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Green marketing awareness among Indian consumers: Insights from a consumer perspective

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Abstract

With the growing concern in the environment and consumer consciousness for eco-friendly products, green marketing has become an important business strategy. The present study aims to study the level of awareness about green marketing among the Indian consumers and analyse the effect of various demographic factors like gender and educational qualification on the level of awareness of consumers. The study seeks to gain insight into consumers' perceptions of environmentally sustainable products and organisation's environmental marketing activities. A total of 150 respondents were used in the study and were obtained using a structured questionnaire, and statistical analysis techniques used included percentage analysis and Chi-square test. The results show that there is a significant difference between the awareness of the green marketing of demographic groups. There is comparatively higher level of awareness about green marketing practices among male respondents and those with postgraduate degree. It is worth mentioning that the awareness of the environment in consumer behavior has increased and it is the responsibility of the businesses to follow the effective green marketing strategy. The aim of the research is to study the awareness level of green marketing among the consumers and the relationship between demographic variables and the level of awareness, and to make recommendations for increasing the awareness of green marketing among consumers and sustainable marketing activities. The study helps in advancing knowledge on consumer attitude towards sustainability in the Indian market.

Keywords: Green marketing, consumer awareness, eco-friendly products, sustainable marketing, consumer behavior, environmental consciousness and Indian consumers

Introduction

With the growing environmental degradation, environmental changes, pollution and depletion of natural resources, the concept of green marketing has emerged as one of the most important concepts of the modern business environment. Today's consumers are more aware of environmental protection and pick environmentally safe, recyclable, energy-saving and environmentally friendly products. As a result, organizations have started to adopt green marketing tactics to satisfy changing consumer needs, and to fulfill their social accountability to the environment. Green marketing is a marketing process which promotes products and services in a way that it is beneficial to the environment. It encompasses activities like eco-friendly production, sustainable packaging, recycling, reduction in carbon emissions and raising awareness among consumers on environmental conservation. Consumer awareness has stimulated the companies to develop green products, and apply sustainable marketing strategies in order to gain competitive advantage in the market. The idea of green marketing is rapidly gaining significance in India in these years, as a result of the accelerated industrialization, urbanization and the growing environmental concerns. Consumers are becoming increasingly conscious of the importance of sustainable consumption and want products that minimize the environment impacts. Food, detergent, car, electronics and retail companies are starting to market green products to these eco-conscious consumers. But consumers' awareness of green marketing is different according to the demographic, social and economic factors. Consumers' attitudes and awareness towards green products can be influenced by several factors including gender, educational qualification, age and income and occupation.

There should not be any doubt about the critical role of the consumer awareness in the achievement of greening marketing practices and how this awareness will influence consumer purchase decision and consumer acceptance of environmental friendly products. Well informed and well informed consumers are more aware of the benefits of green products, and more supportive of green businesses. Therefore, an examination of the awareness of the consumers towards green marketing and the factors affecting the consumers' awareness is important. It can be beneficial to have an understanding of consumer awareness by designing an effective promotional strategy and considering how to encourage consumers towards sustainable consumption.

The present study is an analysis of awareness level of the green marketing among the customers in India and the study is aimed at finding the correlation between the demographic variables and awareness level. The study offers to consumer an idea of what they consider as perceived green marketing and why it is necessary to increase environmental awareness for sustainable development. Consumers' awareness patterns offer the businesses and policy makers the insights for formulating strategies for the promotion of eco-friendly products and environmental sustainability in India.

Theoretical Background

The foundation of the concept of green marketing is the principles of sustainable development, which put forward the emphasis of sustainable development and its principle: "Do not do more harm now than will be done in the future". The theory of sustainable marketing states that companies need to consider the environment and social welfare when deciding about their business activity and production of profits. The concept of green marketing is to incorporate environmental considerations into the product design, production, packaging, promotion and distribution. The idea was first introduced in the late 20th century as the environmental issues of pollution, global warming, and depletion of resources became significant problems on a global scale. Since then, the concept of green marketing has come to be an important tool in the hands of organizations that want to sustain themselves and build a positive image of their organization for the long-run.

