

Customer Awareness about Eco-friendly Products in Kerala

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Abstract- In response to the growing concerns over climate change and environmental degradation, the demand for eco-friendly products has risen globally. Kerala, a state with a deep cultural affinity for nature and a focus on sustainability, is also experiencing this shift. However, despite increased awareness, the adoption of eco-friendly products in Kerala remains inconsistent. This research aims to assess the level of consumer awareness regarding eco-friendly products, explore the factors influencing their purchasing decisions, and identify the barriers hindering their adoption. The study also explores the influence of demographic factors such as age, income, and education on consumer behavior. Additionally, the research examines the effectiveness of current policies that aim to promote eco-friendly products in the region. Secondary data from various reports, market surveys, and academic studies were analyzed to address these objectives. The findings indicate moderate consumer awareness, while highlighting barriers such as price sensitivity, availability, and knowledge gaps that need to be addressed to enhance adoption.

Keywords: Eco-friendly products, consumer awareness, sustainable consumption, Kerala, adoption barriers, demographic factors, environmental policies, consumer behavior

INTRODUCTION

Eco-friendly products, or green products, are designed to reduce environmental harm through their lifecycle, from production to disposal. These products may include items that are recyclable, biodegradable, or produced using renewable resources. Given the pressing environmental issues such as climate change and resource depletion, the adoption of eco-friendly products is crucial for achieving sustainability.[1][4] Kerala, known for its lush natural environment and eco-conscious culture, has seen an increased focus on eco-friendly products. However, despite significant awareness, the transition toward widespread adoption remains slow. This research investigates the level of

awareness about eco-friendly products among consumers in Kerala, the factors that influence their purchasing decisions, and the barriers to adoption. The study also explores the role of demographic factors such as age, income, and education in shaping consumer behavior. Finally, the study evaluates existing policies that promote eco-friendly products and their effectiveness in Kerala.[2]

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the level of awareness among consumers regarding eco-friendly products.
2. To examine the factors that influence consumer decisions to purchase eco-friendly products.
3. To identify the barriers to the adoption of eco-friendly products in Kerala.
4. To explore the impact of demographic variables (age, income, education) on consumer awareness and adoption of eco-friendly products.
5. To evaluate the effectiveness of policies and initiatives promoting eco-friendly products in Kerala.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study follows a descriptive research design, aiming to describe the various factors influencing consumer awareness and adoption of eco-friendly products in Kerala. Descriptive research is appropriate for capturing the current state of consumer awareness, identifying barriers, and understanding the role of demographic variables in shaping consumer behavior. The study uses secondary data sources to provide insights into these issues.

Sampling Method

Since this study relies on secondary data, no primary sampling of individuals was necessary. The secondary

data sources include government reports, market surveys, academic literature, and industry reports. These data are representative of the general population's attitudes and behaviors regarding eco-friendly products. The secondary data provides a broad understanding of trends, demographics, and barriers that could influence consumer adoption.

Sources of Data

1. Government Reports: Publications from the Kerala State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) and other relevant government departments on environmental sustainability and eco-friendly initiatives.
2. Market Research Studies: Surveys and reports conducted by market research firms to analyze consumer awareness, behaviors, and trends related to eco-friendly products.
3. Academic Literature: Research papers, journals, and articles that explore consumer behavior, environmental sustainability, and related topics.
4. Industry Reports: Insights into market trends and consumer preferences from companies involved in producing or selling eco-friendly products.

Data Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative data analyses were performed. Qualitative analysis was employed to interpret the context and effectiveness of government policies and initiatives. Quantitative analysis was used to assess consumer behavior, adoption rates, and the influence of demographic variables. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize key trends in consumer awareness and adoption.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Level of Consumer Awareness about Eco-friendly Products

The study revealed that awareness about eco-friendly products in Kerala is moderate but varies significantly between urban and rural areas. According to data from the Kerala State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB), 60% of consumers in urban areas are aware of eco-friendly products, whereas awareness drops to 45% in rural areas. This disparity is largely due to differences in education, access to information, and exposure to sustainability programs.[3][7]

Table 1: *Level of Consumer Awareness about Eco-friendly Products in Kerala*

Awareness Level	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Overall (%)
Very Aware	20%	10%	15%
Somewhat Aware	40%	35%	38%
Not Aware	40%	55%	47%
Total	100%	100%	100%

The data indicates that rural areas show a higher percentage of individuals who are unaware of eco-friendly products, suggesting that targeted educational campaigns in these areas are necessary.

2. Factors Influencing Consumer Decisions

The research identifies several key factors influencing consumer decisions to purchase eco-friendly products. Price sensitivity is the most significant factor, followed by perceived quality, availability, and trust in eco-certifications.[12][6]

Table 2: *Factors Influencing the Purchase of Eco-friendly Products*

Factor	Percentage (%)
Price Sensitivity	65%
Perceived Quality	60%
Availability	55%
Trust in Eco-certifications	50%
Environmental Impact Awareness	45%

Price sensitivity is the dominant factor affecting purchasing decisions, with 65% of consumers stating that higher prices discourage them from choosing eco-friendly alternatives.

3. Barriers to Adoption of Eco-friendly Products
Several barriers prevent widespread adoption, with high costs being the primary obstacle, followed by a lack of information and limited availability.[5][8]

Table 3: Barriers to Adoption of Eco-friendly Products in Kerala

Barrier	Percentage (%)
High Cost	70%
Lack of Information	55%
Limited Availability	50%
Limited Recycling Systems	45%
Uncertainty About Effectiveness	40%

The high cost of eco-friendly products is the primary barrier, as many consumers find it difficult to justify the higher upfront costs, even when the long-term environmental benefits are clear.

Demographic factors such as age, income, and education significantly influence consumer awareness and adoption. Younger consumers, those with higher income, and those with higher educational levels are more likely to be aware of and adopt eco-friendly products.[11]

4. Impact of Demographic Variables

Table 4: Impact of Demographic Variables on Awareness and Adoption

Demographic Factor	Aware (%)	Adopted (%)
Age		
18-25 Years	75%	45%
26-40 Years	65%	50%
41-60 Years	50%	35%
60+ Years	35%	20%
Income		
Low (< ₹20,000)	40%	25%
Medium (₹20,000-₹50,000)	60%	45%
High (> ₹50,000)	80%	65%
Education		
Less than High School	40%	20%
High School	50%	35%
College Graduate	75%	60%
Postgraduate	85%	70%

Younger individuals and those with higher education and income levels demonstrate higher levels of awareness and adoption of eco-friendly products.

5. Effectiveness of Existing Policies

Policies like Kerala’s Green Protocol and Zero Waste initiatives have focused primarily on institutional changes, with limited impact on direct consumer adoption. Although these policies have raised awareness among businesses, they have not substantially influenced consumer behavior. There is a

need for more consumer-focused policies, such as incentives and subsidies, to increase adoption.[10]

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that while consumer awareness of eco-friendly products in Kerala is moderate, several barriers—particularly high costs, lack of information,

and limited availability—hinder widespread adoption. Demographic factors such as age, income, and education significantly influence both awareness and adoption. There is a clear need for targeted awareness campaigns, especially in rural areas, as well as policy interventions to reduce costs and increase the availability of eco-friendly products. By addressing these barriers, Kerala can enhance its eco-friendly product market and contribute to sustainability goals.

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