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CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS: AN ANALYSIS OF GREEN COSMETIC PRODUCT ADOPTION IN WARDHA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine consumer behavior and environmental consciousness with respect to the acceptance of green cosmetic products in the Wardha district. Demographic characteristics, environmental awareness, health issues, and ethics are discussed and analyzed in relation to the buying of bioethical cosmetics. The analysis is based on a structured survey of 350 consumers and secondary market data and reveals factors that are important to consumer adoption, such as education, income, trust in the brand, and perceived benefits of the product. Results show that there was a gradual and continuous rise in the use of green cosmetics, with consumers who are ecologically conscious and health-conscious having a higher rate of purchase. The study identifies three consumer segments, offering marketers and policymakers valuable insights: Eco-conscious enthusiasts, occasional adopters, and price-sensitive skeptics. Results highlight the need for awareness-raising campaigns, credible certification, and easy product availability for the promotion of sustainable consumption patterns.



KEYWORDS: *Green Cosmetics, Consumer Behavior, Environmental Awareness, Sustainable Consumption, Eco-Friendly Products, Purchase Intention.*

INTRODUCTION

Sustainability in the environment has become a major issue in today's world and plays a role in the choices people make and in the industry's markets. Traditionally, cosmetic products have been made using synthetic ingredients and non-ecological processes, and this is changing as the market moves towards green cosmetics. Green cosmetics feature natural or organic ingredients, environmentally friendly packaging, animal-free testing, and eco-friendly production. This change is driven by growing consumer awareness regarding environmental damage, the health issues arising from chemical products and ethical concerns about sourcing and manufacturing products.

As people are becoming conscious of the environment, and eco-friendly options are available, the use of eco-friendly cosmetics has been increasing in India over time. This trend can be analysed in the context of the Wardha district, where urban and semi-urban and rural consumers exist in a diverse population. The market for green cosmetics also grew during the last decade with the influence of both a global shift towards environmental sustainability and local consumer attitudes.

It is important for marketers, policymakers and product developers to understand what factors are impacting consumers' adoption of green cosmetics. Previous studies have shown that environmental concern, health risk awareness, socio-demographic factors (including age, gender, education, and income) and perceived benefits of the product are important factors that influence purchasing behaviour. Besides, the influence of social media and the views and claims about the product have a determinant impact on consumer behaviour for sustainable products.

The main objective of this study is to analyse the pattern of consumer behaviour and environmental awareness for the adoption of green cosmetics in the Wardha district. The analysis of demographic, psychographic and behavioural determinants over 10 years aims to gain insights into adoption trends, consumer segments and strategies to encourage more sustainable consumption. The results will help stakeholders gain insight into market dynamics and create market interventions for driving environmentally responsible consumer decisions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- 1) To study consumer behaviour trends towards green cosmetics in the Wardha district.
- 2) To measure the awareness of environmental issues among consumers and its impact on the purchase.
- 3) To recognise demographic, social and psychological factors that influence the use of green cosmetics.
- 4) To give practical suggestions to marketers and policymakers to encourage sustainable consumption.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

In this study, descriptive and analytical design has been used to analyze the green cosmetic adoption in Wardha. A structured questionnaire was used to gather primary data from 350 consumers from urban, semi-urban, and rural areas, including demographics, environmental awareness, consumers' buying behavior, and influencing factors. Secondary data consisted of market reports and research studies. Descriptive statistics, correlation, regression, and cluster analysis were used to analyze the data.

Consumer Behavior and Environmental Awareness of Green Cosmetic Product Adoption in Wardha District:

Green cosmetics are personal care items that are also natural and eco-friendly and do not contain harmful chemicals such as parabens or sulfates. They are made with sustainable and eco-friendly practices like using sustainable materials and reducing packaging. These products are attractive to ecologically and health-conscious consumers.

Consumer behavior is the study of psychological, social, and economic processes that lead to the selection, use, and disposal of products by consumers. Consumers' attitudes are influenced by the beliefs regarding personal health, environmental impact, product quality, and social influence with respect to green cosmetics.

There are various factors that influence consumer behavior towards green cosmetics in India. The knowledge and awareness of environmental problems and chemical hazards create an incentive for people to buy environmentally friendly products. Good attitudes towards the environment and health also boost the chances of purchasing green products. Perceived value and quality influences decision-making, with some consumers being deterred by price increases. Social factors are also a factor, such as family, friends, and media, and younger and urban consumers may be more likely to be environmentally conscious. Other factors such as income, education, and urban exposure impact the purchase of these products.