Some theories are found that explain the connection between consumer behavior and its environmental consciousness. The Theory of Planned Behavior states that attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control are the factors that influence consumers' purchase intentions. If individuals can have positive attitudes towards protecting the environment, then more are going to purchase green products. Similarly, Consumer Awareness Theory suggested that consumers' awareness of the environmental issues will affect their purchasing choice. When consumers know a brand is eco-friendly and that the company supports sustainable business, they will be more likely to embrace the brand.

The Stakeholder Theory also applies to green marketing. In this theory, in addition to shareholders, businesses are also held accountable to customers, employees, society and the environment. The aim of green marketing activities in companies is to satisfy the needs of its stakeholders, while reducing the environmental footprint of its marketing functions. Moreover, the Social Responsibility Theory emphasises that businesses must proactively help in

protecting the environment by engaging in ethical and sustainable efforts.

Another significant term which comes under the purview of green marketing is "green consumerism". Green consumers like to purchase products that are recyclable, biodegradable, energy efficient and environmentally friendly. Growth of green consumerism in India has been aided by the increase of EE, media and government initiatives. Environmental consumers are being targeted by the increasing use of eco-labeling, green packaging and environmental advertising by companies.

Awareness is considered as one of the significant factors affecting green purchase behaviour. People with a higher educational level tend to have a better understanding of environmental concern and sustainable products. Similarly, gender differences can be observed as for the level of environmental attitudes and awareness. Studies have suggested that the perception of the environmental responsibility and green consumption between males and females may be different. Therefore, the significance of examining the impact of demographic factors on the awareness of green marketing cannot be overlooked to gain insights into consumer behaviour and improve sustainable marketing practices. Central to the concept of green marketing are the ideas of environmental responsibility, consumer awareness and sustainable business practices. With the adoption of green marketing, companies have the opportunity to improve their brand image and contribute to the environment and the sustainability of the economy.

Research Gap

Several studies have been done on green marketing and consumer response, but very little have been done on the awareness of the consumers of India with respect to the demographic variables like gender and education qualification. Previous studies focused largely on the intention to purchase, green product preference and environmental attitudes, and there were fewer studies that investigated the relationship between demographic characteristics and the awareness level. Moreover, the awareness of consumers about green marketing varies according to regions and social groups; hence studies have to be done in Indian context. There is also a need to refresh research on consumer awareness in the face of changing concerns and trends of sustainable marketing. Hence, the current study tries to fill this gap by studying the green marketing awareness level of Indian consumers and the impact of demographic variables on the level of awareness.

Importance of the Study

The study is significant as it helps to understand the level of awareness of existing consumers of green marketing practices and green products. To ensure the balance of nature and conserve the environment, sustainable consumption is necessary due to the increased environmental issues. The study gives insights on demographic variables and consumer's awareness. The results can be utilized by marketers in developing the promotional strategy to enhance consumer awareness and promote green purchasing behavior. The study will also be useful for policy makers and environmental groups to raise awareness about sustainability and environmental protection. In addition, the study has added value to the academic knowledge in the field of green marketing by offering insights on consumer perception and awareness of green marketing in the Indian context.

Statement of the Problem

The emergence of environmental degradation, pollution and climate change has led to a growing demand for sustainable business practices and environmentally conscious consumption. While organizations are taking the initiative to promote green marketing and new eco-friendly products, consumers' awareness on green marketing is not evenly distributed across different demographic groups. There is still a lack of knowledge among many consumers on the subject of green products, environmental labelling and the practice of sustainable consumption. Consumers' level of awareness can influence their purchasing behavior and green marketing efforts. Hence, it is important to explore consumer awareness of green marketing in India and determine if there is a significant difference in the awareness of the consumers based on their demographic characteristics in terms of gender and educational qualification. The knowledge of these can guide businesses and policy makers in creating strategies to encourage environmental sustainability.

Analysis and Results

With the rise of consumer awareness about environmental protection and sustainable consumption, green marketing has become a significant concept in today's business world. Green marketing awareness is the degree to which consumers are aware of sustainable business activities, recycling, environmental labels and green marketing products. Demographic factors like gender can affect consumers' awareness of the green marketing practices. Hence, this study analyzes the correlation between gender and awareness of green marketing with the help of Chi-square test among the consumers of India.

