

A STUDY ON CONSUMER AWARENESS TOWARDS GREEN PRODUCTS IN FOOD INDUSTRY AT CENTRE INDIA

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Abstract: The demographic factor selected for the study is analyzed to find out its impact on the respondents' awareness towards green products with the help of chi-square. Chi-square test for goodness of fit has been carried out to find out the impact of age on respondents awareness towards green products. The result shows that the chi-square value is significant at 5 % level. So it can be inferred that age has significant influence on the awareness level of respondents towards green products. To understand the impact of educational qualification on consumer awareness towards green products chi-square technique is applied. The results shows that at 5 per cent significant level, the demographic factor educational qualification influences the respondents awareness towards the purchase of green products. It is proved that marital status influence consumer awareness towards green products.

I. INTRODUCTION

The world is beginning to realize the threat to the severe damage caused to the environment due to the increasing population and consumption of goods and services. This exposure to environmentalism has made the consumers eco-friendly and resulted in positive environmental behaviour. Environmental awareness has been ranked as one of the most important predictors of appropriate environmental behaviour. Environmental awareness is also considered as knowledge about the facts and general concepts relating to the environment and ecosystems. This knowledge is also known as Eco-literacy. Behaviour in a person is better predicted by his attitude. Naturally a person's behaviour towards environmental practices are also determined by his attitude. The two main types of attitude that affects environmental behaviour are perceived importance and level of inconvenience. The term perceived importance represent the consumers concern for ecological issues. The term level of inconvenience means the constraints faced by the consumers when they adopt green life style. The perceived level of responsibility is a situation in which the consumers believe that the firms are not playing the role in production of eco-friendly products and it is also important variable that determines the consumers level of environmental consciousness.

The negative impact of human activities over environment is a matter of concern today; Governments all over the world are making efforts to minimize human impact on environment. Today our society is more concerned with the natural environment. Understanding the society's new concerns businesses have begun to modify their behaviour and have integrated environmental issues into organizational activities. Academic disciplines have integrated green issues in their literature. This is true with marketing subject too, and the terms like "Green Marketing" and "Environmental Marketing" have emerged. Governments all over the world have become so concerned about green marketing that they have attempted to regulate them¹⁰.

It is well known that increasing production and business activities are polluting the natural environment. Damages to people, crops, and wildlife are reported in different parts of the world. As resources are limited and human wants are unlimited, it is necessary for marketers to use resources efficiently, so that organizational objectives are achieved without waste of resources. So green marketing is inevitable. There is growing interest among people around the world regarding protection of natural environment. People are getting more concerned for environment and changing their behaviour for the protection of environment. Hence, marketers are feeling their responsibility towards environment and giving importance to green marketing.

Not only marketers but consumers are also concerned about the environment, and consumers are also changing their behaviour pattern. Now, individual as well as industrial consumers are becoming more concerned about environment-friendly products.

The need for firms to be eco-friendly across the world is greatly influenced by consumer forums and the judiciary. Several reasons can be cited for the increased use of green marketing firms, like perception of an opportunity through green marketing that can be used to achieve organizational objectives

- ❖ belief in the moral obligation to be more responsible socially
- ❖ governmental bodies mandating firms to implement eco-friendly systems and process.
- ❖ pressure from competitors
- ❖ cost factors associated with waste disposal or reduction in material usage.

In India, the emergence of Eco-Mark Scheme introduced by the government of India in 1981 was a major step towards the promotion of green marketing in the country. The Eco-Mark Schemes of India were initiated with the following objectives,

1. To provide incentives to manufacturers and importers to reduce unfavourable environmental impact of products.
2. To help consumers to become environmentally responsible in their daily lives by providing them information to take account of environmental factors in their daily lives.
3. To convince citizens to procure the products which have less environmental impact and
4. To reward actual initiatives by companies to reduce adverse environmental impact of products and ultimately to improve the quality of the environment and to encourage the sustainable management of resources.

