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Identification of different types of green products: A market survey

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Abstract

Going green means leading a lifestyle that's not just more beneficial for people who do it, but for their surroundings as well. All the green products that we use provide benefit for the people not just economically, but also socially and environmentally. The green marketing is defined as the activities taken by the firms that are concerned about the environment or green problems by delivering the environmentally sound goods or services to create consumers and society's satisfaction. The study was taken to know the different types of green products available in the market through market survey. The data was collected from 30 shops of from the urban and rural area respectively. The results revealed that majority of the shops had both green and conventional products in both the areas. In both the areas organic food products and green cosmetic products were available in almost all the selected shops. Shopkeepers provide polyethylene bag to carry their products to customers. Eco label and content of the product determines the greenness of the product, recyclable symbol and organic label were the most accepted ecolabels. Health and environmental consciousness and quality concern were the major contributing factors for increasing awareness among the consumers. Consumers were not sure about the greenness of the products and they feel that these costlier than the conventional products so they hesitate to purchase. The research and development expenses should be increased to bring some innovative and better ways to generate, communicate and deliver green products and services by all stakeholders like policy makers, educationists, social development workers, the government and private agencies and the producers at large. Promotion of green concept should start from school level itself. Green advertisements should be encouraged at public places to create awareness among consumers.

Keywords: Green products, ecolabel, health, environment, consumers, conventional products, green marketing, green advertisement

Introduction

Environmental pollution is one of the most serious problems experienced by humanity and other life-forms on the earth today. According to air quality report, 2019 India was ranked as the fifth most environmentally hazardous country in the world, Bangladesh was found to be the worst on environmental indicators and Bahamas was the best country in the world. Ghaziabad (India) was the most polluted city in the world and Indore is the cleanest city in India, Mysore (Karnataka) was ranked fifth cleanest city in India.

Going green means leading a lifestyle that's not just more beneficial for people who do it, but for their surroundings as well. All the green products that we use provide benefit for the people not just economically, but also socially and environmentally. The green products preserve the public health in general. The more people decide to use green products the better it is for everyone around them. When we use products that are natural, it is much better for our well being.

A consumer's concern towards a safe environment has been increasing gradually. Nowadays, the market contains a wide variety of products that are environmentally safe. The purchase behaviour of the consumers depends on the beliefs and the consciousness of the consumers towards their health and environmental concern. If consumers opt for a green product it not only has personal benefits for the consumer but also has many long term environmental benefits. The decision to purchase these products depends on the behaviour which the consumers adopt towards green products.

The green marketing is defined as the activities taken by the firms that are concerned about the environment or green problems by delivering the environmentally sound goods or services to create consumers and society's satisfaction (Kassaye, 2010) [3]. Green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process, packaging, as well as modifying advertising.

The concept of green marketing was first tracked in 1975 as “Ecological Marketing”. Green marketing advocates the green consumption consciousness and encourages people to consume green products.

By the late 1980s and 1990s, the notion of “green” products became somewhat trendier. During 1980s few green products entered into the market. But, only organic foods gain popularity and all other products are not aware by the consumers. During 1990s the consumers were willing to pay for green features, which have lead to a dramatic increase in green consumerism. Eco-labels and certification programs increased in number during 2000. These programs largely focused on reduction of environmental pollution and wise use of natural resources. Consumer awareness is heightened and more green choices were available to consumers during 2010. From 2015 onwards total number of green products in stores increased and consumers were willing to pay more for green products.

There are various categories of green products available in the market such as general green products, green food products, energy saving appliances, green cosmetic products and eco friendly textiles. The present study was aimed to identify the different types of green products available in the market.

Review of Literature

Bukhari (2011) ^[1] reported that the green marketing should not ignore the economic aspect of marketing. The marketers need to understand the implications of green marketing. The customers were not concerned regarding environmental matters or will not pay a premium for products that were added eco-responsible, thought again.

Joshi (2011) ^[2] pointed out that the environmental issues had gained importance in business as well as in public life throughout the world. The Green marketing is portion and parcel of overall corporate policy, along with planning the traditional marketing mix - product, promotion, price and place.

Welling and Chavan (2010) ^[7] revealed that green marketing had a positive impact on the firm. The marketers opined that the customers have to be ready to pay premium price for green products. Marketers have the responsibility to make the stakeholders aware about the need and advantages of green products.

Kumar and Sharma (2013) ^[4] study reported that majority of the consumers were willing to buy organic food products like herbal juices, natural cosmetics, organic tea, coffee, foods, vegetables, spices, grains, pulses, herbs, manures and pesticides.

