



A STUDY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AMONG CONSUMERS OF DURABLE HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS IN BIHAR

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ABSTRACT

Sustainability is a community practice. A truly sustainable community supports the health and quality of life of present and future generations. Nobody wants to expose their children to toxic chemicals and common hazardous ingredients. With the modern amenities, we think that environment is outside us. We do not realize that the water we drink, air we breathe, land on which we live all is integral part of us. Environment and man are inseparable. Today, health of both human beings and environment is at stake. Developing earth friendly habits will take time, efforts and vision. Simple choices by the consumers from using recycled paper, energy efficient bulbs to bigger choices such as solar panels; organic mattresses etc. will surely make a difference. This paper is focused upon the outline on which research activity will take place further.

KEYWORDS: Consumers, Durable Household Products, Eco- Friendly, Environmental Awareness

INTRODUCTION :

Many people today are alarmed about global warming and the future of our planet, but fear that living is a more environmental-friendly lifestyle is complicated and expensive – a luxury they can't afford. What most people don't know is that the exact opposite is true: Not only can you save money by "going green" and taking just a few simple steps to help protect the planet but green at home is easy, affordable, and better in every sense of the word. There has been unprecedented number of eco friendly products available in the market. Any product which is made, used or disposed off in a way, that significantly reduces the harm it would have otherwise caused to the environment, can be termed as eco-friendly product.

Survey show that consumers world-wide are concerned about the environment on the global, national as well as local scale. Attitudes of the consumer's towards environmental conservation are positive and their interest in the environmental impacts of products has also grown during the past few years. As consumers are expected to be the new guardians of environmental improvement, they are also expected to be knowledgeable and able to make environmentally sound decisions.

According to census-2011 literacy rate in Bihar is about 61.8% which is minimum and population density is 1106, which is maximum among all states in India. In Bihar about 89% populations live in rural area, which are not aware related to environmental issue. Again we see that census-2011, Bihar has minimum per capita income Rs-25653/- which is lower among states. Bihar also have lowest female literacy rate among all states (54.89%). Hence we can say that the study of environmental awareness of consumer of household durable products in Bihar is relevant for society as well as marketer and Government.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In essence, a literature review identifies, evaluates and synthesizes the relevant literature within a particular field of research. It illuminates how knowledge has evolved within the field, highlighting what has already been done, what is generally accepted, what is emerging and what is the current state of thinking on the topic. In addition, within research-based texts such as a Doctoral thesis, a literature review identifies a research gap (i.e. unexplored or under-researched areas) and articulates how a particular research project addresses this gap.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS RELATED TO CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Many studies have been undertaken to address the issue of environmental concerns related to consumer behavior. Many researchers (Ottman, 1993 and Polonsky, 1994) have studied that a majority of people believe that green marketing refers solely to the promotion or advertising of products with environmental characteristics. Rothe and Benson's (1974) notion of "Intelligent consumption" and Fisk's (1973) concept of "ecological imperatives" reflect the need to educate the consumer to become aware of environmental problems and their relation to his/her consumption patterns. **Brower and Leon** (1999) have urged the customers to take steps such as driving fuel-efficient, low polluting cars, eating less meat and making their homes energy efficient. The methodology of these studies varies widely but the major findings have been observed to define the research objective. The above literature reviews give an in-depth idea on the topic and it is also observed that not much work has been done in India with references to the environmental literacy and consumer behavior towards eco-friendly products. Knowledge is recognized in consumer research as a characteristic that influences all phases in the decision process. Specifically, knowledge is a relevant and significant construct that affects how consumers gather and organize information (Alba and Hutchinson, 1987), how much information is used in decision making (Brucks, 1985) and how consumers evaluate products and services (Murry and Schlater, 1990 & Menon, 1997). With an increase in the social and political pressures, profit driven firms embraced green marketing strategies and exploited these environmental issues as a source of competitive advantages (Chen & Chai, 2010). The business were motivated to adopt the concept of green marketing provided that consumers demonstrate a high degree of environmental concern and hence translate this into environmental friendly purchasing commitment. Severity of environmental deterioration (Meadow et al., 1972) is necessitating technological changes but also changes in attitude and behavior of consumer (Weigel et al., 1978). Today, environmental or green marketing, a strategic marketing approach is a recent focus in business Endeavour's (Ottman, 1998). Increasing focus on environmental issues can be seen as an indication that pro-environmental concerns have emerged as a potential strategic concern for business (Polonsky & Kibourne, 2005, Menon) When purchasing any product, a Consumer goes through a decision process. This process consists of up to five stages:

- Stage 1: Problem recognition,
- Stage 2: information search,
- Stage 3: evaluation of alternatives,
- Stage 4: Purchase decision,
- Stage 5: post purchase behavior...

