



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor (RJIF): 8.4
IJAR 2024; 10(6): 01-06
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 01-02-2024
Accepted: 08-03-2024

Shweta Suman
Ph.D. Research Scholar,
Department of Commerce &
Business Administration, TM,
Bhagalpur University,
Bhagalpur, Bihar, India

Green marketing in India: An analytical study on consumer's attitude towards environment friendly products

Shweta Suman

Abstract

Environmental concerns have highly intrigued consumers, marketers, researchers and policy-makers to choose different green methods and strategies to mitigate the environmental concerns. 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 marketing and looks into the various ways in which the different consumer attributes are related to the concept of green marketing. A conceptual framework is presented and the information is analysed on the basis of the framework. Therefore, empirical research was conducted and the said study has high implications for the stakeholders of the ecology.

Keywords: Marketers, awareness, environment, consumer, green marketing

1. Introduction

Over the last decade environmentalism has emerged to be a vital aspect due to increasing issues related to acid rains, depletion of the ozone layer, and degradation of the land and many more pressing environmental issues. This resulted in increase in consumer concern with regards to restoration of ecological balance by presenting demands for eco-friendly products in countries around the world (Doyle 1992) ^[1]. The research on environmental consumerism is a well-researched topic with the first research dating back to the 1970s. There has been extensive growth in interest exhibited by marketing academics as well as practitioners with regard to the impact of marketing on promoting and maintaining ecological balance. There is a great deal of depletion of non-renewable energy resources which accompanied by generation of non-bio degradable pollutants has lead to an increase in consumer and corporate awareness of green marketing issues. Green marketing approach was researched from a corporate interest point of view in the early 90s. Research indicated that 92% of MNCs from Europe changed their products to address growing concerns of environmental pollution.

Green marketing research has come a long way since then. Consumers from the developed countries including USA and Western Europe were found to be more conscious about the environment. Research in the last decade (D Souza 2004) ^[11] has indicated that consumer are aware and are willing to pay more to "go green". There is limited research which has examined the impact of green marketing on consumers from emerging economies like India (Bhattacharya, 2011) ^[5]. It is against this backdrop from the above discussion it is quite clear that there is a large research gap in terms conceptually identifying those areas of consumer awareness impacting the concept of green marketing.

1.1 Strategies Used in Green Marketing

Generally, green marketing strategies are representative of eco-marketing orientation within the business philosophy for collaborating towards compelling arrangement of the manufacturing life cycle and distribution Arrangements. In the context of the same, green

Corresponding Author:
Shweta Suman
Ph.D. Research Scholar,
Department of Commerce &
Business Administration, TM,
Bhagalpur University,
Bhagalpur, Bihar, India

washing is a strategy, which is which is broadly embraced by the business associations. Benn & Bolton (2011) ^[14] state that the primary concerns with green washing include confusion about environmental issues among the public, complexity in assessment of the strategy by multinationals and deception concerning the ecological responsibility of the purchases. It may further leave consumers with a positive inclination that they have done their part for ecological preservation by obtaining eco-friendly goods. Cherian & Jacob (2012) ^[15] indicate eco-labelling as an effective marketing instrument for advancing green consumerism. With the point of expanding the base of green consumers, associations are getting to be engaged with asserting their obligation towards nature. The significance of eco-labelling is advocated as far as its immediate impact on the consumers purchase decision towards buying ecofriendly products. Through the use of ecolabels, firms can check the key attributes of the products, which is extremely in approaching the green buyers. This means that promotional practices can be successfully focused in the market for underscoring the necessities of the green purchasers.

2. Literature Review

Environmental marketing, more popularly known as green marketing or sustainable marketing can be defined as the effort by a company to design, promote, price and distribute products in a manner which promotes environmental protection.