Suganya and Kavita (2017) ^[6] reported that majority of retailers opined that the green products were liked by consumers. The high price and poor awareness about green products hinders the consumers to purchase green products. The awareness about green products among the consumers was increasing and they had started implementing green products in their life.

Priya and Pratiksha (2019) ^[5] found that majority of the consumers purchased green products from the specialized shops. More than half of respondents (56.40%) purchased others green products. Nearly twenty percent of respondents

purchase cleaning and house products.

Methodology

The self structured questionnaire was used to identify the green products available in the market. The 30 shops from urban and Rural areas of Belagavi and Dharwad districts were selected for the study. Frequency and Percentage were used to interpret the results.

Results and Discussion

A market survey was conducted in selected areas to collect the information about green products available in the market. Table 1 presents the market information about the green products In majority of the shops (83.33%) both green and conventional products were available in urban area followed by only green products in 16.67 percent of the shops, where as in rural area all the selected shops had both green and conventional products as presented in the Table 1. As explained by the shopkeepers, the retailers were profit oriented and they could not sell only green products in shop, so they sell all kind of products based on the need of their consumers.

Table 1 shows the various categories of products available in the selected shops in both urban and rural area. Organic food products and herbal care products were available in two third percent of the shops in urban area. In half of the selected shops general green products were available, followed by energy efficient appliances (40%) and clothes (20%). In rural area majority of the shops (83.33%) had food products and herbal care products, followed by general green products (40.00%), energy efficient household appliances (20.00%) and clothes (5.00%). These are the most essential products and they are sold regularly. Food and the cosmetic products are the fast moving consumer goods and required by everyone in their day to day living. Majority of the consumers were worried about the health and environment. So, large number of consumers’ preferred to purchase the food products and cosmetics which might be the reason to have these products in almost all the shops.

In urban area two third of the selected shops provided carrying bag for their products to customers and one third of the shops did not provide any carry bags to customers for purchases. While in rural area majority (83.33%) of the shopkeepers provided carrying bag to customers whereas, 16.67 percent of them did not provided any carrying bag. In rural area two third of the shops, shopkeepers provide polyethylene bag. In half of the shops they provided cloth bag followed by paper bag (40.00%). In rural area the shopkeepers provided polyethylene bag only. In none of the shops cloth bag and paper bag were provided for the purchases. Majority of the shopkeepers provide polyethylene bag to carry the things to consumers. Providing eco-friendly bags is an additional cost to the retailers for which the consumers will not agree to pay extra amount. Hence the polyethylene bags were provided to the consumers and many times the consumers will demand the carry bags. It was felt necessary to educate consumers regarding hazards of the usage of plastics.

Table 1: Market information about the green products

N=60 shops

Particulars	Urban (n=30)	Rural (n=30)
I. Type of products available in the shop	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Green Products	5 (16.67)	-
Both green and conventional products	25 (83.33)	30 (100.00)
II. Categories of products available in the shop		
Food products	20 (66.67)	25 (83.33)
Cosmetics / herbal care products	20 (66.67)	25 (83.33)
Clothing	6 (20.00)	5 (16.67)
Energy efficient household equipments	12 (40.00)	6 (20.00)
General green products	15 (50.00)	12 (40.00)
III. Provision of carry bag to customers		
Yes	20 (66.67)	25 (83.33)
No	10 (33.33)	5 (16.67)
IV. Carry bag / shopping bag material		
Cloth bag	15 (50.00)	-
Paper bag	12 (40.00)	-
Polyethylene bag	20 (66.67)	25 (100.00)

Factors contributing for identification of greenness of the products

Table 2 depicts the factors contributing for identification of greenness of the products. In urban area all the shopkeepers opined that ecolabel and content of the product were the factors which determine the greenness of the product, followed by certification of the product (73.33%), packaging material (66.67%) and explanation of the manufacturing process of the product (40.00%). Similarly in rural area also all the shopkeepers opined that ecolabel and content of the product were the factors responsible for greenness of the product, followed by certification (46.67%), packaging material (33.33%) and explanation of the manufacturing process of the product (23.33%).

A glance into Table 2 shows that in urban area cent percent of the shopkeepers opined that their customers understand the eco labels. In rural area majority of the shopkeepers (80.00%) opined that their customers understand eco labels and twenty







percent of the shopkeepers opined that their customers did not understand about eco labels. The consumers will see the recyclable symbol on almost all the products they use in their day to day life. The organic label is used commonly on all the green products and the word organic has gained so much of attraction in the present era which influence the consumers to buy the green products.

In urban area cent percent of the shopkeepers opined that recyclable symbol and organic label were the most accepted ecolabel, followed by green pot label (76.67%), energy star label (53.33%), cruelty free label (26.67%) and organic textile label (16.67%) as presented in Table 2.