Table 1: Gender and level of Awareness among Indian Consumers- Green Marketing

Gender	Level of Awareness			Total
	Less	Medium	High	
Male	22	41	44	107
	20.6%	38.3%	41.1%	100.0%
Female	16	19	8	43
	37.2%	44.2%	18.6%	100.0%
Total	38	60	52	150
	25.3%	40.0%	34.7%	100.0%
Result	8.106 ^a	2	.017	

The table shows the relationship between gender and the level of awareness of green marketing among Indian consumers. Among the male respondents, 20.6% have low awareness, 38.3% have medium awareness, and 41.1% have high awareness regarding green marketing. In contrast, among female respondents, 37.2% have low awareness, 44.2% have medium awareness, and only 18.6% have high awareness.

The findings indicate that male consumers possess comparatively higher awareness of green marketing than female consumers. A greater proportion of males fall under the high awareness category, whereas females are more concentrated in the medium and low awareness categories.

The Chi-square test result shows a calculated value of 8.106 with 2 degrees of freedom and a significance value (p-value) of 0.017. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the relationship between gender and level of awareness is statistically significant. Hence, it can be concluded that gender has a significant influence on the level of awareness of green marketing among Indian consumers.

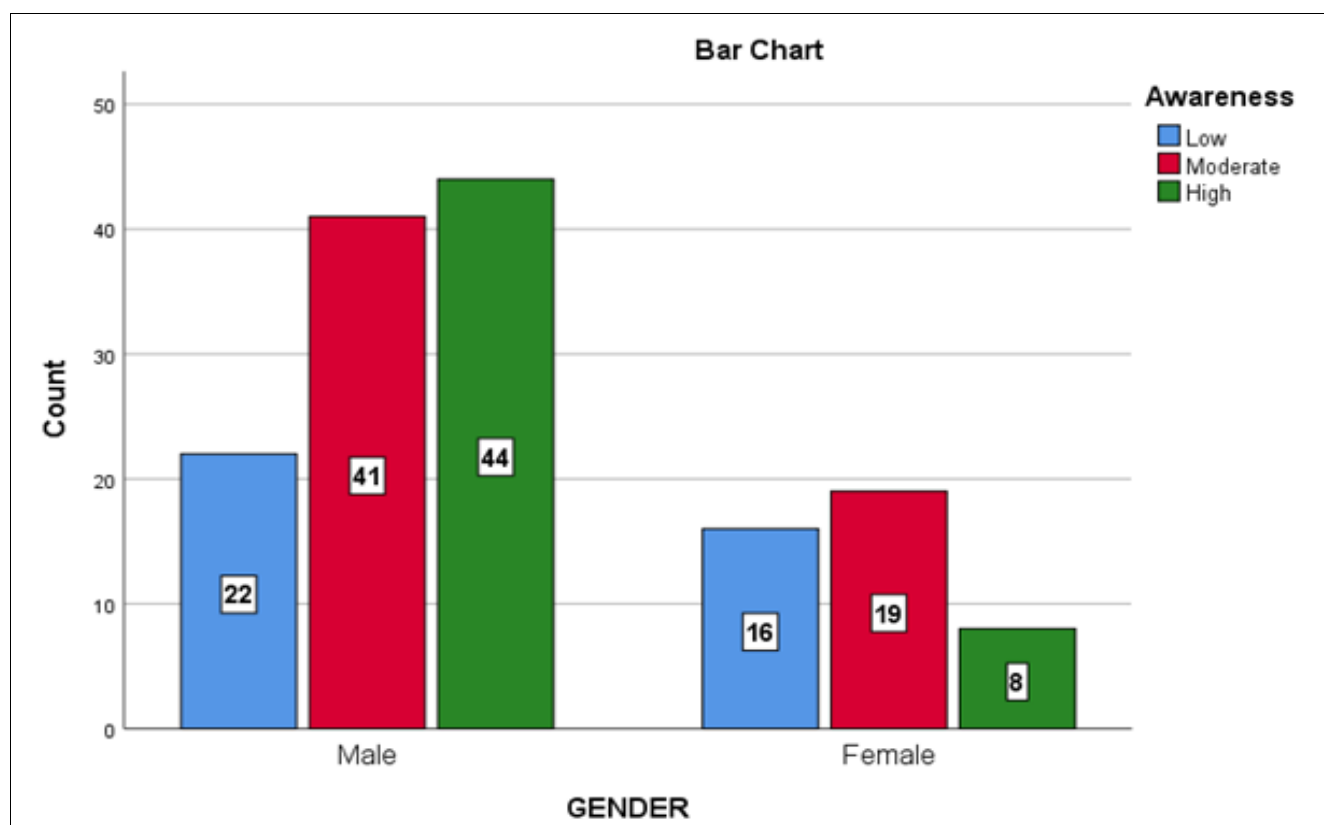


Fig 1: Shows relationship between gender and green marketing awareness levels among consumers.

Qualification and level of Awareness among Indian Consumers- Green Marketing

