

Study of relationship between Environmental Consciousness and Green Purchasing among Youth

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Abstract

India is a second largest population in the world and every seventh individual of the world lives in India. 16% of the world's population reside in India but only 2.4% of its land area. Now a day human are consuming natural resources in an unsustainable way. The much needed impetus to industrial development has resulted in huge residuals, having undesirable effects on the environment — air, water and land, disproportional to their contribution to overall economic growth.

Globally, People have been more aware of environmental issues in last couple of years. Many consumers now express concern about environmental deterioration. This paper studied the Environmental Consciousness and Green Purchasing Decisions of Youth. In order to achieve the objectives of the study primary and secondary data has been collected and an in-depth literature review and empirical research were undertaken. A self-administered questionnaire was filled by 124 respondents in which both gender male and female are equal. Through the data analysis and interpretation, it was found that College going students have good knowledge about environmental issues and shown seriousness for environment protection. Accordingly, Green purchasing of students was found influenced.

Keywords: Green Product, Environmental Consciousness, Green Marketing

1. Introduction

"Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not every man's greed" – Mahatma Gandhi.

Today, human are consuming natural resources in such an unsustainable way which may cause big environment crisis. The expeditious increase in population and industrial development has guided to severe

environmental degradation that emaciates the environmental resources. The much needed impetus to industrial development has resulted in huge residuals, having undesirable effects on the environment — air, water and land, disproportional to their contribution to overall economic growth. The environmental pollution, depletion, and degradation of

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resources have in fact been neglected as compared to the issues related to the industrial growth and expansion. India has not been untouched to this worldwide phenomenon, rather this has been more prominent in India because of the substantial increase in its population, as compared to other developing economies.

The harsh change in the ecosystem poses a very big threat to the survival of human beings. Protection of the environment is the primary duty of each individual and also the biggest challenge to development. Any type of damage to the ecosystem will take some time to get noticed but the rectification of the same issue would take much more time, years, decades, centuries. Any tiny damage to the environment at any level might be the cause behind damage globally.

A recently released report by the Mahindra Group (2019) based on pan-India survey revealed that approx. 80 % Indians are aware of the impact of their activities and actions on nature and climate change, while 4 out of 5 people thought and shown 'interest' in making changes their lifestyle such as using public transport or electric vehicles, carpooling, and 70% people are aware of environmental issue of water conservation. But such knowledge and awareness of environment are not matching with actual behavior pattern. Although purchasing green products has increased in the past few years.

In the past few decades, the green movement has been evolving at a rapid pace in the world. With regards to this consumers are taking responsibility and doing the right things for their environment. Consumer awareness and consciousness continue to drive change in the marketplace, notably through the introduction of more eco-friendly products.

This is the era of business if all businesses take responsibility for environmental protection and come forward with 'go green' attitude then it will be a big step towards sustainable development. Many companies are adopting green marketing strategies in order to get a competitive advantage over others. Hence, it becomes very important to study Green marketing and the perception of consumer towards green marketing.

More than 60 % population of India is youth i.e. below 40 years, can play vital role for the sustainable development of the Nation. Sense of responsiveness towards environmental protection among young can lead "Go Green" movement make green prosperous India. This study throws light on Environmental Consciousness and Green Purchasing pattern of Youth.

1.1 Environmentally Sustainable Products

New product development process begins with 'Idea generation' and this step is an active interface between consumers and manufacturers, in which product itself made in such a way that it could satisfy the consumer wants. If eco-friendly features are added in a new product which has no harmful effect on the environment, is called Green Product.