Today green marketing is a vital component of marketing research which began due to increasing media exposure and pressure on firms to present eco-friendly behaviour. The growth in green marketing over the years has been promoted by adoption of product packaging and presenting to the public these improvements. Over the years there has been a subtle shift from practicing environmental marketing practices as a result of compulsion identified as a result of legislations and pressure from environmental groups to genuine efforts to improve sustainable marketing plans and behaving in an eco-responsible manner.

Consumerism can perhaps be identified as a movement which initially begun as a process which was presented to protect consumers against practices of unethical marketing. Over time this has extended and become broader in nature. When today's agenda with regards to consumer activism is taken into consideration it can be observed that protection of the environment is the most vital aspect.

A green consumer can be identified to be one who avoids any product which may harm damage to any living organism, cause deterioration of the environment during process of manufacturing or during process of usage, consume a large amount of non-renewable energy, involves unethical testing on animals or human subjects (Elkington, 1994) ^[13].

There have been a number of different factors which are instrumental in promoting green consumers to purchase green products. Extensive research over the years identify that heightened awareness of green issues; increased level of information availability on environmental sustenance; green advertising by corporations; increased concern for the environment; increase in popularity of green products by social and environmental charities as some factors. This overwhelming increase in the overall environmental consciousness among different consumer profile there have

been efforts undertaken by firms to "go green" by presenting the concept of corporate environmentalism (Banerjee, 2003) ^[4].

Marketers have also successfully focused in stating emotional brand benefits, which has been an important factor in influencing the purchase decisions of consumers, leading to increased purchase of green products.

3. Research Methodology

The current research paper is a conceptual study in to green marketing. Therefore, the researcher adopted a qualitative research strategy. According to (Ader *et al.*, 2008) ^[1], there are no independent or dependant variables involved in a qualitative study as a qualitative strategy is not experimental in nature. (Saunders, M, *et al.* 2003) ^[16], states that when it comes to conceptual research, it is important to review previously done researches on the same subject matter. A qualitative approach allows for an elastic process during which changes can be made and incorporated into the research.

4. Scope of the Study

This study emphasizes on the need to study the significance of the environmental concern and explore the consumer's perception of green products.

5. Objectives of the Study

The present study was carried out with the primary aim of identifying the consumer's perception towards green products. In the context of the same the objectives of the study include the following.

- To understand the concept of green marketing and to review some of the studies that have dealt with the concept of green marketing
- To identify the relationship between the various consumer attitudes and green marketing.

6. Global Scenario in Green Marketing

"Green" is the buzzword that is gaining popularity among the current generation. A number of businesses right from private entities such as Wal-Mart trying to push the concept of organic food to public entities like the London governments congestion charge are all aimed at improving the environment by promoting 'Green' products and issues. 87% of people from various nations like Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, the UK and the US have shown an interest in reducing their impact on the environment, according to a survey by (McKinsey, 2007) ^[17]. However, showing interest and actually acting on the interest are two different deeds. This fact is proved by a survey that was conducted on a global scale, which was repeated in 2008 with the help of BBC World, which showed that not a lot of people were actually doing something to move their lifestyle to a green lifestyle. The overall market for green marketing is said to be worth \$ 3.5 trillion by the year 2017, according to a report by Global Industry Analysts Inc. of 2011. The report also states that increasing awareness about the environmental issues among the people, businesses and the governments is one of the main reasons for such market potential. Another research study by Mintel, clearly showed that 12% of the American population actively sought green products. There is a growing need to switch over to green products and services by both marketers and consumers. Even though the shift to

'green' will be expensive to both the consumers as well as businesses, it will most definitely pay off in the long run. There are a number of literatures that focus on various aspects related to green marketing and also delves into the various inter relationships between the customers attitudes and environmental strategies in relation to the organizations use of marketing. Environmental issues are addressed in green marketing efforts.

The core idea of green marketing is to create awareness among people on the environmental issues and how consumers would be helping the environment if they switch over to green products. Thus, green marketing aims to provide more information to people and also gives those more choices to switch over to green lifestyle. According to (Rex and Baumann, 2007) ^[18], those aspects will spur businesses to develop more products from an environmentally friendly perspective.