Thereafter, there is a noticeable change in green marketing phenomenon in India for green initiatives in their product and services. Some of the recent examples like the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) have allowed its customers to carry Passenger Name Record (PNR) number of their E-Tickets on their laptop and mobiles, avoiding the printed version of their ticket anymore in order to save papers. Forest and Environmental Ministry of India has ordered the retail outlets like Big Bazaar, Reliance Fresh and many other retailers to provide polythene carry bags to customers only if customers are ready to pay for it. State Bank of India (SBI) has also entered into green service known as —Green Channel Counter. SBI is providing many services like, paperless banking, no deposit slip, no withdrawal form, no checks, —no money transactions form and all these transactions are done through SBI shopping and Automated Teller Machine (ATM) cards. State Bank of India turns to wind energy to reduce emissions. The wind project is the first step in the State Bank of India's green banking programme dedicated to the reduction of its carbon footprint and promotion of energy efficient processes, especially among the bank's clients. By using eco and power friendly equipment in its 10,000 new ATMs, the banking giant has not only saved power costs and earned carbon credits, but also set the right example for others to follow.

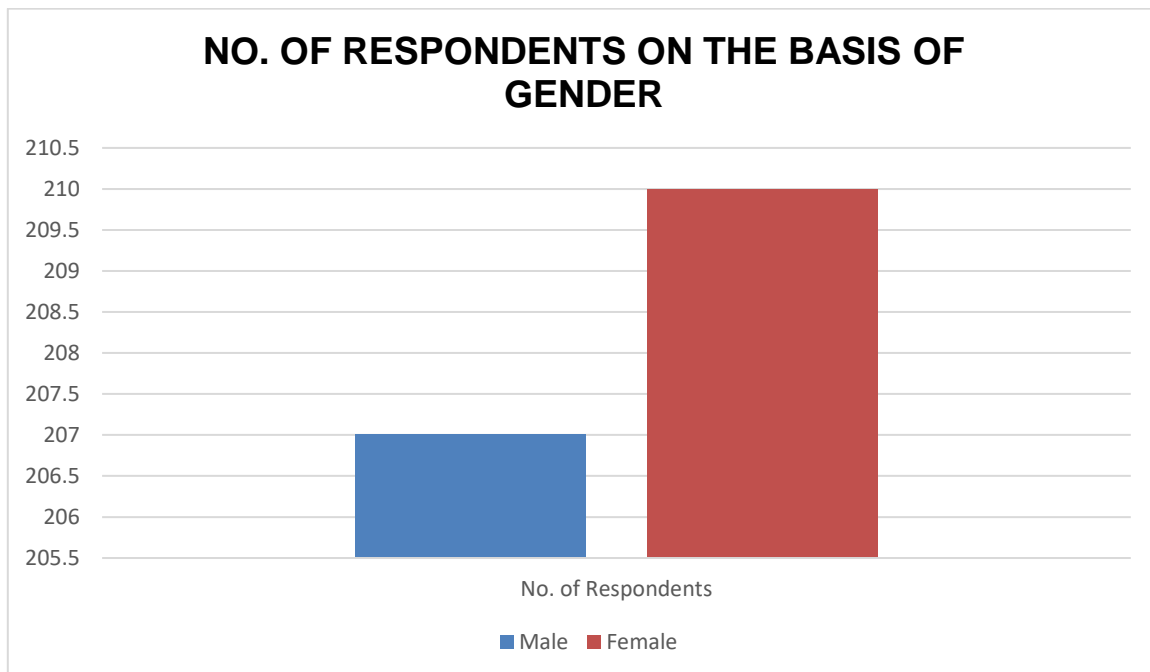
Wipro InfoTech was India's first company to launch environment friendly computer peripherals. For the Indian market, Wipro has launched a new range of desktops and laptops called Wipro Green ware. These products are Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS) compliant thus reducing E-waste in the environment. Philips has launched the `super long life' bulb which saves upto 20 percent energy. The above cases show the corporate initiatives towards the growing concept of green marketing among Indian firms.

II. DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND ITS IMPACT ON CONSUMER AWARENESS

When a study centers on the attitude of the respondents, it is very important to analyses the demographic variables. The main demographic variables taken into consideration for the study are age, educational qualification, marital status, employment, monthly income and residential status. The impact of demographic variable on consumer awareness is analyzed on the basis of gender. The numbers of male and female respondents are selected on the basis of gender ratio in Bhopal District as given in 2021 census. The respondents selected for the study on the basis of gender ratio as per 2021 census is given below.

TABLE 1 NO. OF RESPONDENTS ON THE BASIS OF GENDER

Gender	No. of respondents	Percentage
Male	207	49.6
Female	210	50.4
Total	417	100



The Table 1 shows that out of the total respondents of 417, male and female respondents are 207 and 210 respectively, which is almost in equal proportion. The demographic factor selected for the study is analysed to find out its impact on the respondents' awareness towards green products with the help of chi-square.