Similarly in rural area also cent of the shopkeepers opined that recyclable symbol and organic label were the most accepted eco labels, followed by green pot label (83.33%), energy star label (41.67%). None of the respondents of rural area knew about cruelty free label organic textile labels.

Table 2: Factors contributing for identification of greenness of the products

N=60 shops

Particulars	Urban (n=30)	Rural (n=30)
I. Factors responsible for greenness	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Eco labels	30 (100.00)	30 (100.00)
Content of the product	30 (100.00)	30 (100.00)
Certification	22 (73.33)	14 (46.67)
Packaging material	20 (66.67)	10 (33.33)
Explaining the manufacturing process	12 (40.00)	7 (23.33)
II. Understanding of eco labels by the customers		
Yes	30 (100.00)	24 (80.00)
No	-	06 (20.00)
III. Most accepted eco label by the customers		
Green pot 	23 (76.67)	20 (83.33)
Recyclable symbol 	30 (100.00)	24 (100.00)
Energy star 	16 (53.33)	10 (41.67)
Organic label 	30 (100.00)	24 (100.00)
Cruelty free label 	8 (26.67)	-
Organic textile label 	5 (16.67)	-

Factors contributing to increasing awareness among the consumers

As shown in Table 3 cent percent of the urban shopkeepers opined that the health and environmental consciousness and quality concern were the major contributing factors for increasing awareness among the consumers, followed by changing life style (76.67%), influence from the others (73.33%) and exposure to media (60.00%).

Similarly in rural area all the shopkeepers opined that the health consciousness was the major contributing factor for increasing awareness among the consumers, followed by quality concern (83.33%), environmental consciousness (73.33%), influence from the others (50.00%), exposure to media (36.67%) and changing life style (26.67%) as presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Factors contributing to the increasing awareness among the consumers

N=60 shops

Factors	Urban (n=30)	Rural (n=30)
	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Health consciousness	30 (100.00)	30 (100.00)
Environmental consciousness	30 (100.00)	22 (73.33)
Quality concern	30 (100.00)	25 (83.33)
Influence from the others	22 (73.33)	15 (50.00)
Exposure to media	18 (60.00)	11 (36.67)
Changing life style	23(76.67)	8 (26.67)

Factors preventing customers from buying green products

The factors preventing the customers from buying green products was represented Table 4. All the urban shopkeepers opined that the consumers did not buy the green products because they were not sure about the greenness of the product, followed by green products were costly (73.33%), awareness was low among the consumers (66.67%), green products were not easily available in the market (63.33%), poor quality of the product (60.00%) and because of the non availability of particular branded green products in the shop (56.67%).

Similarly in rural area cent percent of the shopkeepers opined that the consumers did not purchased the green products because they were not sure about the greenness of the product, followed by the green products were costlier (93.33%) and not easily available in the market (83.33%). More than forty percent of the shop keepers (46.67%) opined that because of poor quality of the products the consumers will not buy green products. Forty percent of the shopkeepers reported that the consumers' awareness about the green products was low which prevent them from buying the green products and 30.00 percent opined that the non availability of the particular brand prevents the customers from buying green products as depicted in the Table 4.

Table 4: Factors preventing the customers from buying green products

N=60

Factors	Urban (n=30)	Rural (n=30)
	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Low awareness	20 (66.67)	12 (40.00)
Non availability	19 (63.33)	25 (83.33)
Expensive	22 (73.33)	28 (93.33)
Surety of greenness	30 (100.00)	30 (100.00)
Poor quality	18 (60.00)	14 (46.67)
Non availability of particular brand	17 (56.67)	09 (30.00)

Conclusion

Majority of the shops had both green and conventional products in both the areas. Both in urban and rural area, organic food products and green cosmetic products were available in almost all the selected shops. Shopkeepers provide polyethylene bag to carry their products to customers. In both the areas eco label and content of the product were the factors which determines the greenness of the product, followed by certification of the product and packaging material. Recyclable symbol and organic label were the most accepted ecolabels, followed by green pot label and energy star label by the consumers while purchasing the green products. Health and environmental consciousness and quality concern were the major contributing factors for increasing awareness among the consumers. Consumers were not sure about the greenness of the products and they feel that the green products were costlier than the conventional products so they hesitate to purchase. The research and development expenses should be increased to bring some innovative and better ways to generate, communicate and deliver green products and services by all stakeholders like policy makers, educationists, social development workers, the government and private agencies and the producers at large. Promotion of green concept should start from school level itself. Green advertisements should be encouraged at public places to create awareness among consumers.

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