7. The Attitude-Behaviour Link

It has always been believed by consumer behaviourists that an individual's actions can be predicted by their attitudes. There have been a number of attempts to improve the ability to predict an individual's actions and a variety of factors have also been suggested to involve factors which can be classified as either dispositional or situational. Spruyt (2007) ^[19] indicate that prediction of behaviour is directly dependent on attitude of the consumer which is found to be associated with knowledge and personal experience they have. The impact of beliefs and attitude on consumer buying habits has been studied extensively.

Furthermore, research in this area has indicated that if attitudes are to be used in predicting the consumers behaviour's then there are a number of methodological issues that have to be sorted out. According to (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977) ^[20], behaviour and attitudes have to be measured at the same correspondence level. There are a number of theories that have been put forth to explain the process by which attitudes predict behaviour. According to (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980) ^[21], theory of reasoned action, "people consider the implications of their actions before they decide to engage or not engage in a given behaviour". Thus, according to the above theory, people's attitudes play a significant role when it comes to their forming an intention to act in a certain behaviour. The model primarily argues that people engage in processing that leads to the formation of attitudes, norms and intentions prior to performing the behaviour. However, the theory of reasoned action is not the only theory that deals with people's attitudes and behaviours.

8. Green Marketing: Consumer Attitude-Behaviour Link

8.1 Consumer Attitude towards the Environment

Environmental attitude is identified as the judgment an individual has towards the protection and promotion of the environment. Conflicting results have been published with regards to the relationship that currently exists between attitude towards the environment and the resultant behaviour. There has been other empirical research which has concluded that the relationship is moderate at best (Davis, 1995) ^[9]. Green marketing depends on the consumer's attitude towards the environment. If there is no strong demand for such a shift in consumer attitude, businesses will not put in the extra effort to move towards

introducing green products and services. Based on this evidence three different aspects can be arrived at in terms of identifying the relationship between environmental attitude and behaviour.

Need for more specific studies identifying the relationship between attitude and behaviour. b) Need to identify other variables which have a mediating effect on both these attributes.

8.2 Perceived Seriousness of Environmental Problems

There have been a number of studies that have dealt with the topic of perceived seriousness of environmental problems. According to (Dunlap, 1994) ^[12], most of these studies concentrated on determining the subjects view of the problem, its seriousness and how it differs from the numerous cultures. The studies found that some of the most common problems were air quality, sewage treatment and water quality. People living in the Asian nations were found to be more concerned with such problems when compared to their counterparts from other Western nations. One reason for this is that the Asian community tends to perceive their local communities in a negative manner than their Western or European counterparts (Dunlap, 1994) ^[12]. In recent times a lot of attention has been paid to the effect that mass media has on the audience's perceived seriousness of environmental hazards. An example of one such study is the research done. In that study, the authors stated that the audiences are influenced by the way the mass media interprets the pollution levels. A study on perception of environmental risks by (Bord and O'Connor, 1997) ^[7] revealed that women were more perceptible to the risks involved in global warming and other related hazardous wastes when compared to the males. Furthermore, the study also found that women were more worried about the various negative impacts that global warming could have on their health on their family's health. Businesses have started to understand consumer's attitude towards environmental problems and have therefore started to provide 'Green' products/services that provide an alternative to consumers. Green marketing is done by businesses to increase awareness levels and to show that people worried about the environment can do something to solve some of the issues.