Chen and Chai (2010) defined "green product as one that incorporates the strategies for recycling or with recycled content, reduced packaging or using less toxic materials to reduce the impact on the natural environment. Generally green products include eco-carry bags, recycled papers, energy saving bulbs, energy efficient home appliances, hybrid vehicles, organic food and beverage and green household and personal care products etc"

1. Need for the Study

India is 2nd largest population in the world and one seventh persons of total population on this planet live in India. 16% of the world's population reside in India but only 2.4% of its land area, Therefore there is critical effect on the natural resources. Now a day human are consuming natural resources in an unsustainable way. Approx 60% of total population is youth and awareness in youth plays crucial role in sustainable development. Through this research paper it is tried to study that how environmental awareness is changing attitudes towards nature and affecting the purchasing behaviour.

2. Literature Review

Various literatures are reviewed which are related directly or indirectly to the theme of this research e.g. National and International Journals, Statistical Reports, Magazines, Books, Websites, Newspapers, Speeches of Global leaders etc.

Green marketing term was first discussed in a seminar on “ecological marketing” organized by American Marketing Association (AMA) in 1975 and took its place in the literature and through the years many research related to green marketing are being done. Some of them related to issue are reviewed. Mahaeshwari, A. and Malhotra, G. (2011) has studied on the youth to study factors affecting their behavior towards environment. Moyer (1977) studied on students about environmental attitude and its measures. Shah Nawaj (1990) focused on environmental awareness and environmental attitude of secondary and higher secondary school teachers and students. Astalin, P. kumar (2011) also studied environmental awareness among higher secondary students and some educational factors affecting. Environmental awareness has been studied with respect to

scientific attitude among higher secondary students of Varanasi city (Bharti Anita, 2002). Singh (2005) studied the scientific phenomenon between holistic education and environmental awareness.

Consumers show concerned about the environment and pro environmental behaviour such as avoiding plastic bags, recycling and energy saving are called Environmental conscious consumers (Schlegelmilch et al., 1996). Environmental consciousness is a multidimensional construct which represents mental stage of an individual. (Sharma and Bansal, 2013). H'Mida (2009) advocated that internal factors such as demographic, psychological and economical variables and external factors such as family, media and culture influence the environmental consciousness of an individual. Mina Okada and Mais (2010) studied that young consumers are much aware of environmental issues, more environmental conscious and willing to spend more for Eco-friendly products. Environmental consciousness is a three dimensional construct which includes cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural components (Schlegelmilch et al., 1996). Purchasing green products is linked with Consumers environmental knowledge as the knowledge is more purchasing green products likely to be more. (Yadav and Pathak, 2016; Vicente-Molina et al., Mostafa, 2013; Peattie, 2010).

3. Objective of the study

1. To assess the environmental consciousness of college going students.
2. To examine the level of awareness regarding green product.
3. To study the purchasing behavior of youngsters

4. Relationship between seriousness for environment and green purchasing

4. Research Methodology

The study is based on primary data collected from 124 respondents by means of a structured questionnaire. Random sampling technique was applied and 200 questionnaires were distributed and 152 were got back filled by different college students but 124 were found correctly filled to analyse. Statistical tools like Percentage Analysis, Chi-Square and Crosstab were carried out to analyse the data and draw interpretation.

Research Hypotheses:

Based on the literature reviewed and the conceptual model the hypothesis was generated to be verified with statistical analysis. Null Hypothesis is “there is statistically significant relationship between seriousness for environment and green purchasing”.

5. Data Analysis and interpretation

Gender wise distribution of respondents

Primary data was collected through Questionnaires filled by college going students. Both female i.e.44.4% and male i.e.55.6% respondents participated as

Table1.1 : Gender wise distribution of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	55	44.4
Male	69	55.6
Total	124	100.0

Seriousness for environment protection
For assessing the seriousness for environment protection, three options were given to the respondents, first- Very serious, and should be

on priority, second - Somewhat serious, but other issues are more important and third - Can't Say, frequencies and percentages of responses are tabled as follows.