2.1 Age and Consumer Awareness

Age is an important factor to be considered while analyzing the awareness of the respondents towards green products. The consumer's preference for green products may be impacted by the age of the consumers

Table 2 shows that 63.1 per cent of the total respondents belong to the age group 21-30 and 31.2 per cent belong to the age group 31-40. In the gender group of male 56.03 per cent belong to the age group of 31-40 and 37.68 per cent belong to 21-30 age group. In case of female 88.09 per cent belong to 21-30 age groups.

From this it is understood that the majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 21-40. The special feature is 88.09 per cent of the female respondents are youngsters in the age group of 21-30.

TABLE 2 AGE AND CONSUMER AWARENESS

Age	Consumer Awareness		Total	χ^2	P. Value
	Male	Female			
Upto 20	3 (1.44)	2 (0.95)	5 (1.2)	124.615*	.000
21-30	78 (37.68)	185 (88.09)	263 (63.1)		
31-40	116 (56.03)	14 (6.66)	130 (31.2)		
41-50	4 (1.93)	4 (1.9)	8 (1.9)		
51-60	2 (0.96)	3 (1.44)	5 (1.2)		
Above 60	4 (1.93)	2 (0.96)	6 (1.4)		
Total	207 (100)	210 (100)	417 (100)		

Note: Data in parenthesis is percentage

Source: Primary Data

***Significant at 5% level**

Chi-square test for goodness of fit has been carried out to find out the impact of age on respondents awareness towards green products. The result shows that the chi-square value is significant at 5 per cent level. So it can be inferred that age has significant influence on the awareness level of respondents towards green products.

2.2 Educational Qualification and Consumer Awareness

Education gives knowledge to understand the concept of green products and an insight to understand green attributes. Therefore, educational qualification of the respondents is considered as an important factor to analyze their awareness towards green products.

TABLE 3 EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION AND CONSUMER AWARENESS

Educational Qualification	Consumer Awareness		Total	χ^2	P. Value
	Male	Female			
Up to Higher Secondary Level	2 (0.95)	6 (2.85)	8 (1.9)	9.374*	.042
Graduate	12 (5.79)	14 (6.66)	26 (6.2)		
Post graduate	152 (73.42)	128 (60.95)	280 (67.1)		

Professionals	37 (17.87)	59 (28.09)	96 (23)
Others	4 (1.93)	3 (1.42)	7 (1.7)
Total	207 (100)	210 (100)	417 (100)

Note: Data in parenthesis is percentage

Source: Primary Data

***Significant at 5% level**

Table 3 reveals that 67.1 per cent of the respondents are post graduates and 23 per cent are professionals. In the gender group of male 73.42 per cent are post graduate and 17.87 per cent are professionals. In the female group 60.95 per cent are post graduate and 28.09 per cent are professionals. The result clearly shows that the respondents selected for the study are highly educated.

To understand the impact of educational qualification on consumer awareness towards green products chi-square (χ^2) technique is applied. The results shows that at 5 per cent significant level, the demographic factor educational qualification influences the respondents' awareness towards the purchase of green products.

2.3 Marital Status and Consumer Awareness

Marital status increases the responsibility of a person and thus it may help the respondents to understand the importance of purchasing green products.

TABLE 4 MARITAL STATUS AND CONSUMER AWARENESS

Marital Status	Consumer Awareness		Total	χ^2	P. Value
	Male	Female			
Married	162 (78.26)	78 (37.14)	240 (57.6)	72.145*	.000
Unmarried	45 (21.73)	132 (62.85)	177 (42.4)		
Total	207 (100)	210 (100)	417 (100)		

Note: Data in parenthesis is percentage

Source: Primary Data

***Significant at 5% level**

Table 4 shows that 57.6 per cent of the respondents are married and 42.4 percent are unmarried. In the male group 78.26 percent are married and the remaining 21.73 per cent are unmarried. But the female group shows just the opposite that is 62.85 percent are unmarried and the rest are married. It is interesting to note that the majority of the men respondents are married whereas the majority of the female respondents are unmarried.

The chi-square test applied to find out the degree of association between marital status and respondent's awareness shows that, there is significant association between the above said two factors at 5 per cent significant level. It is proved that marital status influence consumer awareness towards green products.

