

Original Research Article

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Awareness and Knowledge about Green Products among the Urban and Rural Consumers

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ABSTRACT

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The growing environmental concern amongst the public has demanded organizations, businesses and individuals to be responsible and conscious in their everyday activity not to cause any harm to the environment. Most environmental problems are caused by the way people living and continuously damaging the environment. The study was conducted with the aim to assess the awareness and knowledge among the consumers about green products. The exploratory research design was adopted to conduct the study. The data was collected from 600 educated consumers from the urban and rural areas of Dharwad and Belagavi district. The data was analyzed by using frequency, percentage, mean, 't' test and correlation coefficient. The results revealed that Both in urban and rural the areas majority of the consumers belonged 22-29 years of age group and more than half of the consumers selected for study were graduates in urban area and studied upto 12th standard in rural area. With regard to occupation one third of the consumers selected for the study were students, followed by unemployed and self employed consumers. Majority of the consumers had medium family income of rupees 7,380-51,780 per month. Maximum number of the selected consumers belonged to upper middle socio economic category. Urban consumers were more aware about green products than the rural consumers. Urban consumers had better knowledge about green products than rural consumers. The knowledge of the consumers will help the policy makers to develop the product and services based on the genuine need of the customers.

Introduction

Environmental pollution is one of the most serious problems experienced by humanity and other life-forms on the earth today. Going green means leading lifestyle that's not just more beneficial for people who do it, but for their surroundings as well. All the green products that we use provide benefit for the

people not just economically, but also socially and environmentally, which means that the green products preserve the public health in general. The more people decide to use green products the better it is for everyone around them. When we use products that are natural, it is much better for our well being. The rapid economic growth in the past years have witnessed increasing consumers' consumption

worldwide causing environmental deterioration through over-consumption and utilization of natural resources (Chen and Chai, 2010). With technological development, there has been an increase in industrial activities that have directly and indirectly affected the environment. The environment has been extensively exploited, resulting in climate change, global warming, pollution, environmental exploitation, ozone layer depletion etc. Such problems have raised concerns about protecting our climate, which has led to the idea of going green. Government has adopted policies to save the world from further deterioration, so businesses have chosen the environment friendly practices. Creation of goods that are environmentally friendly is one of the first initiatives taken to resolve this environmental problem.

A consumer's concern towards a safe environment has been frequently increasing. Nowadays, the market contains a wide variety of products that are environmentally safe. The purchase behavior of the consumers depends on the beliefs and the consciousness of the consumers towards their health and environmental concern.

The decision to purchase these products depends on the behavior which the consumers adopt towards green products. Consumers who are concerned with the environment and are knowledgeable about the environmental issues when shopping try to purchase only eco-friendly products. Increasing environmental concerns and awareness of eco-friendly products among consumers have resulted in their green buying behavior.

One can only hope that change is the only thing that is constant, once we decide protecting our nature thereby ensuring our own safe future and then the rest of it follows. Let's start using eco-friendly products for a

start now and turn the vision of a lovely environment in the future a reality.

Awareness and knowledge about green products is the basic idea which transcends people to think positively towards the problems being faced by the environment as well as the people.

The main objectives include to study the awareness about green products among the consumers. To assess the knowledge about green products among the consumers. To compare the awareness and knowledge between the gender and locality.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted during 2018-20, the data was collected by using structured interview questionnaire and self developed knowledge scale. A total 600 consumers from Dharwad and Belagavi district were selected for the study. Frequency, percentage and mean scores were used to interpret the results of demographic variable, awareness and knowledge among the consumers.

Results and Discussion

The age of the respondents was grouped into three categories. The majority of the urban consumers (43.00 %) were in the age group of 22-29 years, followed by more than 29 years (30.00 %) and less than 22 years (27.00 %). More than half of the selected consumers (57.67 %) were graduates followed by 39.00 per cent were studied upto 12th standard and only 3.33 per cent were post graduates. More than one third of the urban consumers were students (32.67 %), followed by unemployed (21.66 %), self employed (21.00 %), employed in private sector (13.33 %) and employed in government sector (11.33 %). Majority of the urban consumers (83.00 %) had medium family income of ₹ 7,380/-

51,780/- and only 17.00 per cent of them had high income of more than ₹ 51,780/- as presented in the Table 1.

