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Eco-Conscious Consumerism in Urban India: An Analytical Study of Attitude and Behavior Towards Green Marketing in Nagpur

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate and comprehend less popular and more advantageous side of the concept of eco-conscious consumption behaviour of the consumers living in the urban areas and their attitude towards green marketing in the context of Nagpur city within India. Consumer awareness of sustainable consumption, escalating concerns of our environment, and access to eco friendly products have made an impact on how consumers are making their buying decisions. The study aims to assess green marketing consumer knowledge level, identify factors affecting consumers' purchasing intentions for green goods and analyse the association between consumers' attitudes and their purchasing behaviour. This Primary data was collected by using a structured questionnaire among the urban consumers of Nagpur and Secondary data was collected from the books, journals and published reports. The descriptive data were analyzed and a correlation/regression analysis used to deal with the correlative data. The results show that with the exception of price sensitivity, environmental awareness, product quality, the use of eco-labels and social influence have a positive impact on the willingness to buy green products. The research provides insights that will enable the marketers, policymakers and business to incorporate environmental responsibility and sustainable consumption issues into environmentally sound marketing strategies.

Keywords: Green Marketing, Eco-Conscious Consumerism, Consumer Attitude, Buying Behavior, Sustainable Consumption, Nagpur City.

Introduction

People's concerns over the environment have changed worldwide consumers' attitudes, and as a result, a set of new attitudes called eco-conscious consumerism are emerging. As consumers begin to understand the linkages between their purchasing decisions and the environment – and the threats of climate change, pollution, resource depletion and waste generation that will continue to loom over our ecological balance will increase, so will be the opportunities to discuss environmental impacts. Chances increase to discuss the impacts of the environment as increasing environmental degradation, climate change, pollution and waste generation pose threats to ecological balance. This change has spurred businesses to become Eco-friendly and to promote their products or services as Eco friendly. Today, green marketing has evolved as a strategic choice with embedding of values that support the environment in the design, development, packaging, distribution and promotion of products. It's not merely about keeping up with the demand for sustainable products; it is about developing a responsible corporate image and assisting us in conserving the natural world as well. With the advent of rapid urbanization, industrialization and rising disposable incomes in developing countries, like India, it has become an important field of interest in the context of Green marketing. Consumers living in urban areas are increasingly demanding a product with organic, reusable, energy efficient, biodegradable and sustainable production parameters; especially those who are educated and caring about the environment. Despite rising awareness, however, uptake of green products is not widespread, with factors such as high price, limited number of distributors, consumers' lack of trust in the environmental claims, and a lack of information available to consumers all playing a part.

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In the past ten years, the attitude of the public towards sustainability has changed in India. The citizens are well-versed in the importance of environment as they have seen in the recent era through the implementation of various programmes and initiatives by the government such as Swachh Bharat Mission, National Action Plan on Climate Change, Plastic Waste Management Rules, Energy Conservation programmes etc. and to ensure the core of the era has shifted towards the production of renewable energy. Meanwhile, today a slew of cradle-to-cradle products have hit the market from industrial giants in diverse fields from fast moving consumer goods to automobiles and electronics, clothing and retail outlets. In today's tough market it's catching on more and more that eco certification and the more environmentally friendly packaging will become more visible – as well as responsible sourcing and other measures which reduce carbon footprints. Users' admiration for digital media and social networks has also helped to raise awareness of environmental issues, as it's possible to disseminate information on sustainable products and companies behavior regarding the environment. Consumers are becoming more aware and better informed, and they are more and more making their purchases on environmental and stewardship principles and other factors—quality, price, reputation of the company.

This process of green marketing has gone beyond the mere act of selling a product, it's become an entire business ethos focusing upon sustainable production and responsible consumption. It encompasses the introduction of products that have no negative environmental impacts; manufacturing with 'green' methods; minimising waste; the efficient use of natural resources and transparency regarding environmental outcomes. Through good green marketing, an organization can build customer loyalty, boost their brand value, gain better competitive edge as well as meet environmental laws. Consumers' perceptions, attitudes, trust and willingness to buy environment friendly products are crucial in successful green marketing, however. The attitude-behaviour gap, or "gap between attitudes and behaviour", happens when many consumers have actual positive attitudes for protecting the environment but are not willing to make behavioural changes that align with those attitudes when it comes to their purchases, the researchers report. This gap needs to be understood in order to create effective marketing strategies for promoting sustainable consumption.