8.3 Perceived Environmental Responsibility

According to a study by (Lai, 2000), the citizens of Hong Kong were found to be much more literate when it comes to issues regarding the environmental problems over the past few years. This clearly shows that people living in Hong Kong are more responsible when it comes to protecting their environment. However, the study also determined that even though they were more aware of the problems their sense of individual duty towards taking corrective measures was significantly weak. On one hand they expected their government to take full responsibility of ensuring that all environmental related issues were solved through more proactive public policies and on the other hand they were not ready to follow through with the proposals that the government was suggesting in a bid to improve the environmental quality. Zelezny *et al.* (2000) ^[21] have evidenced in their study that compared to males, females had higher levels of perceived personal responsibility towards environmental protection. This difference in gender when it comes to the subject of environmental responsibility is explained mostly by the norm activation model that

originated from the social psychology context. According to this model, most individuals are more likely to develop a helping behaviour only when they become aware of the dangerous consequences that arise from global warming and when they actually feel responsible for their part in perpetuating this damage to the environment. In a sense, environmental behaviour carries an altruistic meaning, whereby individuals may need to have a strong "other" orientation and willingness to sacrifice their time for preferred activities to protect the environment for the long-term benefits of the earth and human race. According to a study, females tend to have a better ability to take control and take the responsibility for alleviating problems in the world and also they are the ones who have a stronger sense of ethics.

8.4 Consumer Behaviour towards Eco Labelling

One important tool of green marketing involves the promotion of eco labels on environmentally friendly products. Eco labelling is an effective measure which helps in bridging the gap between sellers and buyers by providing information on two aspects: Information function presenting intangible quality measures including product quality and Value function which presents the recyclability and CSR related brand prestige. Empirical research has concentrated on the need to look for ways by which eco labels will directly impact consumer purchase intention of products which are deemed to be environmentally safe. There is a need to identify the impact eco labelling will have directly on the consumer environmental attitude in terms of decision making. The consumer awareness of eco labelling and its impact on consumer intent to purchase an eco-friendly product has been researched and conflicting views have been expressed (D Souza, 2004) ^[11]. Rashid (2009) ^[22] has identified that when consumers are aware of eco labels they react more positively towards knowledge of green marketing and the purchase of green products. The research by Kuhn (1999) ^[23] also adds value to his research by identifying that the promotion of eco-friendly product manufacturing will definitely help improving a company's market share due to the ability of the company to present sustainable marketing strategies. Conflicting view was presented by Leire and Thidell (2005) ^[24] who identified that consumer awareness of eco labelling does not necessarily lead to their green purchase decisions. This is further augmented by the research of Bleda and Valente (2008) indicated that eco labelling schemes have been linked to negative firm performance. D Souza (2004) ^[11] on the other hand identified that there is not enough empirical evidence available to identify the relationship between the use of eco labels on products and its ultimate impact on eco-friendly labels. The reason behind this may be due to lack of trust among consumers (Lyer, 1999) ^[25] with regards to the effectiveness of eco labels which is result of their ignorance of the concept of eco labelling. The reason behind this consumer cognition has not been very well understood. Overall, the understood perception is that eco labels are

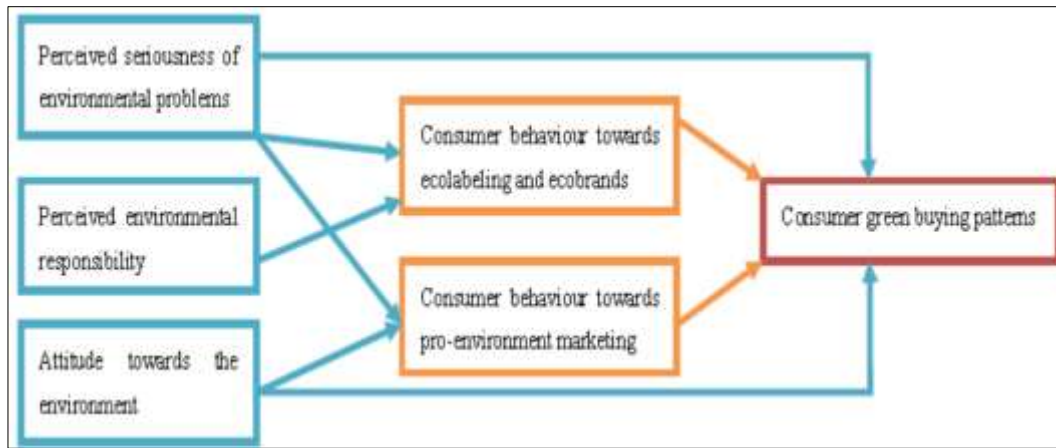
instruments which draw consumers by explaining their impact on the environment. The first eco labelling scheme Blue Angel eco label was introduced in Germany and today 30 different eco labelling methods are available. Countries in Asia have recently begun implementing labelling schemes which are uniquely their own as seen in India, Thailand, China and Japan.

