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**GREEN PRODUCTS VERSUS CONVENTIONAL PRODUCTS: A SELECT STUDY**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of this paper is to compare green and conventional products. Consumers need information to make effective decision making. This paper also helps the marketers to develop advertising strategies for communicating the advantages of green products. Four consumer products: jute bags, CFL bulbs, eco-friendly paper and organic food are briefed in this paper by comparing them with their respective counter conventional products. This paper was written based on secondary sources for discussing the advantages of green products over conventional products. From this research it is found that green products are having positive impact on the environment but at the same time there is need for effective green supply chain strategies. Marketers should develop strategies for minimizing the price of green products which is a major barrier for consumers to adopt green products.*

**KEYWORDS**

Eco-friendly products, Environment friendly products, Green marketing, Green products, Organic products.

**INTRODUCTION**

There are wide varieties of green products in the present world. Each green product has its unique advantages towards the environment. Products which do not cause any kind of harm to the environment are known as green products. The marketers had identified that there will be huge demand for 'green products' in future and started developing green marketing strategies. Organizations are bringing innovative green products for safety of the environment and also to sustain in the competitive business world. Consumers are becoming environmental conscious and looking for products which are harmless to the environment. Throughout this paper, the terms 'green products', 'eco-friendly products', 'environmental products' and 'sustainable products' mean the same. Green marketing is a movement which makes organizations to manufacture products which are harmless to the environment. The green products which are selected in this study are: CFL bulbs, Organic food, Jute bags and Eco-friendly paper. Each of these products has its unique advantages for protecting the environment.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

The jute stands in the second place after cotton in natural fiber category products. The polypropylene had brought substitute products to jute but at the cost of environment (Boyce, 1995). The consumer behavior towards organic foods is positively influenced by values such as 'security', 'hedonism', 'stimulation', and 'self-direction' etc (Aertsens, 2009). Chen (2009) made an investigation to understand the attitude of organic foods and found that concern of health and concern for environment were the two most important determinants which influence the consumer in purchase decision. Hustvedt & Dickson (2009) had conducted a survey in United States and found that 38 percent of consumers who are interested to purchase organic cotton had self-identity as environment, organic and socially responsible consumers. Hoefkens et.al, (2009) made a comparative study between organic and conventional vegetables and found both of them are having unique advantages and disadvantages. Chakrabarthy (2010) conducted a survey among experts in organic food industry and stated that three attitudes: assurance, utility of organic foods and reputation of the store play a vital in consumer purchase decision process. Ghosh (2010) had explained the difference between traditional marketing and green marketing and also briefed how organizations move from one stage to another during the implementation of green marketing processes. The roles of social identify influence the consumers attitude towards green products and the branding of such green products is very important (Bartels & Hoogedam, 2011). Chen (2011) stated that organizations should modify their structure and adopt new culture for attaining green organizational identify. It also helps the organization to According to Pual & Rana (2012) the education, health consciousness and demographic have an influence on consumer attitude towards organic food products. Consumers are willing to pay 25 percent more for organic cotton apparel than conventionally produced cotton apparel (Ellis et.al, 2012).

**RESEARCH GAP**

Many studies were conducted on consumer attitude, consumer perception, consumer behavior regarding but there are no specific studies regarding comparison of green and non-green products. This paper is aimed to fulfill the research gap by comparison of selected green products versus traditional products.

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

The study is aimed to discuss the benefits of selected green products by comparing them with traditional products. It also provides insights for marketers and consumers in their respective decision making situations. The secondary objective of this paper is to provide information to advertisers for effective marketing of green products.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The secondary sources of data are used this study to describe about green versus non-green products. The information from text books, magazines, online sources and journal articles will be used to find the differences between green and non- green products.

### CFL VERSUS INCANDESCENT BULBS

CFL bulbs are energy efficient and they are costly (Sahakian, 2010). The average life span of CFL bulbs is life span of 8,000 hours and they need 13-15 watts of electricity. The carbon dioxide emission of CFL bulbs is approximately 1051 pounds per year. The CFL bulbs are sensitive to external environment and may not function efficiently at low temperatures. The disposal of CFL bulbs is an issue because it contains mercury is toxic for health and environment. CFL bulbs are more suitable for household lighting than outdoor lighting.

The average life span of incandescent bulbs is 1,200 hours and they need 60 watts of electricity. The annual operating cost of incandescent is high compared to CFL bulbs. But incandescent bulbs do not contain mercury and they can be disposed easily compared to CFL bulbs. Incandescent lights turn on instantly and they are not sensitive to external environment compared to CFLs.

