

A Study on Consumers' Preference Towards Eco-Friendly Fmcg Products in Perambalur Town

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Abstract

Growing concerns about climate change, environmental degradation, and sustainability have led to a significant shift in consumer behavior globally. The preference for eco-friendly Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) is emerging as a prominent trend. This study explores the level of awareness, preference, and purchasing behavior of consumers in Perambalur Town regarding eco-friendly FMCG products. The study also identifies the influencing factors, barriers, and demographic determinants affecting consumer choices. Using a structured questionnaire, data was collected from 100 respondents and analyzed through percentage analysis and chi-square tests. The study found that while awareness levels are moderate to high, affordability and accessibility are major challenges. The paper concludes with practical recommendations for marketers, policymakers, and environmental advocates to promote sustainable consumption in semi-urban areas.

Key words: Awareness on FMCG, Eco-friendly FMCG products, Consumer Preference.

Introduction

In recent decades, environmental issues such as climate change, plastic pollution, and excessive resource consumption have driven both individuals and organizations to adopt more sustainable practices. Among consumers, this has led to a growing demand for eco-friendly products that do not compromise the health of the planet. Eco-friendly FMCG products—those that are sustainably produced, packaged in biodegradable materials, and marketed with an emphasis on minimal ecological impact—are gaining popularity, particularly in urban markets. However, there is limited literature focusing on the adoption and acceptance of such products in semi-urban and rural towns in India. Perambalur, a developing town in Tamil Nadu, presents an interesting case for examining how consumers in smaller regions perceive, prefer, and purchase eco-friendly alternatives. This study aims to fill that gap by investigating the awareness, attitudes, and purchasing behaviors of consumers in Perambalur Town towards eco-friendly FMCG products. The research focuses on key variables such as product type preference, pricing sensitivity, brand trust, packaging appeal, and demographic correlations.

Review of Literature

The concept of eco-friendly consumer behavior and green marketing has gained considerable attention in both academic and commercial fields. Several studies have explored the key drivers of eco-friendly product preference, especially in the FMCG sector.

Green Marketing and Consumer Alignment: Ottman, Stafford, and Hartman (2006) emphasized that green marketing strategies are most effective when they align environmental benefits with consumer values. Their research noted that merely promoting the ecological benefits of a product is not enough unless it also satisfies consumer needs in terms of quality and affordability.

Evolution of Green Marketing: Peattie (2001) identified three phases in the evolution of green marketing: ecological, environmental, and sustainable. In the third phase—sustainable marketing—companies must provide more information and transparency about the environmental impact of their products, which influences consumer trust and purchasing behavior.

Consumer Knowledge and Behavior: According to Rahbar and Wahid (2011), there is a strong positive correlation between consumers' environmental knowledge and their likelihood of purchasing green

products. Their study in the Malaysian context highlighted the role of education, media, and labeling in shaping consumer perceptions.

Indian Perspective on Green Consumption: Vernekar and Wadhwa (2011) conducted a study on Indian consumers and discovered that while many have a favorable attitude towards green products, actual purchasing behavior is influenced by trust in the product, labeling clarity, and perceived price premium.

Trends in the Indian FMCG Sector: The Indian Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF) reports that there is a growing shift in consumer behavior in India toward sustainable and eco-conscious FMCG products. Packaging, product labeling, and corporate social responsibility initiatives are playing crucial roles in attracting environmentally aware consumers.

Objectives of the Study

- To assess the level of awareness about eco-friendly FMCG products among consumers in Perambalur Town.
- To examine consumer preferences across different FMCG categories.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Profile	:	Category	%
Gender	:	Male	41
	:	Female	59
Age	:	Below 30yrs	32
	:	31 to 40yrs	28
	:	41 to 50yrs	21
	:	Above 50yrs	19
Type of family	:	Nuclear	82
	:	Joint	18
Education Level	:	UG	44
	:	PG	34
	:	Others	22

Source: Primary Data

Gender: The data reveals that a majority of the respondents (59%) are female, while males account for 41%. This suggests that women are more responsive or possibly more conscious regarding eco-friendly FMCG products. Their role in

- To identify the key factors influencing purchase decisions.
- To analyze the demographic impact on eco-friendly product preference.
- To recommend strategies for enhancing the adoption of sustainable FMCG products.