In rural area majority of the consumers (48.33 %) belonged to 22-29 years age group, followed by less than 22 years (27.33 %) and more than 29 years (23.33 %). More than half of the consumers (54.00 %) were studied upto 12th standard, followed by graduates (43.33 %) and only 2.67 per cent were post graduates. Around one third of the selected rural consumers (32.67 %) were unemployed, followed by students (27.67 %), self employed (16.67 %), private employees (16.00 %) and only seven per cent were government employees. More than ninety per cent of the rural consumers (91.33 %) had medium family income of ₹ 7,380/- to 51,780/- followed by 8.33 per cent of them had high income of more than ₹ 51,780/- and only 0.33 per cent consumers in rural area had low family income.

The distribution of the consumers according to their socio economic status categories as per the Aggarwal (2005) scale was represented in the Fig. 1. It was clear from the data that 64.00 per cent of the urban consumers belonged to upper middle socio economic category, followed by lower middle (28.66 %) socio economic category and only 7.33 per cent of the urban consumers belonged to high socio economic category.

A glance at Fig. 1 shows that half of the selected rural consumers (50.33 %) belonged to upper middle socio economic category, followed by lower middle socio economic category (46.33 %) and only 3.00 per cent of the respondents belonged to high socio economic category.

Table 2 reveals that cent per cent of the selected urban consumers were aware about

green products. Nearly seventy per cent of the female consumers were aware about recycling symbol. More than ninety per cent of the consumers (92.00 %) were aware about the term organic was used alternatively for green products, followed by recycled (85.00 %), energy efficient (78.66 %), non toxic (73.67 %), biodegradable (56.33 %), low carbon (36.33 %) and water efficient (22.33 %).

All the selected rural consumers were aware about green products. Three fourth of the rural consumers (75.66 %) were aware about recycling symbol.

Regarding alternate terms used for the green products, more than ninety per cent of the rural consumers (93.67 %) were aware about the term organic, followed by the term recycled (72.67 %), energy efficient (69.33 %), non toxic (61.33 %), biodegradable (47.00 %), low carbon (16.33 %) and water efficient (16.00 %) as presented in the Table 2.

Fig. 2 presents the comparison of awareness about green products among the selected urban and rural consumers reveals that, urban consumers were more aware about green products than the rural consumers with the mean scores of 9.78 and 8.87 respectively.

The student 't' test showed highly significant difference of awareness among the selected urban and rural consumers also.

The comparison of knowledge about green products among the urban and rural consumers was depicted in the Fig. 3. It reveals that the urban consumers had better knowledge about food products (13.99), followed by green cosmetics (13.94), energy saving appliances (13.55) general green products (13.07) and green textile (12.79).

Table.1 Distribution of respondents based on their socio-personal characteristics n=600

Variables	Classification	Urban (n ₁ =300)	Rural (n ₂ =300)
Age (yrs)	<22	81 (27.00)	82 (27.33)
	22-29	129 (43.00)	145 (48.33)
	>29	90 (30.00)	73 (23.33)
Education	Upto 12 th std	117 (39.00)	162 (54.00)
	Graduate	173 (57.67)	130 (43.33)
	Post Graduate	10 (3.33)	8 (2.67)
Occupation	Student	98 (32.67)	83 (27.67)
	Unemployed	65 (21.66)	98 (32.67)
	Self employed	63 (21.00)	50 (16.67)
	Private sector	40 (13.33)	48 (16.00)
	Government sector	34 (11.33)	21 (7.00)
Monthly Family Income (₹)	Low (<7380)	-	1 (0.33)
	Medium (7380-51780)	249 (83.00)	274 (91.33)
	High (>51780)	51 (17.00)	25 (8.33)