Adding to the above Consumer's buyer behavior is influenced by four major factors:

- (1) Cultural
- (2) Social
- (3) Personal
- (4) Psychological
- (5) Demographic factors

These factors cause consumers to develop product and brand preferences. Although many of these factors cannot be directly controlled by marketers, understanding of common behaviors to their own culture. Flora brand, it is important to understand and take into account the cultural factors

inherent to each market or to each situation. In order to adopt its product and its marketing strategy. As these will play a role in the perception, habits, behavior or expectations of consumers.

The length of this decision process will vary. A consumer may not act in isolation in the purchase, but rather may be influenced by any of several people in various roles. The number of people involved in the buying decision increases with the level of involvement and complexity of the buying decision behavior. Consumer's buyer behavior and the resulting purchase decision are strongly influenced by cultural, social, personal, and psychological characteristics. An understanding of the influence of these factors is essential for marketers in order to develop suitable marketing mixes to appeal to the target customer.

FACTORS THAT AFFECT GREEN CONSUMER BEHAVIOR-

Research on environmentally responsible behavior has used various terms interchangeably, such as environmental behavior, green behavior, ecological behavior, environmentally friendly behavior, and sustainable behavior. Corral-Verdugo and Pinheiro (2004) suggested that environmental terms should be analyzed according to the historical moment when the concepts arise. They suggested that pro-environmental and ecologically friendly behaviors gained wide use from the middle 1980s to the late 1990s. Since the late 1990s the concept of suitable behavior, defined as a set of effective, deliberate, and preemptive actions that lead to the preservation of natural resources, including the integrity of animal and plant life, as well as the individual and social welfare of current and future human generations replace the terms of pro-environmental, pro-ecological, or simply environmental behavior. It includes energy savings and water, compost preparation, ecological building, and birth control since they favor high levels of welfare in the economic, political, environmental, and social domains. In this research, we will refer to these environmentally friendly or sustainable behaviors as "green behaviors". Another ordering scheme of environment protecting actions involves the so-called 3R'S, reducing, reusing, and recycling (compare, e.g. Inami,2001).Our research takes up the perspective of the 3R'S, but includes a fourth pillar, that is, the purchase of it esalmabeled as ecological/biological/organic products. From our stand point, this 4perspective allows for the analysis of concrete sustainable consumption behaviors and actions by defining actions favorable to the preservation of the environment in clear-cut terms.

Factors that have been shown to exert influence on the ecological behavior of individuals have been generally classified as external (e.g. education, media, family, or culture), internal (e.g. knowledge, attitudes, awareness, or involvement), and situational (economic rewards and legislation). Many researchers have focused on demographic and psychographic criteria to explain green consumer behavior. Some researchers also find the geographic factors (rural or urban) also play major role to influence green consumer behavior.

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

During the process of Literature review we see that there is a huge problem related to environment in the society of Bihar, it's may be lack of awareness among people. Again we observe that Purchasing power capacity influences the consumer to purchase eco-Friendly household durable products. So we will study the people of Bihar related to source of income and their saving especially in northern region in both urban and rural areas. After complete study of Literature review we see that buying behavior of a housewife maybe different from working women. Economy in Bihar, women participation may be less than men. So we study the factors which are responsible for women participation in economy. We see that there is Complexity among eco-friendly household durable goods and non eco-friendly products in the same category. It's may be due to lack of knowledge as well as motivation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Based on the above mentioned research problems helped in setting research objectives of this proposed study. Objectives of this study are as follows -

Research objective 1: To test consumer's environmental literacy by knowledge test on Environmental Problems.