2.4 Employment and Consumer Awareness

Since the economic status of a person is determined by his employment, it is important to analyze the impact of the nature of employment on the consumer awareness towards green products. Employment gives financial security and helps the respondents to spend extra money on green products.

TABLE 5 EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AWARENESS

Employment	Consumer Awareness		Total	χ^2	P. Value
	Male	Female			
Private employees	151 (72.94)	69 (32.85)	220 (52.8)	76.618*	.000
Govt. employees	8 (3.86)	6 (2.85)	14 (3.4)		
Business	2 (0.96)	2 (0.95)	4 (1)		
Service	23 (11.11)	90 (42.85)	113 (27.1)		
Others	23 (11.11)	43 (20.47)	66 (15.8)		
Total	207 (100)	210 (100)	417 (100)		

Note: Data in parenthesis is percentage

Source: Primary Data

***Significant at 5% level**

It is understood from table 5 that 52.8 percent of the respondents are private employees and 27.1 percent of them are service providers. In the male group 72.94 percent are private employees and 11.11 percent are service providers. In case of female respondents 42.85 percent are in the field of service and 32.85 percent are private employees. It means most of the employees are engaged in private organisations and service field.

The chi-square test is applied to find out the association between employment and consumer awareness towards green products. The result shows that at 5 per cent level of significance, the employment of the respondents influences their awareness level towards green products.

4.2.5 Monthly Income and Consumer Awareness

Income is an important factor that decides the purchasing power of a person. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the impact of income of respondents on their awareness towards green products. Extra money gives them space to buy green products.

TABLE 6 MONTHLY INCOME AND CONSUMER AWARENESS

Monthly income	Consumer Awareness		Total	χ^2	P. Value
	Male	Female			
Up to 20,000	1 (0.48)	3 (1.42)	4 (1)	67.188*	.000
21,000-30,000	152 (73.42)	74 (35.23)	226 (54.2)		
31,000-40,000	7 (3.38)	11 (5.23)	18 (4.3)		
41,000-50,000	27 (13.04)	44 (20.95)	71 (17)		
Above 50,000	20 (9.66)	78 (37.14)	98 (23.5)		
Total	207 (100)	210 (100)	417 (100)		

Note: Data in parenthesis is percentage

Source: Primary Data

***Significant at 5% level**

It is known from the table 4.6 that 54.2 per cent of the respondents belong to the income group of 21,000-30,000 and 24 per cent have income above 50,000. In the male group 73.42 percent have income between 21,000-30,000 and 13.04 percent have income between 41,000-50,000. The female group data shows 37.14 percent have income above 50,000 and 35.23 per cent earn between 21,000-30,000. The average monthly income of the respondents selected for the study is 38,094.

In order to understand the impact of monthly income on consumer awareness towards green products, chi-square (χ^2) technique is applied. The results show that at 5 per cent significant level, the demographic factor monthly income influences the respondents' awareness towards the purchase of green products.

III. CONSUMER AWARENESS

In order to study the attitude of respondents towards green products it is necessary to understand, how far a respondent is aware of environment, the concept of green product and its attributes. Whether a consumer is aware of the need to buy green products, to save the environment or not is essential to study the consumer's willingness to buy green products. In order to analyze, the respondents were asked to register their opinion regarding the extent of damages caused to environment by certain common issues.

3.1 Awareness towards the Causes of Damage

The damage to the environment is caused by many reasons such as usage of plastics, cutting down of trees, pesticides, chemical wastage, e-wastage, unbranded products and urbanization which are listed below.

TABLE 7 AWARENESS TOWARDS THE CAUSES OF DAMAGE

Sl. No.	Causes of damage	Male		Female		Overall	
		Mean score	Rank	Mean score	Rank	Mean score	Rank
1.	Usage of Plastics	4.45	III	4.95	I	4.70	I
2.	Pesticides (Insecticides)	4.75	I	4.34	IV	4.55	II
3.	Chemical wastage	4.71	II	4.31	V	4.51	III
4.	Cutting down trees	4.35	IV	4.53	II	4.44	IV
5.	E-wastage	4.34	V	4.03	VII	4.29	V
6.	Unbranded products	3.97	VI	4.18	VI	4.07	VI
7.	Urbanisation	3.58	VII	4.38	III	3.98	VII

Source: Primary Data

***Significant at 5% level**

Table 7 shows the extent of awareness that the respondents have on factors which damaged environment. The mean score shows usage of plastics (4.70), pesticides (4.55) and chemical wastage (4.51) are the main three causes for the damage to the environment. According to female respondents, usage of plastics (4.95), cutting down of trees (4.53) and urbanization (4.38) are the top three ranked reasons that cause damage to the environment. The male respondents are of the opinion that pesticides (4.75), chemical wastage (4.71) and usage of plastics (4.45) are the top three reasons for environment damage. This analysis shows that the respondents are of the opinion that using plastics is the main reason for the environment damage.