One such prime fastest growing city of Maharashtra is Nagpur, the right place to study on the eco-conscious consumerism. Nagpur is a major commercial, educational and an industrial city with immense industrial development, urbanization, growing retail space, and growing awareness among the people about the environment. The population of the city is very diverse, encompassing different socio-economic characteristics and purchase preferences of the students, professionals, as well as entrepreneurs, government officials and business owners. The consumer can now access green products with ease at supermarkets, shopping malls, organic stores and online, in the latter case, via e-commerce. Also, air pollution, waste management, plastic use and climate change are things that began to become prominent in this city and have encouraged its consumers to become more sustainable. Despite these activities little empirical evidence exists about Nagpur consumers' knowledge and understanding of green market concepts, their level of trust in green product claims and their shift towards buying green products with the environmental considerations.

Consumers' attitude to green purchasing can be an important influencing variable in GBP. Consumers may also show preference for products which are recyclable, efficient in energy use, biodegradable and environmentally friendly, often as a result of positive environmental attitudes. Additionally, age, gender, education, income and occupation as well as lifestyle, environmental concern, perceived consumer power / effectiveness, social norms and eco-labels awareness are amongst the demographic and psychological factors influencing purchase

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decisions. Marketing variables such as product quality, price, packaging, consumer perception of the brands/brand credibility, promotional message, product channel etc. also affect consumer behaviour. Hence, these factors should be taken into consideration thoroughly to formulate green marketing strategies and promote the use of green products.

This research study, entitled 'Eco-Conscious Consumerism in Nagpur: Analytical Study of Attitude and Behavior towards Green Marketing' aims to explore the level of environmental consciousness among the urban consumers and to determine their attitudes towards green marketing and to find the factors influencing their green purchasing attitude and behaviour and to analyze the relationship between attitude and buying decisions. The study also examines the consumer barriers to the fulfilment of their positive environmental goals on purchasing environmental products. The study employs proper statistical methodology to acquire the first data from consumers about Nagpur and also some empirical inferences about the current situation of green consumers have been collected. The results will be useful for the existing knowledge of sustainable marketing, and give hints for practical recommendations for marketers, policymakers, manufacturers and environmental organizations. In general, the study achieve the overall objective of recommending "sustainable consumption practices" as an effective action, and strengthen the sustainability efforts in the environmental protection, corporate responsibility and sustainable development campaigns using "green marketing" in urban India for sustainable long term solutions.

Literature Review

In the wake of increasing awareness of the environment and shifting attitudes of consumers, the idea of green marketing and consumer eco-consciousness has begun to receive more attention in the research field. Consumer knowledge/awareness, attitudes, purchase intention, willingness to pay and organizational efforts towards nongratings have been previous studied. The salient findings of the previous studies, relevant to the present study have been summarized.

Patel Maneesha, Patel Raj and Raina Namita (2013) have studied the factors underlying consumer consumption from a view of eco-friendly perspective, which will focus on the cognitive process of the consumer behavior on the consumption of eco-friendly products. Their study revealed that consumers' attitude generation towards green products positively related with the environmental awareness and education. Based on the consumers' findings, they expressed their awareness of the sustainability and they are ready to buy green products even though the pricing and availability of these products are low.

Kawaitkar Suresh [2013] has done in-depth study about the impact of eco friendly products on buying behaviour. The study demonstrated that environmental concern has become a relevant one on purchase decisions, particularly the highly educated consumers. Based on the result of the research Related to the Aspect of Purchase; it is showed that green products attributes could be having positive influence are Biodegradability, Recyclability and Environment Safety. It also recommended that successful promotion is vital and awareness raising campaigns amongst consumers needed to step up to ensure that green products are bought.