Research Objective 2: To identify key variables/factors such as age, education, and level of income that shape consumption of eco-friendly products. In other way segment of customer, and their motivation level, who purchase household durable products.

Research Objective 3: Describe the effect on environment from the buying decision of Indian house wives and working women, special on household durable Products.

Research objective 4: To analyze the role of selected eco-friendly household durable goods in the reduction of adverse environmental impact vis-a-vis non Eco-friendly products in the same category.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is in view of the above that the present project has been undertaken. The outcome of the study should help the marketers and the government to device the strategies which will motivate the customers to buy eco- friendly products.

Also the findings could help the industry in better strategic decisions in making their eco-friendly house hold durable products.

It would be helpful in promotion of products which are environmental friendly.

The research is relevant, innovative and truly inter-disciplinary with sustainable development. As more people start living a green life, there will be a greater drive for developments in the area of green energies, recycling and other green technology, as well as a market for eco-friendly products and services.

The outcome of the study help to conserve energy minimizes carbon footprints or minimizes the emission of green house gases and doesn't lead to a lot of toxicity.

It would be helpful for lower cost, Healthier lives, A sustainable world, Better Quality of life and Development in new areas.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

With the above given objectives a few hypothesis are being proposed:

(Ho-1) Eco-friendly household products are not preferred by consumers in Bihar.

(Ho-2) There is Lack of environment awareness among the consumers of household durable products in BIHAR.

(Ho-3) Level of Income is one of the important determinants of purchasing the eco-friendly household durable products in Bihar.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

The research design in the research work will be designed keeping in mind the focused objectives and the aim of accurate and authentic collection of data. The Research design for the study will be:

(1) Descriptive/Explanatory Research–This study is related to Descriptive Research design as process of research where describing, explaining, and validating research findings be done on the basis of past data as well as on the responses and the reaction of youth, House wives, working man and women, pensioners' etc, of both rural and urban area in northern region of Bihar, towards house hold durable product.

(2) Probability Research–This study also related to Probability Research, As we select sample from large population randomly by using a method based on the theory of probability. The population of the Bihar is alone is 10,40,99,452 (census 2011) it is practically impossible to send a survey to every individual to gather information but we can use probability sampling to get data which is as good even if it is collected from a smaller population.

(3) Sampling: Sample is the fraction of the population; sampling is a technique or a method of selection of samples. The technique of Quota Sampling will be used to get the questionnaire filled from different individuals with different background and professions. The respondent will be from both rural and urban areas of northern region in Bihar specially Darbhanga, such as school going teenagers, collegians, working persons and house wives etc.

Sample Size: Since there are time and resource restraints, a specific population had to be identified in order to generalize and create relevant segments. I will try to cover approximately 1000 samples from the various respondents with the help of different type of survey, But Approximately 500 sample sizes may be administrated from the different areas of the study undertaken.

Sampling Techniques: Sampling techniques will be used according to the requirement of the study. Convenience sampling will be used in the initial stages of the study (i.e exploratory research) again Probability sampling technique will use lastly.

Data collection method: The data for the proposed study will be collected through two methods of data collection.

Primary Data: These data collected through survey via Questionnaires, Interview, schedule, Observation.

Secondary Data: The method of secondary data collection will be....

1. Literature from articles published in the journals.
2. Literature from text books and magazines.
3. Literature from websites.

Statistical Tools and Techniques-

For analysis of data and testing the hypothesis:

1. Average, S.D, Graphical presentation, map and diagrams will be presented with the help of computer.
2. Photograph will be taken with the help of camera.
3. Govt. record will be used for the information about their actual position.

The statistical tools will be used for testing of hypothesis. Such as T-test, Chi-square test, F-test etc.

With the help of some statistical software such as AMOS and S.P.S.(statistical package for social science) ANOVAs (Analysis of variance), Regression and Correlation, the collected data will be analyzed to reach the conclusion of the study.

But natural study will face certain limitation like...Localities, time, and size of sample as well as focus on household durable products:

CONCLUSION

The conclusion chapter recapitulates a brief Summary of the Finding & Suggestions made on the basis of the study will be presented after the completion of Research Work.

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