Educational qualification plays a vital role in shaping consumer knowledge, attitudes, and awareness toward environmental issues and sustainable practices. Consumers with higher educational exposure are generally expected to possess better understanding of eco-friendly products and green marketing concepts. Therefore, analyzing the relationship between qualification and the level of awareness of green marketing helps to identify how education influences consumer awareness among Indian consumers

Table 2: Qualification and Level of Awareness

Qualification	Level of Awareness			Total
	Less	Medium	High	
Up to HSC	1	6	6	13
	7.7%	46.2%	46.2%	100.0%
UG	16	19	20	55
	29.1%	34.5%	36.4%	100.0%
PG	6	8	16	30
	20.0%	26.7%	53.3%	100.0%
Professional	15	27	10	52
	28.8%	51.9%	19.2%	100.0%
Total	38	60	52	150
	25.3%	40.0%	34.7%	100.0%
Result	13.337 ^a	6	.038	

The table presents the association between qualification and the level of awareness of green marketing among Indian consumers. Among respondents with education up to HSC, 46.2% possess high awareness and another 46.2% possess medium awareness, while only 7.7% fall under low awareness. Among UG degree holders, 36.4% have high awareness, 34.5% have medium awareness, and 29.1% have low awareness.

In the case of PG degree holders, a majority of 53.3% possess high awareness, indicating that postgraduate respondents have comparatively better awareness regarding green marketing practices. On the other hand, respondents with professional qualifications are mainly concentrated in the medium awareness category (51.9%), while only 19.2% have high awareness.

The Chi-square test result shows a calculated value of 13.337 with 6 degrees of freedom and a significance value (p-value) of 0.038. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the relationship between qualification and level of awareness is statistically significant. Hence, it can be concluded that educational qualification has a significant influence on the level of awareness of green marketing among Indian consumers.

