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Contemporary issues on Eco-friendly consumerism

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ABSTRACT

Environment has been exploited by companies in different ways; it becomes their responsibility to compensate for this damage. Producing environment-friendly products and creating awareness among consumers conserve nature. This study compared the attitudes of consumers in urban and rural reveals that there does not seen any significant difference in attitudes of gender-wise people except after-use features of environment-friendly products. Urban people have more favorable attitude than rural.

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1. Introduction

Environment which is essential for all living beings has fallen prey to mankind. Nature is being degraded by the activities done by companies. It becomes the responsibility of the business world to compensate for it. Ethical help of companies contribute towards nature's conservation. Environmentally responsible companies make themselves more attractive to customers and investors. The companies are addressing these issues and playing their part in preserving nature. Producing environment-friendly products is one way to conserve environment and these issues are complex (Fuller, 1999). Companies need changes in product development, manufacturing, promotion and distribution, without harm to it.

India introduced eco-labeling scheme, 'Eco-mark' for easy identification of products,¹⁻⁵ is examined in terms of following environmental impacts:

1. Substantially less potential for pollution than other comparable products in production, usage and

disposal.

2. Recycled, recyclable, made from recycled products or biodegradable, where comparable products are not.
3. Significant contribution to saving non-renewable resources including non-renewable energy sources and natural resources compared to comparable products.
4. Product must contribute to a reduction of the adverse primary criteria.

In India 17 different product categories for eco-mark scheme has specified; out of these, three have been obtained by 12 manufacturers.⁶ Manufacturing is the phase of product life-cycle where, usage of material should be minimized, production process should be efficient and wastage or toxic release should be reduced. Excessive and unnecessary packaging of the product should be avoided to save the packing resources. Refills can be used for packaging of the products.

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Table 1: Main characteristics of sample

		Age (in Years)	Monthly income (in Rs. '000)	Family size (No. of persons)
G (male)	M	34.1	14.3	4.97
	SD	12.2	11.7	2.06
G (female)	M	26.0	18.5	4.69
	SD	8.65	13.6	1.33
RS (urban)	M	28.8	20.7	4.34
	SD	10.7	14.6	1.47
RS (rural)	M	33.1	11.2	5.39
	SD	12.1	7.73	1.96
Total	M	31.0	16.0	4.86
	SD	11.6	12.6	1.81

Note: RS- Residential Status; G- Gender; M- Mean; SD- Standard Deviation

Table 2: Summary of 2-way ANOVA for attitude towards various dimensions of environment-friendly-products

Dimensions of EFP	Source of variation	F value	P
Raw material	Gender	0.50	0.48
	Residential Status (RS)	5.13	0.02
	Gender X RS	0.15	0.70
Manufacturing process	Gender	2.21	0.65
	Residential Status (RS)	0.76	0.39
	Gender X RS	0.36	0.55
Packaging	Gender	0.08	0.78
	Residential Status (RS)	5.61	0.02
	Gender X RS	0.51	0.48
In-use features	Gender	3.30	0.07
	Residential Status (RS)	0.09	0.76
	Gender X RS	0.85	0.36
After-use features	Gender	4.22	0.04
	Residential Status (RS)	16.15	0.00
	Gender X RS	0.56	0.46
Environment-friendly-product (EFP)	Gender	1.04	0.30
	Residential Status (RS)	5.34	0.02
	Gender X RS	0.006	0.94

Note: Gender: Male/Female; RS: Residential Status-urban/rural; EFP: Environment-friendly-product

Table 3: Mean value for various dimensions of environment-friendly-products

Dimensions of Environment-friendly-product (EFP)	Residential Status (RS)	Gender (Male)	Gender (Female)	Overall Mean
In-use features	RS (Urban)	27.29	27.58	27.44
	RS (Rural)	26.90	27.78	27.34
	Overall Mean	27.10	27.68	27.39
After-use features	RS (Urban)	10.77	11.35	11.06
	RS (Rural)	10.11	10.37	10.24
	Overall Mean	10.44	10.86	10.65
Environment-friendly-product (EFP)	RS (Urban)	74.37	75.29	74.83
	RS (Rural)	72.52	73.30	72.91
	Overall Mean	73.45	74.30	73.87

Note: Gender: Male/Female; RS: Residential Status-urban/rural; EFP: Environment-friendly-product

The companies should educate customers about the usage of product. Consumer health and safety should be the priority (Chinnappa. T. B. and Karunakaran. N, 2021). In India, Godrej launched eco- friendly refrigerator in 2001; Modicare introduced blue liquid toilet cleaner, Wipro has its waste management policies. Some hotels in India launched Eco-hotel; Reva Electric Car Company is involved in cars that run on electricity.

2. Objectives

The main objective is to study and compare the attitude of urban and rural people towards environment-friendly products in India.

3. Review of Literature

Antil John H (1984), Arbuthnot Jack (1977), Brooker George (1976), and Buttel F Hand Flinn WK (1978) examined the consumer's concern about the environment and its impact on business. Sriram and Forman (1993) studied the relative importance of product's environmental attributes in a cross-cultural comparison. Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS) conducted a survey (1997) for the Ministry of Environment and Forests, India. Das R. P and Nath Vikas (2003), Chinnappa. T. B. and Karunakaran. N (2021), Karunakaran. N (2022), and Jain and Kaur (2004) undertook a study of attitudinal and behavioral analysis of Indian consumers regarding environmental issues.⁷⁻⁹

4. Materials and Methods

The study is based on primary data collected from India, having a sample of 400 respondents with 243 males and 157 females. Specific characteristics (education, employed or not, rich or poor), were also considered for selecting respondents. The main characteristics of sample are shown in Table 1. Likert 5-point scale is used to find the various dimensions of environment-friendly products, i.e., raw materials, manufacturing process, packaging, in-use features and after-use features. The attitude towards environment-friendly product was taken as the sum total of attitude towards various dimensions of environment-friendly product.¹⁰⁻¹² Two-way ANOVA was also used.

5. Results, Analysis and Discussion

Table 2 Shows that males and females have similar attitude; urban people have more positive attitude towards the raw material and take care of the ingredients before using it. Both the sources of variation, i.e., gender and Residential Status have yielded non-significant F ratio. For both the sources of variation, gender and Residential Status and interactive effect of gender and Residential Status has yielded F ratios which are non-significant in nature. F value for dependent measure attitude towards gender is 4.22 and

significant. It is evident that, females have more favourable attitude towards the after-use features than males.

The mean values for males and females for after-use features are 10.44 and 10.86, respectively (Table 3). The second source of variation, yielded significant F ratio also. People residing in urban areas have more favorable attitude towards the after-use features than rural. Urban people, like females, try to focus on method of discarding the product. They also feel that correct method of discarding the product should be informed on the package of product. The interactive effect of gender and Residential Status has not resulted in significant F ratio. The main source of variation gender has yielded F ratio which is non-significant. The second source of variation, Residential Status has F ratio equal to 5.34, which is significant. The mean values for urban and rural people are 74.83 and 72.91, respectively (Table 3); shows the urban people have more favorable attitude compared to people in rural areas.

6. Conclusion

Female have more favorable attitude towards after-use features of environment-friendly product compared to male. They try to discard the product in a proper manner which reduces the harmful effects. Both have similar attitude; but there is difference in attitude of urban and rural people. Urban people are more conscious about the raw material, packaging and after-use features of environment-friendly products, and have greater exposure to the happenings around the world. They encounter the environmental problems more as compared to rural people. There does not see any significant difference in attitudes of gender-wise people except after-use features.

7. Source of Funding

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8. Conflict of Interest

None.

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