Table.2 Awareness about green products among the consumers n=600

Particulars	Urban (n ₁ =300)	Rural (n ₂ =300)
1. Awareness about green products	300 (100)	300 (100)
2. Awareness about the symbol	212 (70.66)	227 (75.66)
3. Terms used for green products		
Non-toxic	221 (73.67)	184 (61.33)
Biodegradable	169 (56.33)	141 (47.00)
Energy efficient	236 (78.66)	208 (69.33)
Organic/ locally grown	276 (92.00)	281 (93.67)
Recycled	255 (85.00)	218 (72.67)
Low carbon	109 (36.33)	49 (16.33)
Water efficient	67 (22.33)	48 (16.00)

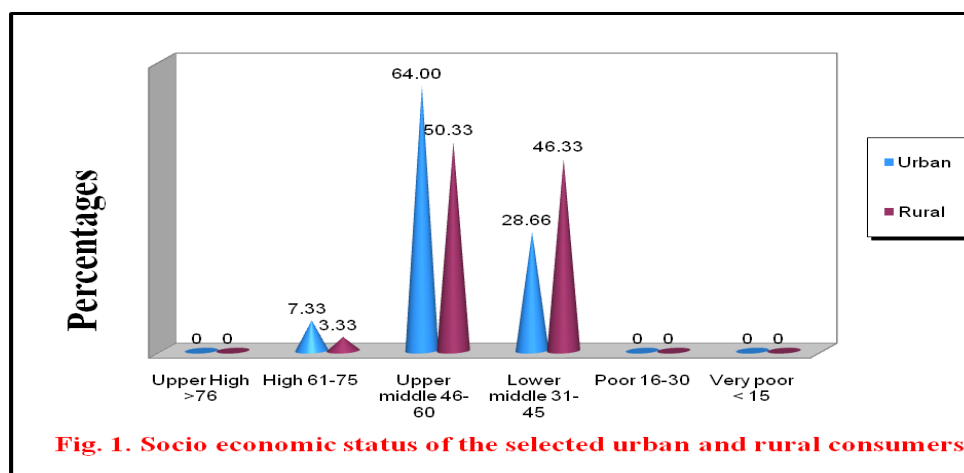
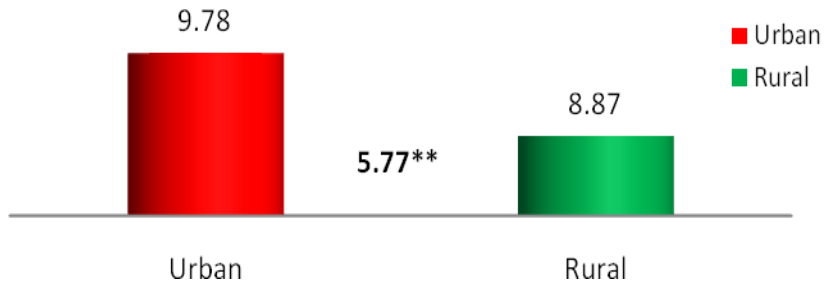


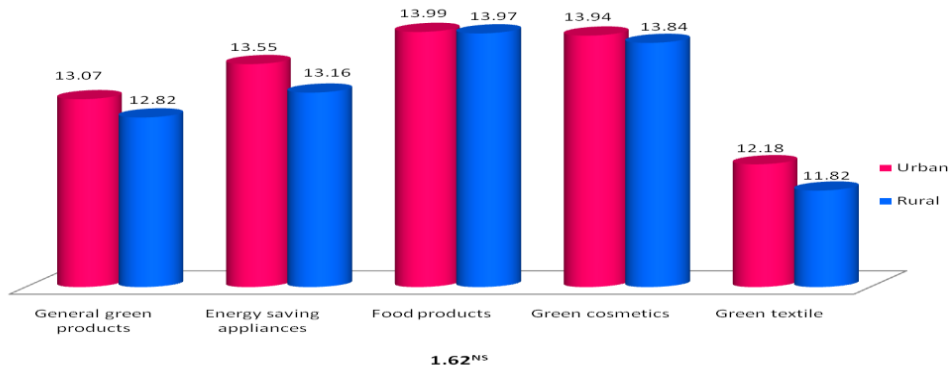
Fig. 1. Socio economic status of the selected urban and rural consumers