Table 1.2: Seriousness of environment protection

Measures	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very serious, and should be on priority	85	68.5	68.5	68.5
Somewhat serious, but other issues are more important	24	19.4	19.4	87.9
Can't Say	15	12.1	12.1	100.0
Total	124	100.0	100.0	

From above table 1.2, 68.5% respondents were consider that environmental protection is very serious and should be on priority whereas 19.4% respondents think that it is somewhat serious matter but other issues are more important. 12.1% respondents were not in the situation to tell anything on this matter. It reflects that majority people are serious for environmental protection.

Awareness about Environmental issues

In order to examine the level of awareness about Environmental issues like Global Warming, Pollution (water, air, soil etc.), Deforestation, Ozone depletion, Climate Change, acid rain, etc. among college going students, question of five point Likert scale were asked. Responses from students are shown in table 1.3.

Table 1.3 : Level of awareness about Environmental issues like Global Warming, Pollution (water, air, soil etc.), Deforestation, Ozone depletion, Climate Change, acid rain, etc.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very low	3	2.4	2.4	2.4
	Low	41	33.1	33.1	35.5
	Average	29	23.4	23.4	58.9
	High	14	11.3	11.3	70.2
	Very High	37	29.8	29.8	100.0
	Total	124	100.0	100.0	

Above table 1.3 clearly revealed that 35.5 % respondents are not much aware about the Environmental issues like Global Warming, Pollution (water, air, soil etc.), Deforestation, Ozone depletion, Climate Change, acid rain, etc. as they considered themselves very low (2.4%) and low (33.1%) aware about the same whereas 23.4% respondents are having average awareness. 51 students were found pretty aware about the environmental issues i.e. more than 40% of total which shows that

youngsters are much aware regarding the environmental issues.

Further, to understand deeper, students were asked categorically environmental issues like Ozone depletion, Global Warming, Deforestation, Pollution and Climate change to rate each of these as problem on scale 1 to 5 (where 1 is small and 5 is biggest). For analyzing purpose, Mean and standard deviation are calculated and has been shown in table 1.4.

Table 1.4 : Mean and Standard deviation of Environmental problem

(N=124)	Ozone Depletion	Global Warming	Deforestation	Pollution	Climate Change
Mean	3.7742	2.6129	2.2855	4.5726	4.1129
Std. Deviation	.63552	.71806	.70269	.76693	.31776

As shown in table 1.4, most of respondents consider that pollution is the biggest environmental problem which is verified by the mean value for pollution i.e. 4.5726. whereas mean value for climate change and ozone depletion e.g.4.1129 and 3.7742 respectively are also their bagginess as environmental problem.

Sense of responsiveness for environmental

degradation

In order to understand the sense of responsiveness for environmental degradation, 4 questions were framed on five point Likert scale (1 - Strongly disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Undecided, 4 - Agree and 5 - Strongly agree). Mean and standard deviation calculated and gathered in table 1.5.

Table 1.5 : Sense of responsiveness for environmental degradation

Measures	Mean	SD
Environmental protection is my responsibility.	4.3306	.87161
I feel my behavior is responsible for Pollution and other environmental issues.	3.8145	.91391
My purchasing affects the environment for example create waste, more energy or natural resources consumption, different type of pollution, etc.	3.4355	.58771
If I purchase and use/consume such products (Green Products) which has no negative effect on environment, i can also contribute in saving environment.	3.2903	.52226

Table 1.5 reveals that most of respondents admit their responsibility for environmental protection that is justified by the mean value 4.3306 whereas majority students do agree that their behavior is responsible for Pollution and other environmental issues (Mean 3.8145). Mean value 3.4355 calculated for which students consider that their purchasing affects the environment for example create waste, more energy or natural resources consumption, different type of pollution, etc.

students responsibly admit that if they purchase and use/consume such products (Green Products) which has no negative effect on environment, i can also contribute in saving environment (Mean 3.2903).

Awareness about Green Products

For the purpose of knowing the level of awareness about the Green Products, General question framed in questionnaire on 5 point Likert Scale. Analysis is shown in table 1.6.