8.5 Consumer Behaviour towards Environmental

Advertisements Along with the process of labelling their products, arriving at measures which promote manufacturing of eco-friendly products and reduction of environmental pollution there is a growing trend among corporations across the world to present environmental advertisements. This process is identified to be a major factor influencing green marketing. The main aim of presenting green advertisements is to present to the consumer that the company is eco centric while at the same time making an effort to influence the purchase behaviour of the consumers by presenting them with choices of availability of products which do not cause harm to the environment and directing their attention to positive consequences of purchase behaviour. There are three elements which form the core of environmental advertising. These include presentation of the corporation's mission statement with regards to environment protection, presentation of the procedures adopted by the company to go green and finally one specific CSR activity which has been adopted by the corporation. The creation of a consumer value and the subsequent translation into purchase of products is strongly identified by the impact of environmental advertisements (Baldwin, 1993) ^[3].

8.6 Consumer behaviour towards pro-environmental marketing

The formation of attitude and action is found to be dependents on the development of values (Rokeach, 1973) ^[26] however the impact these may have on behaviour in a real-life condition. Thoughts (cognitive function) and feelings (affective function) are directly impacted by the attitude people show hence impacting their overall perception of purchase related behaviour. This identifies with the idea that there is a need to change the overall attitude consumers have towards a product thereby impacting their decision making. This scenario will apply to a green marketing context also. If one were to consider the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980) ^[2] into account then it can be postulated that marketers of green products change their method of evaluation of consumer attitude and intention to understand exactly what consumers really want. The new beliefs and normative beliefs of consumers can be identified in this manner. An effective brand management strategy involves a principle wherein companies convert rational reasoning to emotional ones. If enough effort is taken by the brands, then there should be a shift in consumer attitude towards suitable measures of sustainable consumption.



Source: Polonsky (2011)^[27]

Fig 1: Conceptual framework

9. Conclusion

There is a need for green marketing and a need for a shift in the consumer's behaviour and attitude towards more environment friendly life styles. The current study is a compilation of various aspects related to green marketing. It is clearly evident from review of literatures and the conceptual model that the majority of the consumers still lack 'green' knowledge and because of such low awareness towards green products organizations are still not pushing towards developing more green products nor are they working hard on green packaging. Organizations still believe that marketing aspects such as developing a proper supply chain, packaging, pricing etc take precedence over green marketing initiatives.

However, this is all changing. People are beginning to realize their role and responsibilities towards the environment. With more and more consumers willing to pay a little extra towards green products, organizations are taking notice of the demands and behaviour and attitude of the consumers.

