

Strategic Options for Promoting Green Practices in Coimbatore City

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ABSTRACT

The environmental consciousness in India has been diverted the population to think about better products that are not harmful to environment. The marketers grabbed the opportunity to convince the consumers to go behind green. Industries have well focused on their green product developments. Though the opinion of respondents towards the green products differ, positive approach is found among business men, senior citizens and home makers towards adopting green practices. But, most of these consumers felt that the green marketing strategies are not effective. This article lists out the strategic options such as practical applicability of green values by individual and government, Use of comprehensive terminologies, effective application of green marketing strategies, and High quality products at considerable price, adoption of appropriate quality standards, easy accessibility and Package of green products for promoting green practices.

1. Introduction

The growing awareness and interest of consumers effect a change in the marketplace through the introduction of more green products. To the Indian marketers, green marketing is a recent concept. Initially people were induced to buy products due to industrialization. The environmental consciousness in India has been diverted the population to think about better products that are not harmful to environment. The marketers grabbed the opportunity to convince the consumers to go behind green. Industries have well focused on their green product developments. Green marketing of products is environmentally safe. These products are designed to reduce harmful effects on the physical environment. Ecological concerns have been developed among the producing and marketing institutions in the aspects of production, promotion and packaging.

2. Need for the Study

The prevailing environmental issues and their impact brought about a change in the behaviour of consumers. Consumers search for products that are environment friendly. The attitudinal change among consumers brought about the emergence of green marketing. It is complex to define the term 'green' in 'green products', as it is a relative term that describes products with less impact on the environment than their alternatives. According to industrial perspective, a green product is a product which respects "3 R" – "Reduce", "Reuse" and "Recycle". Biodegradability is also a main component of a green product.

Green washing is the practice of making a misleading claim about the environmental benefits of a product, service, and technology or company practice. The consumer's reliability and trust on green products is shaken by the practice of green washing that is used by firms to differentiate their products from

their competitors. Therefore, more strategic options are needed for promoting these marketing practices.

3. Research Methodology

The present study is an analytical study, as the outcome of the study focuses on measuring the exposure of green consumers in Coimbatore city. Both primary and secondary data have been collected. Interview of consumers are conducted with the help of schedules. Among the non probability sampling methods of the social science research, quota sampling has been used for the study. There are five types of respondents have been chosen for the study viz., Students, employees, business men / women, home maker and senior citizens in the ratio of 20:40:25:10:5 by determining the total sample size of 300.

4. View of Respondents towards the Term "Green Products"

As the study focuses on the purchase behaviour of consumers towards green products, it becomes necessary to know what comes to the minds of the respondents by the term "green products". Analysis is made on this aspect in order to bring out the understanding of consumers about the term "green products".

Table - 1
View of Respondents towards the Term "Green Products"

View	Frequency	Percent
Organic products	66	22.0
Bio-degradable products & processes	91	30.3
Recyclable products	13	4.3
Products without harmful chemicals	78	26.0

All of these	52	17.3
Total	300	100.0

The above table portrays the views of the respondents towards the term green products. 30.3 percent of the respondents opined that the green products are biodegradable. 26 percent of them viewed that these products are

free from harmful chemicals. Some of the respondents related the term green products with organic products (22 percent) and recyclable products (4.3 percent). Rests of them (17.3 percent) have tried to understand the term green products by indicating various features of the products. The perception of respondents on green products is analyzed using Mean score analysis, One-sample 't' test and ANOVA.

Table - 2
Perception of Consumers toward the Usage of Green Products

Variables		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Feels good about buying green products	Students	60	1.08	.850	.110	.86	1.30
	Employees	120	1.38	.537	.049	1.29	1.48
	Businessmen/women	75	1.48	.578	.067	1.35	1.61
	Home maker	30	1.43	.679	.124	1.18	1.69
	Senior citizens	15	1.47	.516	.133	1.18	1.75
	Total	300	1.36	.646	.037	1.28	1.43
Finds it easy to recognize green products	Students	60	.32	.983	.127	.06	.57
	Employees	120	1.02	.879	.080	.86	1.18
	Businessmen/women	75	.80	1.103	.127	.55	1.05
	Home maker	30	1.17	1.206	.220	.72	1.62
	Senior citizens	15	-.07	1.335	.345	-.81	.67
	Total	300	.78	1.068	.062	.66	.90
Feels that green products perform well	Students	60	1.20	.708	.091	1.02	1.38
	Employees	120	1.08	.528	.048	.99	1.18
	Businessmen/women	75	.56	1.307	.151	.26	.86
	Home maker	30	1.23	.898	.164	.90	1.57
	Senior citizens	15	.93	.458	.118	.68	1.19
	Total	300	.98	.886	.051	.88	1.08
Prefers green products from personal experience	Students	60	.87	.999	.129	.61	1.12
	Employees	120	1.27	.604	.055	1.16	1.38
	Businessmen/women	75	1.20	.637	.074	1.05	1.35
	Home maker	30	1.40	.621	.113	1.17	1.63
	Senior citizens	15	1.27	.458	.118	1.01	1.52
	Total	300	1.18	.720	.042	1.10	1.27
Feels that marketing of green products are not effective	Students	60	.45	1.227	.158	.13	.77
	Employees	120	1.38	.536	.049	1.28	1.47
	Businessmen/women	75	1.20	.697	.081	1.04	1.36
	Home maker	30	1.33	.758	.138	1.05	1.62
	Senior citizens	15	.73	.594	.153	.40	1.06
	Total	300	1.11	.857	.049	1.01	1.21

The mean score analysis revealed that businessmen/women scored high mean score (1.48) showing that they felt good about buying green products. Subsequent mean score was obtained by Senior citizens (1.47). Home makers scored high mean score (1.17) revealing that they

could easily recognize green products, whereas Senior citizens found it difficult to recognize green products which was

indicated by negative mean score (-0.7). Home makers perceived that green products performed well and they preferred green products from their own experiences. Employees felt that green products were not effectively marketed.