Table 1.6 level of awareness about Green Products					
		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean
Valid	Very low	6	4.8	4.8	2.9194
	Low	28	22.6	27.4	
	Average	64	51.6	79.0	
	High	22	17.7	96.8	
	Very High	4	3.2	100.0	
	Total	124	100.0		

On the base of mean value i.e. 2.9194, it can be said that students were not much aware about the Green Products.

Analysis of usage of green products

There are many green products are available in the Indian market and people are using them. The study considered the common type of green products viz. Energy/water/other natural resources saver electronic/non electronic products, organic food, organic

clothes, cosmetics and personal care products and Products Packaged by recyclable material and packaging which can be refilled or reused. In order to analyze the respondents' responses for usage or non-usage of green products, close ended questions were asked with 5 option; 1 – never, 2- rarely, 3- sometimes, 4- very often and 5- always. The table 1.7 contents the information covering number and percentage of users and non-users category wise.

Cosmetics and personal care products and

Table 1.7
Usage/non usage of green products

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very often	Always	Total	Mean
Energy/water/other natural resources saver electronic/non electronic products	6 (4.8%)	11 (8.9%)	42 (33.9%)	35 (28.2%)	30 (24.2%)	124 (100%)	3.5806
Organic food	20 (16.1%)	30 (24.2%)	41 (33.1%)	20 (16.1%)	13 (10.5%)	124 (100%)	2.8065
Organic clothes	40 (32.3%)	40 (32.3%)	21 (16.9%)	18 (14.5%)	5 (4.0%)	124 (100%)	2.6371
Cosmetics and personal care products	07 (5.6%)	11 (8.9%)	20 (16.1%)	48 (38.7%)	38 (30.6%)	124 (100%)	3.7984
Products Packaged by recyclable material and packaging which can be refilled or reused	07 (5.6%)	18 (14.5%)	47 (37.9%)	32 (25.8%)	20 (16.1%)	124 (100%)	3.3226

Energy/water/other natural resources saver electronic/non electronic products are using or purchasing more than other categories of product as mean value of these are 3.7984 and 3.5806 respectively. Whereas Organic food and Organic clothes are being used low comparatively.

Chi- square test employed to examine the significant relationship between Environmental Seriousness and Green Purchasing. Accordingly, generated hypothesis H1 = “there is statistically significant relationship between seriousness for environment and green purchasing” will be tasted.

Environmental Seriousness and Green Purchasing

Table : 1.8 -The seriousness of environment protection andGreen Product Purchase tabulation									
		Organic clothes					Total	Chi-square Value	Sign
		Never	Rarely	sometimes	Very often	Always			
Seriousness for Environment protection	Very serious	9.4%	31.8%	35.3%	17.6%	5.9%	100.0%	8.686	.369
	Somewhat serious	25.0%	37.5%	25.0%	12.5%		100.0%		
	Can't Say	26.7%	26.7%	26.7%	20.0%		100.0%		
Total		14.5%	32.3%	32.3%	16.9%	4.0%	100.0%		
		Energy/water/other natural resources saver electronic/non electronic products					Total	Chi-square Value	Sign
		Never	Rarely	sometimes	Very often	Always			
Seriousness for Environment protection	Very serious	2.4%	7.1%	35.3%	31.8%	23.5%	100.0%	5.786	0.214
	Somewhat serious	12.5%	16.7%	33.3%	16.7%	20.8%	100.0%		
	Can't Say	6.7%	6.7%	26.7%	26.7%	33.3%	100.0%		
Total		4.8%	8.9%	33.9%	28.2%	24.2%	100.0%		
		Cosmetics and personal care products					Total	Chi-square Value	Sign
		Never	Rarely	sometimes	Very often	Always			
Seriousness for Environment protection	Very serious	5.9%	4.7%	12.9%	43.5%	32.9%	100.0%	4.98	.347
	Somewhat serious	4.2%	16.7%	25.0%	29.2%	25.0%	100.0%		
	Can't Say	6.7%	20.0%	20.0%	26.7%	26.7%	100.0%		
Total		5.6%	8.9%	16.1%	38.7%	30.6%	100.0%		
		Products Packaged by recyclable material and packaging which can be refilled or reused					Total	Chi-square Value	Sign
		Never	Rarely	sometimes	Very often	Always			
Seriousness for Environment protection	Very serious		15.3%	41.2%	24.7%	18.8%	100.0%	5.346	.456
	Somewhat serious	16.7%	12.5%	29.2%	33.3%	8.3%	100.0%		
	Can't Say	20.0%	13.3%	33.3%	20.0%	13.3%	100.0%		
Total		5.6%	14.5%	37.9%	25.8%	16.1%	100.0%		