S. Gupta, Abbas S. In the study carried out by (2013) had taken issue on Green marketing and attitude of the consumers towards green behavior in India. They discovered people of India showed a positive attitude towards products which will help setting the environment but still they were affected by several factors such as product quality, cost, brand perception, environmental awareness and so on before buying these products. The authors found it to be necessary to define plausible green marketing activities and existence of genuine environmental labelling to increase consumer trust and market receptivity.

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A study by Joshi Nitin and Mishra D.P. Welingkar (2011) on Consumer Awareness on Environmentally Friendly cars, with special reference to Maharashtra has revealed lack of consumer awareness about the environmentally friendly cars. The results showed that consumers' perception of the advantages of using fuel-efficient and low emission vehicles was rising. However, green cars were an expensive purchase and there had been a lack of awareness of green tech. The study emphasized that consumers' awareness and affordability are important, in order to be achieved by the government's awareness and manufacturers' initiatives.

Mahesh D.N., Ganapathi D.R. (2012) studied the factors affecting consumers' buying behaviour of green products. Product quality, social influence, environmental concern, environmental knowledge, and perceived consumer effectiveness were the factors identified in their research that were to influence green purchasing intentions. The researchers concluded that marketers have to educate their consumers and make their product more approachable to aid in the promotion of their conscious buying.

Tanushree Bhowmick (2011) also studied consumer behaviour towards green marketing, and observed that there was slowly a conscious consumer towards green marketing across various groups. The research revealed that the consumers would appreciate value in the sustainable products, but were not willing to spend for the increased price costs, and product performance uncertainty. The author recommended to provide consumers with more education and reasonable credible certifications to diminish the gap between consumers' positive attitude and their purchasing behavior.

Morel M., Kwakye F. Two primary variables were studied in detail, first attitudes towards eco-friendly products and second buying intentions of the consumers towards the same products in Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector for the two variables (Makki, 2012). The results showed that there was a significant positive correlation between the cultural attitudes and purchase intentions. Consumers who have greater environmental awareness were more likely to buy the FMCGs which are eco-friendly products. In addition, the author highlighted the importance of proper communication, Green Packaging and Eco-Labels in Consumer decision Making.

Bhattacharya S. Ananthanarayana Reddy & K. Maroju (2011) conducted a study on the attitude of the consumers towards green marketing in India. The overall findings of the study show that the majority of Indians are positive with regards to being business responsible and hence, positive towards the introduction of green products. However, consumers' trust in the sustainability information and their knowledge of different certifications had a negative effect on the overall purchasing intention for environmentally sustainable products. For building consumers' trust, it encouraged consumers to do green marketing which aimed at being real and transparent, the author highlighted it.

Garg Swasti (2014) studied green marketing strategies adopted by the Indian companies. One of the major findings of the study was that a considerable number of firms were promoting their environmental sustainability initiatives as part of their marketing strategies, including promoting eco-friendly packaging, optimizing their energy usage processes, reducing waste and promoting corporate social responsibility (CSR). The research showed that if organizations are to be sustainable, they may stand to gain competitive value and support their brand and because they would remain in favor for those who buy them, they become more loyal.

Singh Namrata (2013) has indicated that the Indian customers are willing to pay a premium price towards eco-friendly products. It was recognised that there was a ready to pay consumer segment for Eco-products, although some consumer parameters were found to affect this readiness to pay, including income, Environmental awareness, product quality, and ability to

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trust in the claims of the products. Raising awareness and showing consumers the positive environmental impacts of buying green products offered another possible way to help them become more accepting of green products, according to the research.

The consensus on the reviewed studies was that consumer attitude, social influences and trust in environmental claims, product quality, and environmental awareness have a significant impact on green purchasing behavior. Most consumers have a positive attitude toward buying environmentally friendly products but encountered several barriers such as price, lack of detailed information, inaccessibility and mistrust toward green information prevent consumers from buying eco-friendly products. Past research also has highlighted the growing relevance of corporate sustainability programmes and eco-friendly marketing in consumers' eco-friendly consumption. However there is need of some empirical study which can be location specific to understand the urban consumers' behavior in a growing urban town like Nagpur in India. So the present Study is focused on that rural consumers attitude and behavior towards green marketing in Nagpur, which was not touched upon by the previous studies, but there is an endeavour to understand the study about eco conscious consumers in the rural environment in India.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the level of awareness and attitudes of urban consumers towards green marketing and eco-friendly products in Nagpur City.
2. To identify the factors influencing consumers' purchasing behavior and willingness to buy green products in Nagpur City.
3. To analyze the relationship between consumers' environmental attitudes and their actual green purchasing behavior towards eco-friendly products.