10. References

- Adèr HJ, Mellenbergh GJ, Hand DJ. Advising on research methods: A consultant's companion. Huizen, The Netherlands: Johannes van Kessel Publishing; c2008.
- Ajzen I, Fishbein M. Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behaviour. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ; c1980.
- Baldwin P. Advertisers beginning to see green. The Dallas Morning News; c1993. p. J1-J11.
- Banerjee SB, Iyer ES, Kashyap RK. Corporate Environmentalism: Antecedents and Influence of Industry Type. Journal of Marketing. 2003;67(2):106-122. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.67.2.106.18604>
- Bhattacharya S. Consumer Attitude towards Green Marketing in India. The IUP Journal of Marketing Management; c2011. p. 62-70.
- Bleda M, Valente M. Graded eco-labels: A demand-oriented approach to reduce pollution. Technological Forecasting and Social Change; c2008. p. TFS-17065.
- Bord RI, O'Connor RE. The gender gap in environmental attitudes: The case of perceived vulnerability to risk. Social Science Quarterly. 1997;78(4):830-840.
- Chase D, Smith TK. Consumers keen on green but marketers don't deliver. Advertising Age. 1992;63:63.
- Davis JJ. Consumer response to corporate environmental advertising. Journal of Consumer Marketing. 1995;11(2):25-37. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/07363769410058902>
- Doyle J. Hold the Applause: A Case Study of Corporate Environmentalism. The Ecologist. 1992;22(3):84-90.
- D'Souza C. Eco-label programmes: A stakeholder (consumer) perspective. Corporate communications: An International Journal. 2004;9(3):179-188.
- Dunlap RE. International Attitudes towards Environment and Development. In: Bergesen HO, Parmann G, editors. Green Globe Yearbook of International Co-operation on Environment and Development. Oxford: Oxford University Press; c1994. p. 115-126.
- Elkington J. Toward the Sustainable Corporation: Win-Win-Win Business Strategies for Sustainable Development. California Management Review. 1994;36(2):90-100.
- Bolton JS, Haehnelt MG, Warren SJ, Hewett PC, Mortlock DJ, Venemans BP, McMahon RG, Simpson C. How neutral is the intergalactic medium surrounding the redshift $z = 7.085$ quasar ULAS J1120+ 0641?. Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society: Letters. 2011 Sep 1;416(1):L70-4.
- Cherian JP, Jacob J. A study of green HR practices and its effective implementation in the organization: A review. International Journal of Business and Management. 2012;7(21):25-33.
- Saunders M, Lewis P, Thornhill A. Research methods for business students. Essex: Prentice Hall: Financial Times. 2003 Jan.
- Wheat LJ, Freifeld AG, Kleiman MB, Baddley JW, McKinsey DS, Loyd JE, et al. Clinical practice guidelines for the management of patients with histoplasmosis: 2007 update by the Infectious Diseases Society of America. Clinical Infectious Diseases. 2007 Oct 1;45(8):1197-205.
- Rex E, Baumann H. Beyond ecolabels: what green marketing can learn from conventional marketing. Journal of cleaner production. 2007 Jan 1;15(6):567-76.
- Spruyt A, De Houwer J, Hermans D, Eelen P. Affective priming of nonaffective semantic categorization

- responses. *Experimental Psychology*. 2007 Jan;54(1):44-53.
20. Ajzen I, Fishbein M. Attitude-behavior relations: A theoretical analysis and review of empirical research. *Psychological Bulletin*. 1977;84:888-918.
 21. Zelezny LC, Chua PP, Aldrich C. New ways of thinking about environmentalism: Elaborating on gender differences in environmentalism. *Journal of Social Issues*. 2000;56(3):443-457.
 22. Rashid NR. Awareness of eco-label in Malaysia's green marketing initiative. *International journal of business and management*. 2009 Aug;4(8):132-141.
 23. Kuhn D. A developmental model of critical thinking. *Educational researcher*. 1999 Mar;28(2):16-46.
 24. Leire C, Thidell Å. Product-related environmental information to guide consumer purchases - A review and analysis of research on perceptions, understanding and use among Nordic consumers. *Journal of Cleaner Production*. 2005 Aug 1;13(10-11):1061-1070.
 25. Lyer L, Ratain MJ. 5-Fluorouracil Pharmacokinetics: Causes for Variability and Strategies for Modulation in Cancer Chemotherapy: New Drugs. *Cancer Investigation*. 1999 Jan 1;17(7):494-506.
 26. Rokeach M. *The nature of human values*. Free press; c1973.
 27. Polonsky MJ. Transformative green marketing: Impediments and opportunities. *Journal of business research*. 2011 Dec 1;64(12):1311-1319.