Research Methodology

Area of Study : The study was conducted in Perambalur Town, a semi-urban area in Tamil Nadu, India, known for moderate development and improving consumer awareness.

Research Design : Descriptive and analytical in nature, this study seeks to describe current consumer attitudes and establish relationships among variables.

Sampling Method: Convenience sampling was used to collect data from 100 respondents.

Data Collection Tool : Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire, divided into five sections: demographics, awareness, preferences, influencing factors, and barriers.

Data Analysis Tools : Percentage analysis, Cross-tabulation and Chi-square test

household consumption may explain their greater involvement in such choices. **Age:** Respondents below the age of 30 make up the largest group (32%), followed by those aged 31 to 40 (28%). Those aged 41–50 comprise 21%, and only 19% are above 50. This indicates that younger

consumers are more engaged and possibly more inclined towards sustainable product choices, reflecting greater environmental awareness among the youth. Family Type: A significant 82% of respondents belong to nuclear families, indicating a modern family structure dominance in the region. This could influence product decisions as nuclear families might prioritize convenience and

individual health, leading them toward eco-friendly options. Education Level: The respondents are predominantly well-educated, with 44% holding undergraduate and 34% postgraduate degrees. Education is often linked with higher environmental consciousness, which may positively influence their preference for eco-friendly FMCG products.

Awareness of Eco-Friendly FMCG Products

Awareness Level	:	%
Highly Aware	:	22
Moderately Aware	:	45
Slightly Aware	:	25
Not Aware	:	08

Source: Primary Data

The level of awareness is moderate overall. While only 22% of respondents are highly aware, the largest group (45%) is moderately aware. A quarter (25%) are only slightly aware, and a small percentage (8%) are not aware at all. This suggests

that awareness campaigns and product labeling strategies could play a crucial role in educating the population further and converting low awareness into purchasing behavior.

Product Preference

Product Preferred	:	%
Personal Care	:	42
Cleaning Agents	:	30
Packaged Food	:	18
Others	:	10

Source: Primary Data

Among the various eco-friendly FMCG product categories:

- Personal Care products are the most preferred (42%), indicating a growing concern for health, hygiene, and skin-friendly products.
- Cleaning Agents follow with 30%, showing that consumers also value eco-safe alternatives for household use.
- Packaged Food accounts for 18%,

suggesting potential growth if trust and awareness increase.

- Other products (10%) reflect a small but diverse interest in niche or less common eco-friendly goods.
- This distribution indicates that practical, daily-use items are more accepted in eco-friendly formats, highlighting a market opportunity for expanding these categories.

Factors Influencing Purchase Decision

Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Environmental Concern	38	30	20	12
Availability in Market	25	28	22	25
Price Affordability	20	25	18	37
Packaging Appeal	30	26	25	19

Source: Primary Data

Environmental Concern: This is the most influential factor, with 38% strongly agreeing and 30% agreeing. This shows a majority (68%) consider the environmental impact before purchasing, highlighting rising eco-consciousness among consumers.