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is **no significant relationship** between consumers' environmental attitudes and their actual green purchasing behavior towards eco-friendly products.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a **significant relationship** between consumers' environmental attitudes and their actual green purchasing behavior towards eco-friendly products.

Research Methodology

This research work is descriptive, in nature and analytical to study eco-conscious consumerism and analyse the attitude and behaviour of consumers regarding green marketing in Nagpur city. The research is identified to find out the level of awareness, attitude and purchasing tendency of the urban consumers with regards the usage of the eco-friendly product and the determining factors which could influence the conscious realization of the green purchasing. All the areas of the primary and secondary sources were employed to achieve the research aims of the research. Data were gathered with a structured question with demographic questions and statements rated on a five scale Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree; primary data were obtained. The purpose of the questionnaire was to find out about the consumers' awareness and attitude towards the environment, their buying behaviour and influencing factors towards green product usage. Secondary data were collected from various books, research journals, government publications, conference proceedings, newspapers and approved online resources pertaining to green marketing, sustainable consumption, and consumer behavior. The study has been conducted with the urban consumers of Nagpur city based on various factors like age, sex, education, occupation and income etc. group them in various groups. The sample size was 400 respondents chosen to match the sampling method—convenience sampling, depending on the availability and willingness of the respondents to

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participate in the survey. The questionnaire underwent a preliminary test to ensure that the measurement items are clear, reliable, and relevant in conducting the primary study. The data gathered were coded, tabulated and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistical Tools such as Frequency distribution, Percentage analysis, Mean and S.D. were applied and summarized to summarize the demographic characteristics and the reaction of the consumers. Pearson's correlation analysis and Simple linear regression analysis were used to test the research hypotheses, to check the correlation of the variables and to check the relations between variables. Data collected were analysed and interpreted in the context of the objectives of the study and literature. It is a methodological approach which is systematic and empirical and gives a good understanding of eco conscious consumers' behavior and meaningful insights to understand the effectiveness of green marketing practices among the urban consumers in Nagpur City.

Table: Descriptive Statistics of Environmental Attitudes and Green Purchasing Behavior (N = 400)

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Environmental Attitude	400	1.80	5.00	4.18	0.56
Green Purchasing Behavior	400	1.60	5.00	4.05	0.61

Interpretation

The numbers of descriptive statistics indicate that there are 400 people that have been included into the study. The overall mean value for Environmental Attitude (EA) (SD = 0.56) points to a high and positive overall level of attitude towards environmental protection and sustainability among the respondents in general. Also, the average score of Green Purchasing Behavior is 4.05 (SD = 0.61), each consumer was found purchasing green products very often. Opinions expressed by the respondents do not differ very much, as demonstrated by their relatively low RSDs. Overall, the result indicates that the environmental attitudes and buying attitude towards green products are positive among all the consumers present in urban areas in Nagpur which would imply toward further analysis of the correlation between environmental attitude and buying attitude of green products among them with the help of Pearson's correlation analysis.

Correlations

Variables	Environmental Attitude	Green Purchasing Behavior
Environmental Attitude	1	.742**
Sig. (2-tailed)	—	.000
N	400	400
Green Purchasing Behavior	.742**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	—
N	400	400

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Interpretation

A Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation was performed to assess the correlation between the attitudes of the consumers with respect to their green purchasing behavior. The results show that there is a high positive correlation between the two variables (with $r = 0.742$ and $p = 0.000$, $N = 400$). The p value of <0.01 and less than the desired value of 0.05, indicates that the relationship is statistically significant. Here the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternate (H_1) is accepted. This is important finding, because individuals who are concerned with the

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environment at high levels are much more likely to take various actions in order to make an environmentally conscious purchase. The increasing awareness about environment and positive attitude towards the environment have now made urban consumers of Nagpur more inclined towards the sustainable products. This indicates that there is a significant role of environmental attitudes in green consumption.

