communication      | 4.14 | 0.73 |
| 4   | Branding product associating with green marketing practices         | 4.01 | 0.80 |
| 5   | Modifying products to make them environmental friendly              | 4.18 | 0.77 |
| 6   | Modifying product packaging to suit environment                     | 4.18 | 0.78 |
| 7   | Educating customer to use products in environmental friendly manner | 4.33 | 0.78 |
| 8   | Using green supply chain for procurement and distribution           | 4.06 | 0.81 |

**Interpretation:**

Out of 8 propositions on importance of green marketing practices from environmental point of view all propositions have a mean score of 4 or above on likert-5 point scale, (Coded as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), which means most of the respondents are having strongly agreed for these propositions and same is supported by relatively less SD. The marketing practices like manufacturing eco-friendly product, manufacturing products through eco-friendly process and educate consumers to use products in an eco-friendly manner are the main marketing practices on which respondents show a strongly agree attitude. From the above table it is clear that all these marketing practices are important from the environmental point of view. The respondents are also realizing the importance of these.

TABLE NO 4

**Level Of Customer Commitment On Environment-Friendly Products**

| No. | Variable  | Mean | S.D  |
|-----|---|------|------|
| 1   | I choose to buy products that are environment friendly. | 4.14 | 0.89 |
| 2   | I prefer green products than non-green products.        | 4.01 | 0.91 |
| 3   | I buy green products even if they are more priced       | 3.71 | 1.03 |

**INTERPRETATION:**

Out of 3 propositions on level of customer commitment on environment-friendly products propositions 1 and 2 have mean score of 4.14 and 4.01 on likert-5 point scale, (Coded as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), which means most of the respondents are having strongly agreed for these propositions and same is supported by relatively less SD. Except in the case of proposition 3 gave an above average mean score of 3.71 and a SD of 1.03 which indicates respondents have varied opinion on this proposition which is well supported by its SD. From the above table it is clear that the customers' commitments on eco-friendly products are hopeful. They are ready to purchase eco-friendly products. But if they are more priced customers shows a neutral attitude and there is variation among the opinions of respondents.

**TABLE NO 5**

**Factors affecting purchase of green products**

| No. | Variable                              | Mean  | S.D  |
|-----|---------------------------------------|-------|------|
| 1   | Product price                         | 12.61 | 5.28 |
| 2   | Awareness about Green Products        | 9.68  | 3.13 |
| 3   | Availability of Green Products        | 10.33 | 3.68 |
| 4   | Past Experience                       | 7.69  | 2.79 |
| 5   | Information provided on Green Product | 8.68  | 3.02 |

**Interpretation:**

The table shows that the factors affect the purchase of green products. The respondents are asked to distribute points to the factors. The total point is fixed to 50. From the table we can understand that customers gave more importance to the price of the green products. It has a mean value of 12.61, and also has a SD OF 5.28, which means there are variations among the opinion of the customers regarding product price as the important factor. The next factor customers gave more importance is the availability of green products. It has a mean value of 10.33 and a SD of 3.13, there is also having variations among the opinion of the customers. The next factor affect the purchase of green product is the awareness about green products. It has a mean value of 9.68 and a SD of 3.68. Another factor is the information provided on the green product. It has a mean value of 8.68 and SD of 3.02. Variations are also exists there. And the past experience of the customers has a mean value of 7.69 and SD of 2.79. The customers also gave importance to their past experience in the purchase of green products .So from the above table we can conclude that the customers gave more importance to the price of the products, the availability of green products and awareness about the products. But variations are exists among the opinion of respondents. It indicates there is no consistency among the opinions. It is supported by its value of SD.

**Findings**

- ❖ Majority of the respondents knew about the eco-friendly products.
- ❖ The most familiar eco-friendly products among respondents are organic vegetables and consumable items.
- ❖ The major reason that the customers are not ready to pay more for eco-friendly products is the high cost of the product that cannot afford by the customers and some respondents have the opinion that cannot see the benefit of the product.

- ❖ Respondents on an average (60%) say that information about green features of green marketing products is not available.
- ❖ Customers have a positive perception towards environmentally friendly products. Most of the respondents considered that it's important to them that the products they use do not harm the environment and they considered themselves as environment friendly attitude.
- ❖ Buyers are aware about the seriousness of various environmental problems. Industrial water pollution, industrial air pollution, pesticides on food, hazardous waste, drinking water contamination etc are the major environmental concern on which the buyers express their seriousness.
- ❖ From the environmental point of view the marketing practices like manufacturing eco-friendly products, Manufacturing products through eco-friendly process and educating customer to use products in environmental friendly manner are more important.
- ❖ Customers' commitment on environment friendly products is positive and hopeful. They are ready to prefer eco-friendly products than non-eco-friendly products. But if the products are more priced customers shows a neutral attitude towards this.
- ❖ The major factors affecting purchase of green products are product price, availability of products and awareness about the products.

### Suggestions

- ❖ Environment friendly behaviour is far and difficult to attain. Hence environmental awareness and attitudes should be created in the minds of consumers during their childhood days itself.
- ❖ It requires rigorous efforts at school level to create an attitude of environment sustainability.
- ❖ Eco clubs play an important role in creating environmental awareness amongst the future generation. So eco clubs should be there in all schools and colleges.
- ❖ Expand the consumer awareness of green products by creating effective green marketing campaigns or environmental related activities. The companies should try to more focus on the green features of the product in their marketing activities.
- ❖ Price is the attribute that consumers reflect on when making a green purchasing decision. Consumers are less likely to purchase green products if they are more expensive. So price should be reduced for the eco-friendly products.
- ❖ Companies should create ads that are more focused on green, eco-friendly image that will influence their customers purchasing decision.

### Conclusion

Thus from the analysis which carried out in this study, we can conclude that the people have awareness about the eco-friendly products and they show a positive attitude towards green marketing and green products. But we should try to increase the awareness level into another extent. Which means a wide variety of eco-friendly products is available today. But the customers' awareness level limited to organic vegetables and consumable items. Price is the attribute that consumers reflect on when making a green purchasing decision. Consumers are less likely to purchase green products if they are more expensive. So efforts should make to reduce the price of eco-friendly products. Constant efforts should be taken by Government, NGOs, Educational institutions, Business houses and society at a large to create awareness among the consumers to promote eco-friendly buying behaviour.

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