### JUTE BAGS VERSUS PLASTIC BAGS

Jute bags are biodegradable and they are made from natural fiber. The manufacturing of jute bags does not consume petrol which is a scarce resource. Jute bags are reusable and available in various designs. Jute bags do not add any toxic materials to the products which are packed in them. The average life span of jute bags is approximately five years. Jute bags are eco-friendly and helps in reducing global warming. Jute bags are not resistant to environment unless they are treated with chemicals. Using jute bags becomes a promotional tool for organizations and people because they communicate the environmental concern of people. Jute bags carry more weight than plastic bags.

Plastic bags create land pollution and add tons of carbon emissions to the environment. Plastic bags had endangered the life of aquatic animals when they are mistaken for food and consumed. The life span of plastic is thousands of years and depends on thickness of the material. Plastic bags are resistant to the external environment. In the present world the use of plastic bags is becoming negative promotional tool for organizations and people.

### ORGANIC FOOD VERSUS CONVENTIONAL FOOD PRODUCTS

The organic food is manufactured without using synthetic chemicals, antibiotics and hormones during crop production (Dimitri & Greene, 2000). Organic food products are environment friendly and they are producing through organic farming systems like nutrient cycling, crop rotation, and animal manure are recycled etc. The pesticide residue is low and almost nil in some organic food products compared to conventional food products. The farming of organic food products causes less environmental impact than farming of conventional food products. Organic food consists of more vitamins and antioxidants for example scientists have observed that organic tomatoes have a type of antioxidant than conventionally grown tomatoes (Chang, 2012). The process of manufacturing makes organic products costly than non organic products. At present the organic products attributes like quality, physical shape are not comparable to their counterpart non organic food. But in future these issues may be avoided with support of research and development in the organic food sector.

The health consciousness and environment concern are the primary factors which positively influence consumers regarding organic food products. The carbon emissions caused by organic food manufacturing process is low. The process of manufacturing organic food products and the consumption of organic food helps the community to fight against global warming. Organic food do not cause any health related issues because pesticides and chemicals are not used during manufacturing process. The conventional food or traditional food had indirect health issues for using pesticides, and antibiotics etc.

### ECO-FRIENDLY PAPER VERSUS CONVENTIONAL PAPER

Eco-friendly paper minimizes the impact on the environment during the manufacturing process. The consumption of energy, water, and carbon emissions are very low compared to manufacturing of regular paper. The raw material used for eco-friendly paper is renewable and it is recyclable. The deforestation is reduced to a greater extent with the consumption of eco-friendly paper. However the cost of eco-friendly paper is little bit more than conventional paper. Eco-friendly paper is certified by Forest Steward Council (FSC), an organization which encourages the sustainable forests around the world. The chemicals like chlorine are not used in manufacturing of eco-friendly paper.

### DISCUSSION

The green products minimize the carbon footprint of human beings on this planet. These products are being marketed aggressively from the past three decades. The existing manufacturing process of green products is not satisfactory because the lack of green supply chain process is making them to have an impact on the environment. For example jute is second largest crop after cotton in the natural fiber industry but at the same time the transportation of raw jute is increasing the carbon foot print. The CFL bulbs which are environment friendly are becoming an issue at the time of disposal because of mercury in the bulb. The organic food products which are good for health may cause impact on the environment if they are not locally grown and consumed. The recyclable paper which is manufactured by consuming less energy may increase reverse logistics cost for the organizations. In this study it is observed that distribution of products is increasing carbon emissions due to transportation.

At present the organizations have taken an initiative and started the manufacturing of green products but at the same time these products are not becoming perfect substitutes of regular products. For example CFL bulbs which are sensitive to environment are not suitable in countries where temperature is low. The jute bags which are alternate to plastic bags are not suitable for carrying liquid products like milk, juices etc. Hence the organizations should develop sustainable product strategies for developing efficient products. The quality, color and design is also an issue with regard to organic food products compared to conventional food products.

### CONCLUSION

To protect the earth from global warming and reducing carbon emissions the green consumption of green products is essential. The drastic climatic changes can be controlled with green products. The only choice before the world is to accept green products and minimize the carbon foot print on this globe. The green products like jute bags, CFL bulbs, organic food and eco-friendly paper have a positive impact on the environment. But at the same time organizations should continuously improve their green marketing products for the well being of mankind on this planet.

### SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There are many innovative green products which are being introduced by organizations. The future researchers can select products like organic cotton, organic personal care products and green electronic appliances etc. Apart from comparing green products with regular products, researchers can study about importance of labeling and branding of green products. Due to time and other resource constraints only four green products are selected in this paper.

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