Fig.2 Awareness about green products among the consumers



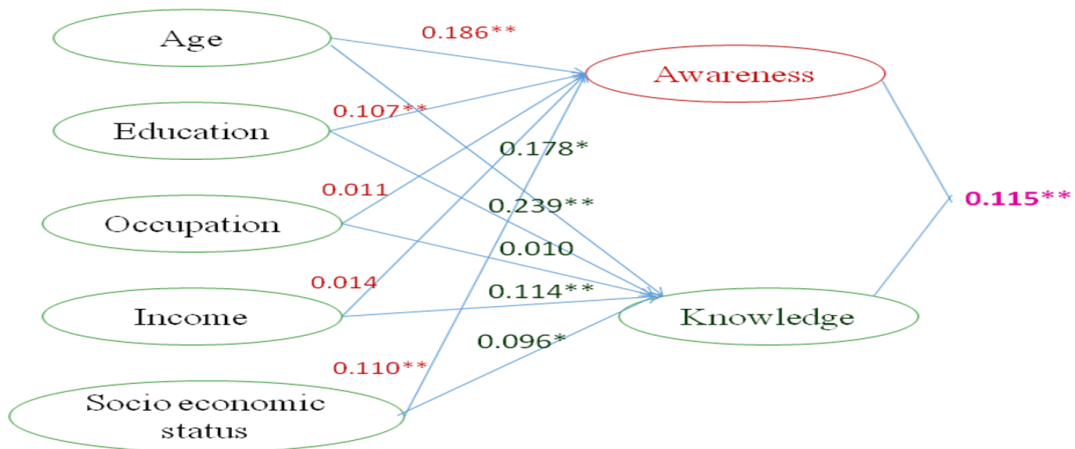
** Significant @ 1% level of significance

Fig.3 Knowledge about green products among the consumers



NS-Non Significant

Fig.4 Relationship between the demographic factors, awareness and knowledge of the consumers about green products



The selected rural consumers had higher knowledge about the food products (13.97), followed by green cosmetics (13.84), energy saving appliances (13.16), general green

products (12.82) and green textile (11.82) as presented in the Fig. 3. The statistical analysis reveals that there was no significant difference between the locality with respect to knowledge about green products.

The result from Fig. 4 reveals the correlation between the demographic variables and the awareness, knowledge, attitude and practices among selected consumers. The age of the consumers was highly correlated with the awareness and knowledge among consumers at 0.01 level, indicates that the selected consumers with higher age had better awareness and knowledge towards green products.

The education of the consumers showed highly significant relationship with the awareness and knowledge of the consumers towards green products. It indicates that the consumers with higher education had better awareness and knowledge towards green products. The income of the consumers showed significant relation with the knowledge about green products. It indicates that the consumers with high income showed better knowledge about green products. The socio economic status of the consumers was significantly correlated with the awareness and knowledge among the consumers towards green products.

It shows that the consumers with high socio economic status had better awareness and knowledge about green products. The awareness of the consumers showed significant relation with the knowledge about green products at 0.05 level, indicating that the higher the awareness among the consumers better will be the knowledge about green products.

In conclusion, both in urban and rural areas majority of the consumers belonged 22-29 years age group and more than half of the consumers selected for study were graduates in urban area and in rural area majority were studied upto 12th standard. With regard to occupation nearly one third of the consumers selected for the study were students in urban area, selected consumers were unemployed in rural area. Majority of the

consumers had medium family income of rupees 7,380/-51,780/- per month. Maximum number of the selected consumers belonged to upper middle socio economic category. Gender wise awareness showed that, both in urban and rural area male consumers' had better awareness about green products than the female consumers. On the basis of location, urban consumers were more aware about green products than the rural consumers. Urban consumers had better knowledge about green products than rural consumers. In both the urban and rural locality, female consumers had better knowledge than male consumers about green products

Implications and recommendations

The knowledge about green products among the consumers is medium, so the knowledge has to be imparted among the consumers.

The knowledge of the consumers will help the policy makers to develop the product and services based on the genuine need of the customers.

Green initiatives like subsidies to producers, campaigns on green products, exhibitions on green products can be taken up by government and voluntary organizations to create awareness and to impart knowledge among the consumers.

Promotion of green concept should start from school level itself.

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Competing interests

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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