According to the above table, Relationship between Seriousness for Environment and Green Product purchasing are not significantly related. So the hypothesis is rejected.

6. Major Finding of the study

On the basis of analysis and interpretation, following major finding are drawn –

- Most of students were found serious for the environmental protection.
- 35.5 % students are not much aware about the Environmental issues like Global Warming, Pollution (water, air, soil etc.), Deforestation, Ozone depletion, Climate Change, acid rain, etc.
- Most of students consider that pollution is the biggest environmental problem.
- Majority student consider that Environmental protection is their responsibility.
- Awareness of Green product found average among students.
- Purchasing and using green product are yet low that may due to awareness and price.
- Seriousness for environment and green product purchasing in not related. Youngsters shown seriousness but not it is found in their Green Product purchasing.

7. Suggestion and Recommendations –

- Youngsters expressed their concern for environmental protection which indicates that if manufacturer create the trust among consumers for their ecofriendly products then consumers will prefer green products only.
- It is hereby recommended that

government, companies, NGOs, and concerned authorities should take initiatives to make people aware about environmental issues and its cause.

- It is found that respondents were not thoroughly aware about green products. Though, most of the people were having average knowledge about ecofriendly products. This study also suggests that specific promotional strategies should be designed, developed and implemented considering age, income, and education qualification of consumers.
- This study suggests that Government should come forward to solve such problems by giving relaxation in tax or provide subsidy on green products so that consumers can buy green products without worrying about pocket.
- Government can play an important role in successful execution of green marketing. People are not satisfied with the efforts of government, Hence governments should come forward with active involvement and need to execute the laws related to this.

8. Scope for the Future Research

- This study is limited to the Madhya Pradesh and college going student only but any interested researcher may study on the population of other states or country and different age group people.
- This study is not specific to any particular category of green products, so further studies can be focused on particular category like automobile, FMCG, tourism etc.
- Future studies can be done by using different sampling method so that more insightful conclusions regarding problems

of green marketing could be drawn.

- Further, study can be done by interested researchers on larger sample.

Conclusion

Most important thing came out from findings of this research work that people are showing their concern for environmental issues and protection which drive the market in a new direction and force to offer such products which have least detrimental effect on environment. Green marketing has become necessary to adopt by manufacturers these days and even many companies have started implementing the green marketing practices to gaining competitive advantage over others. Even many companies have realized that it will become very difficult to survive without adapting green marketing strategy in this competitive era.

However, most of the consumers are using green products directly or indirectly but still the acceptance of green products is a big challenge for manufacture and government. Apart from awareness, various reasons are found for dissatisfaction and non-usage of green products i.e. product quality, price and availability of green product. Thus, it can be said that there are problems at the end of all three stockholders i.e. Consumer, Manufacturer and Government, which need to be resolved.

We look the India as super power or Vishwa Guru but it is not possible to become without sustainable development. Today, Indian economy is progressing at rapid rate but on other side environmental issues like pollution, deforestation, shrinkage of natural resources etc. have become big problems in front of nation. In this era of business, green marketing

can play an important role in sustainable development. So through sustainable development, which covers three dimensions – Environment, Society and Economy, India can be a green prosperous nation in future.

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