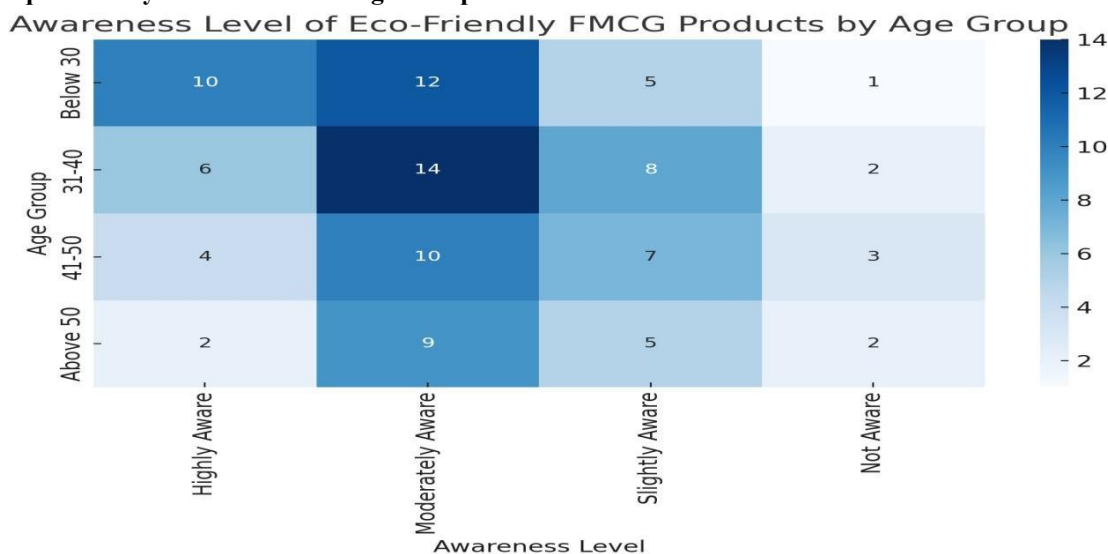
Availability in Market: Opinions are mixed-only 25% strongly agree and 28% agree, while 22% are neutral and 25% disagree. This reflects inconsistency in product availability, suggesting a need for wider distribution and retail presence.

Price Affordability: A major concern-only 20% strongly agree and 25% agree that eco-friendly products are affordable, while 37% disagree. This indicates that price is a significant barrier to wider adoption, especially in semi-urban settings like Perambalur.

Packaging Appeal: 30% strongly agree and 26% agree that attractive packaging influences them. With 25% neutral and 19% disagreeing, this suggests that packaging still plays a key role in influencing consumer attention and purchase behavior.

The study highlights that young, educated, and female consumers from nuclear families are more inclined toward eco-friendly FMCG products. However, despite moderate awareness and preference for personal care and cleaning agents, barriers such as affordability and availability must be addressed. Factors like environmental concern and packaging aesthetics strongly influence buying behavior, emphasizing the importance of both sustainability and product presentation.

Chi-Square Analysis: Awareness vs Age Group



Chi-Square Value : 6.34 Degrees of Freedom : 9

P-value : 0.705

Interpretation: No statistically significant association was found between age and awareness level. This suggests eco-consciousness is spreading across age groups.

Major Findings

- Majority of respondents are moderately to highly aware of eco-friendly products.
- Personal care and cleaning products are

preferred over food items.

- Packaging and environmental concern strongly influence purchase decisions.
- Affordability remains a key barrier.
- Consumers aged below 40 shows slightly more enthusiasm towards sustainable consumption.

Suggestions

- Promote Education and Awareness: Use local media and community events to spread

knowledge about eco-friendly products.

- **Improve Product Availability:** Ensure sustainable alternatives are accessible in local retail outlets.
- **Introduce Affordable Options:** Brands should develop cost-effective versions to reach wider demographics.
- **Labeling and Branding:** Emphasize environmental certifications and packaging appeal to attract more buyers.
- **Government Support:** Subsidies or tax benefits for eco-friendly brands can help bridge the price gap.

Conclusion

The study concludes that consumers in Perambalur Town are becoming increasingly aware of eco-friendly FMCG products and demonstrate a willingness to adopt them. However, systemic challenges like pricing, product availability, and awareness campaigns remain underdeveloped. There is a need for coordinated efforts from businesses, government, and civil society to ensure that sustainable consumption becomes a norm rather than a choice in smaller towns and cities.

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