Overall Conclusion

The present study, 'Eco-Conscious Consumerism in Urban India: Analytical Study on Awareness, Attitude and Buying Behavior of Urban Consumers towards Green Marketing and Eco-friendly Products' has examined the awareness and attitude level of urban consumers with the purchase of the eco-friendly products in Nagpur city. Environmental issues are becoming more and more prevalent in society and it has become vital to have sustainable consumption as part of responsible consumption. The study is an instrumentarian to guide their insight towards their choices from their awareness on environment and also points out the importance of green marketing in relation to urban consumers of India for the upcoming years.

The findings demonstrate that the consumers in Nagpur area have good level of environmental awareness as their knowledge about green products is good. This overall positive sentiment, which is common across the respondents, has been reflected towards preserving the environment, sustainable consumption and utilization of green products. Many customers realised that purchasing a more environmentally friendly product which helps to minimise pollution, conserve natural resources and promote sustainable development. It does imply that urban consumers have been taken aback when it comes to shopping with a concern for the environment.

The study also identified some impacts that can greatly influence the purchasing decision behavior of the green purchasing firm. The quality of the product, environmental benefits, eco-label, brand that is credible and social influence positively influence the consumer's desire to buy the green product. Consumers are now more common in selecting a product with a recycling mark, which is also biodegradable, less energy-intensive, and made using sustainable processes. Simultaneously, the study highlighted price sensitivity, availability of limited products, lack of knowledge about the product among the consumers and doubts about promotion as 'green marketing' as the significant barriers which hinder consumers to purchase ecofriendly products regularly. This suggests that consumers are pro-ecological, but their attitudes don't correspond to their actual purchases (due to a lack of information and/or economic considerations they still see are important).

The hypothesis testing was conducted by Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Analysis which are revealed to be the strong positive correlation for actual consumer environment purchasing behaviour which is statistically significant. The t-test provided evidence for a positive correlation between the dimension of environmental concern and people's shopping for ecological goods. The significance value was less than 5 per cent and it was felt that the null hypothesis would be rejected and the alternative hypothesis would be accepted. This empirical evidence supports and substantiates the conjecture that green purchasing behavior is an outcome of positive environmental attitudes as potentially salient predictor variables.

It also stresses the need for green marketing for promoting sustainable consumption. Employing good quality environmental products, communicating the environmental benefits and building consumer confidence in environmental claims can be one way a business can build up more trust and consumer loyalty. The concept of green marketing, however, should not be limited solely to marketing, but should be incorporated into the product development, manufacturing of product, product design and packaging, distribution process and company's



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sustainability plans. If it's a practice, some long-term competitive advantage is likely to be seen in the organization if they implement environmentally responsible practices.

On a policy level, the study's results highlight the importance of increasing awareness campaigns and environmental education for the government bodies, institutions and environmental groups. Promotion of eco-labels and eco-friendly production, coupled with improving waste management (and incentives for eco-friendly businesses) will have the potential to further contribute to consumers purchasing more eco-products. Working together between policy makers and businesses is critical to establish a sustainable consumption and responsible production ecosystem.

The findings from the study suggest that the level of eco-consciousness of consumers of urban areas is increasing and is on the rise in Nagpur. The benefits on purchase intention of environmental attitudes have been proved, but some barriers related to increased availability of green products and costs are still standing as barriers in practice. This can help embed confidence and promote eco-friendly consumer buying behaviour by addressing the barriers and practicing effective green marketing strategies. The research yields good insights that complement the existing literature on green marketing concepts and consumer attitudes, providing some useful cues for marketers, policy makers, research and green organizations. In the ultimate, educating about "Eco-conscious Consumerism" will benefit business in its customers' loyalty, its advantages, more competitive, gaining more benefits to nature, sustainable economic development and much better, much better quality of life to future generations.

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