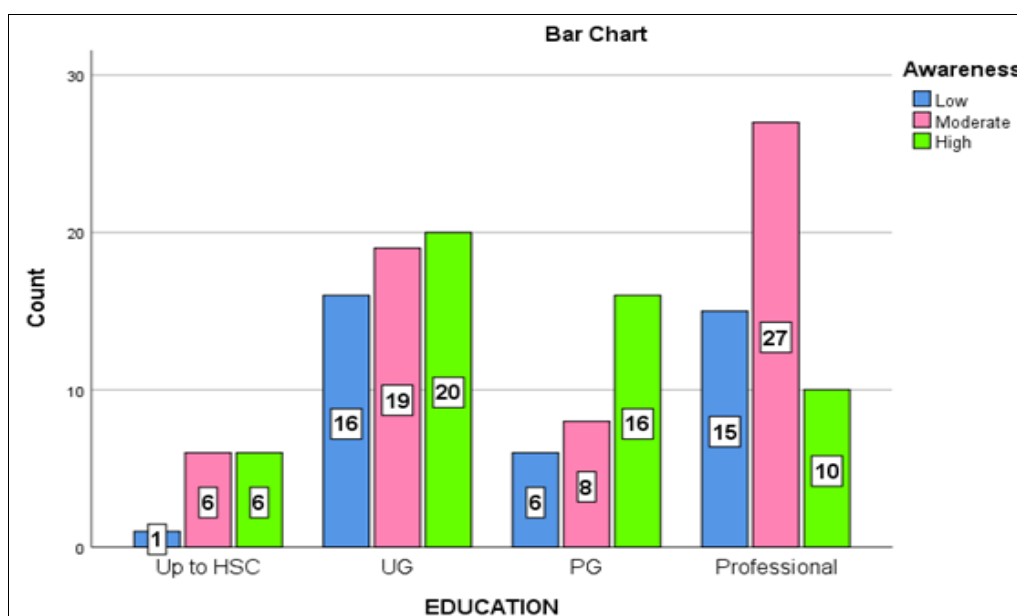


Fig 2: Represents association between educational qualification and green marketing awareness levels.

Implications for the Study

The study holds great relevance for marketers, businesses, policymakers, and researchers. The results show consumers' awareness pattern of green marketing and indicate the need to educate and promote consumer awareness of environmental issues to certain groups in terms of their demographic characteristics. The findings can be utilized by businesses in effective green marketing strategies, eco-friendly product communication and in customer engagement towards sustainable products. The results can be used by policymakers and environmental agencies for establishing awareness programs and campaigns for the adoption of environmentally responsible consumption behavior of the public. Moreover, education efforts are highlighted as a key factor for raising consumers' environmental awareness. The study offers a basis for future

research on green marketing, sustainable consumer behavior, and environmental awareness for academic researchers. The research, in general, supports the issues of sustainability, environmental responsibility and long-term consumer welfare in society.

Recommendations and Suggestions

To boost consumer awareness about green marketing, organizations will need to employ innovative advertising, educational programs and social media marketing strategies. Companies need to give clear details of the environmental advantages of their products, sustainable production and eco-friendly packaging. Incorporating sustainable and green marketing concepts into educational programs can help spread awareness among students, a step that could have a significant impact on the movement of environmental

awareness. Public awareness programmes, workshops and campaigns should be organised by government or environmental organisation to promote environmentally friendly consumption behaviour among consumers. Businesses also need to be transparent to gain consumer trust and avoid giving misleading environmental advertisements. Awareness creation should be targeted to groups of people who are less aware, for which special measures should be taken. Digital communication and the use of influencers are effective ways for marketers to connect and help communicate positive messages about green living to younger people. In addition, companies in the sector must constantly create new sustainable products that can be priced and made available to the consumers. Business, education and government cooperation has the potential to make a great difference in enhancing environmental consciousness and sustainable development in India.

Conclusion

The present study explored the level of awareness of Indian consumers towards green marketing and the impact of demographic factors like gender and educational qualification on the level of awareness. The results show a significant difference in consumer awareness on green marketing among different demographics. Male respondents and the postgraduates have comparatively higher awareness levels about environmentally friendly products and sustainable marketing practices. The statistical analysis verifies that there is significant difference in consumer awareness of green marketing due to gender and educational qualification. As consumer demand for ecologically friendly products grows and concerns about the environment rise, green marketing is becoming a must-have tool for organizations.

The study identifies the awareness as an important factor affecting consumer acceptance of green products and environmentally responsible business. People with improved knowledge of environmental problems are more likely to back environmentally friendly products and help protect the environment. Businesses need to concentrate on raising consumer awareness by implementing effective communication strategies, information campaigns and communicating about green practices honestly. Government, education, and organisations can have a significant impact in promoting sustainable consumption through environmental awareness programmes.

Green marketing can help companies build a positive brand image and gaining customer loyalty, and it can also help promote the conservation of the environment and sustainable development. As the demand for eco-friendly products grows, India is becoming a more environmentally conscious society. But ongoing work needs to be done to raise consumer awareness and encouraging responsible consumption. Overall, the study highlights the significance of green marketing awareness in building environmental sustainability and the importance of the role of all stakeholders in the business, consumer and government sectors in creating a greener and healthier future.

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