3.2 Awareness towards Consequence of Environment Degradation

When the damage is done to the environment due to the life style of consumers, it results in many harmful things such as global warming, climate change, destruction of ozone, hazardous waste, contamination of drinking water, health problem to human beings,

acid rain, endangered species, scarcity of rain, reduction of natural resources and toxic substances in the environment. The following table shows the respondents opinion on the consequences of environment degradation.

TABLE 8 AWARENESS TOWARDS CONSEQUENCE OF ENVIRONMENT DEGRADATION

Sl. No.	Consequences of environment degradation	Male		Female		Overall	
		Mean score	Rank	Mean score	Rank	Mean score	Rank
1.	Global warming	4.12	I	4.43	I	4.28	I
2.	Climate change	4.07	II	4.40	II	4.24	II
3.	Destruction of ozone	4.06	III	4.39	III	4.22	III
4.	Hazardous waste	4.03	IV	4.00	IV	4.01	IV
5.	Contamination of drinking water	3.44	VII	3.97	V	3.71	V
6.	Health problem to human beings	3.45	VI	3.95	VI	3.70	VI
7.	Acid rain	3.33	VIII	3.55	VIII	3.44	IX
8.	Endangered species	3.59	V	3.32	IX	3.46	VIII
9.	Scarcity of rain	3.18	X	3.28	X	3.23	X
10.	Reduction of natural resources	3.26	IX	3.90	VII	3.58	VII
11.	Toxic substances in the environment	2.91	XI	3.02	XI	2.96	XI

Source: Primary Data

*Significant at 5% level

Table 8 lists the main consequences of environment degradation and how the respondents rank them on the basis of mean score. The overall results shows that global warming (4.28), climate change (4.24) and destruction of ozone (4.22) are the top three ranked consequences of environment degradation. The interesting fact to be noted here is both the male and female respondents have the same opinion regarding the top three causes of economic degradation namely global warming, climate change and destruction of ozone.

3.3 Source of Awareness of Green Products

Now a days many sources are available through which a consumer gets information about the green products and their green attributes. The main sources available are internet, relatives, seminar and conference, friends, magazine and journals, books, newspaper, television, radio, awareness programs by NGOs, Private organisations and awareness programs conducted by government and education institutions. The following table analyzes the source through which the respondents got awareness of green products with the help of Garrett ranking technique.

TABLE 9 SOURCE OF AWARENESS OF GREEN PRODUCTS

Sl. No.	Awareness	Garrett Mean Score	Rank
1.	Newspaper, Television, Radio	51.24	I
2.	Friends	51.16	II
3.	Internet	51.11	III
4.	Awareness programmes by Government	50.85	IV
5.	Seminar and conference	49.94	V
6.	Relatives	49.78	VI

7.	Magazine & Journals	49.53	VII
8.	Awareness programmers by NGOs, Private organizations	49.62	VIII
9.	Awareness programmers conducted by education institutions	49.04	IX
10.	Books	48.57	X

Source: Primary Data

Table 9 shows the results of analysis of the sources of awareness of green products. It is found out that newspaper, television, radio (51.24), friends (51.16) and internet (51.11) are the top three ranked sources through which respondents got information on green products. The result also shows that the least important sources of awareness are educational institutions.

IV. CONCLUSION

This chapter analyses the demographic profile of the sample respondents in the study area and its impact on the awareness level of the respondents on green products and its green attributes. It also brings out, to what extent the respondents are aware of causes of damage done to the environment and the consequence of environment degradation. It also throws light on the ways of identifying green products attributes and the impact of gender on it. It also gives an idea about the sources through which the respondent gets information regarding the green products. Thus this chapter gives an overall insight into the awareness level of the respondents on the green product and its green product attributes.

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