Table - 3
One-Sample 'T' Test for Perception on Green Products

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig.
I feel good about buying green products	1.36	0.646	-44.050	.000
It is easy for me to recognise green products	0.78	1.068	-35.956	.000
I feel that green products perform well	0.98	0.886	-39.407	.000
I prefer green products from my own experience	1.18	0.720	-43.714	.000
I feel that marketing of green products are not effective	1.11	0.857	-38.218	.000

The result of One sample't' test for five variables on the perception of green products were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) at 5 percent level. The mean values revealed that consumers felt better while purchasing green products, they could recognize green products, they felt positive about the performance of green products, consumers preferred green products from their personal experiences and consumers felt that the strategies for marketing green products were not effective.

5. Benefits of Green Products

The green products rightly found as a remedy for environmental degradation serves many benefits. The study analyses the benefits of green products by using Chi-square test.

Table -4
Benefits of Green Products

Benefits	Mean Rank	Chi-square	Sig.
Healthy	3.27	40.399	.000
Taste natural / Fresh	2.89		
Eco-friendly	3.02		
High quality	2.91		
Reduce pollution	2.92		

The result of Friedman's Chi-Square test showed that there was a significant difference ($P < 0.05$) in the benefits derived from the usage of green products. The mean ranks revealed that healthy (3.27) aspect of green products obtained first rank in view of consumers. Environment friendly nature of green products were ranked second with the mean rank of 3.02, followed by reduce pollution (2.92), high quality (2.91) and taste natural / fresh (2.89).

6. Conclusion

Though the opinion of respondents towards the green products differ, positive approach is found among business men, senior citizens and home makers towards adopting green practices. But, most of these consumers felt that the green marketing strategies are not effective. Health benefits, preference of consumers and quality consciousness among consumers lead to chalk out innovative strategies for the widespread of green practices.

7. Strategic Options for Promoting Green Practices

The strategic options are given hereunder:

❖ Practical Applicability of Green Values by Individual and Government

People have knowledge about environment and they understand the importance of protecting the environment. But they fail to follow the practices that will protect the environment in the real time. Individual must come forward to take his/her own bags for shopping, failing which the super markets and grocery stores must provide paper bags or jute bags for cash in order to insist the importance of bringing their own bags for shopping. This practice should be carried out extensively.

Individual by himself must avoid the use of vehicles to go to nearby places. Self-regulation is needed in this regard. The practical applicability of disposing the wastes after separating it into bio-degradable and non bio-degradable wastes is recommended. Local governments such as municipality and panchayat must ensure the proper collection of segregated wastes. Individuals must help the local governments to carry out such measures extensively.

❖ Use of Comprehensive Terminologies

People find it difficult to coin a comprehensive term that denotes all the nature of green products such as organic product, product without chemicals, recyclable product, bio-degradable etc. Suitable comprehensive terminologies must be brought into practice in order to reach the green products to the consumers with more clarity.

❖ Effective Green Marketing Strategies

Consumers find that the green marketing strategies are not so effective. Their reliability on green products is still doubted. Transparency in following green practices should be evidently made known to the consumer. Marketing practices should be carried out in such a way that the consumer never fear about green washing. Marketers must ensure the consumer trust on green products by providing the exact same quality and purity at which the product was marketed. Consumer must be educated with the ways to differentiate an ordinary product with an organic product. Key natural ingredients should be highlighted and appropriate quality certifications should be obtained to make the consumer feel right about his choice of buying a green product. The consumer's primary need in purchasing the product should not be altered in projecting the product as green.

❖ High Quality at Considerable Price

Consumers go for green products keeping in mind about its quality and purity. So there should not be any compromise in terms of quality of the product. At the same time, price of green products must be fixed considering the price of the respective alternative ordinary product. It is acceptable to price green products higher than normal products, but the

percentage of increase in prices with respect to normal products must be considered. It should be made affordable to a normal intended customer.

❖ **Quality Standards**

In order to ensure the quality of the green products it becomes important to appropriately label and certify the products with green marks such as GreenPro, AGMARK, Ecomark, fssai, environmental labels of ISO 14020 series etc. It also becomes important to educate the consumers about such certifications and labels and insist them to look for such certification symbols on the packages of the products.

❖ **Ensure Easy Accessibility**

Generally consumers find it difficult to reach out for green products. Green products must be made

available in their locality at ease. Local ulavar sandais are to be set up and promoted extensively to ensure easy accessibility. Co-operative communities can be networked to connect wider areas and enhance accessibility.

❖ **Package of green products**

Reusable packages and bio-degradable packages should be given importance. The eco-friendly contents of the product must be clearly stated on the package with appropriate eco-labels and symbols. Awareness must be spread among public stating the importance of reading the contents on the package before buying the product. Manufacturing institutions and marketing agencies must come forward in initiating such changes. They are suggested to follow ethical norms while manufacturing and marketing the products.

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