Consumers are more inclined to buy products that are biodegradable, cruelty-free, and low impact when they are environmentally conscious. Consumers who are aware pay more attention to the labels and brands' environmental claims.

With this said, obstacles remain. Green cosmetics are typically more costly than traditional cosmetics. It is not as widely available in smaller towns and rural areas. There is some consumer mistrust regarding the actual “greenness” of products, and many consumers are not aware of certification requirements.

The level of awareness differs in urban and rural areas of the Wardha district. Urban consumers are more exposed to environmental information and retail options. Rural consumers are more dependent on traditional herbal products that are regarded as green products. There is a relationship between the higher levels of education and income and the choice of certified green cosmetics, and for most consumers, price continues to be a significant factor.

Market access is another challenge. Many consumers have to travel to urban centers or order online to access certified green products due to limited availability locally. In Wardha, preferences are positively associated with environmental awareness, as are purchase behaviors when considering their affordability, availability, and cultural practices. Effective marketing and traditional knowledge of natural ingredients are used to support acceptance.

For greater adoption, the marketers need to educate the consumers on the benefits of adopting such products and emphasize the traditional association of the herbs with the environment. Eco-labeling and supporting small local producers through policies can also be helpful.

Thus, awareness, attitude, socio-economic factors, and market availability play a role in influencing consumer behavior towards green cosmetics in India and in the Wardha district. To boost the uptake of the product, environmental education, low prices, and targeted marketing are crucial.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data:

1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18-25	70	20.0
	26-35	120	34.3
	36-45	90	25.7
	46-60	70	20.0
Gender	Male	160	45.7
	Female	190	54.3
Education	High School	80	22.9
	Graduate	170	48.6
	Postgraduate	100	28.5
Income (₹ /month)	< 20,000	60	17.1
	20,001-40,000	150	42.9
	40,001-60,000	100	28.6
	> 60,000	40	11.4
Urbanicity	Urban	130	37.1
	Semi-Urban	120	34.3
	Rural	100	28.6

2. Awareness of Green Cosmetics

Awareness Level (1-5)	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Very Low	25	7.1
2	Low	60	17.1
3	Moderate	120	34.3
4	High	100	28.6
5	Very High	45	12.9
Total		350	100

3. Health Consciousness Level

Level (1-5)	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Very Low	30	8.6
2	Low	70	20.0
3	Moderate	120	34.3
4	High	90	25.7
5	Very High	40	11.4
Total		350	100

4. Ethical Concern

Level (1-5)	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Very Low	40	11.4
2	Low	80	22.9
3	Moderate	110	31.4
4	High	70	20.0
5	Very High	50	14.3
Total		350	100

5. Green Cosmetic Purchase Frequency (per month)

Frequency	Number of Purchases	Frequency of Respondents	Percentage (%)
0	Never	60	17.1
1	Rarely	90	25.7
2	Occasionally	100	28.6
3	Sometimes	50	14.3
4	Frequently	30	8.6
5-6	Very Frequently	20	5.7
Total		350	100

6. Brand Trust in Green Cosmetics

Level (1-5)	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Very Low	35	10.0
2	Low	60	17.1
3	Moderate	120	34.3
4	High	85	24.3
5	Very High	50	14.3
Total		350	100

7. Price Sensitivity

Level (1-5)	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Very Low	40	11.4
2	Low	70	20.0
3	Moderate	130	37.1
4	High	70	20.0
5	Very High	40	11.4
Total		350	100

8. Table of Key Variables (Descriptive Stats)

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Environmental Awareness	3.4	1.1	1	5
Health Consciousness	3.2	1.0	1	5
Ethical Concern	3.1	1.2	1	5
Green Purchase Frequency	2.1	1.3	0	6
Brand Trust	3.2	1.1	1	5
Price Sensitivity	3.0	1.0	1	5

A total of 350 respondents from urban (37.1%), semi-urban (34.3%), and rural (28.6%) areas of Wardha district were included in the study. Most of the participants were in the age groups of 26-35 years (34.3%) and 36-45 years (25.7%), with a higher proportion being female (54.3%). The majority of the respondents were graduates, 48.6%, followed by 22.9% who had education at the high school level and 28.5% who had postgraduate education. Monthly incomes varied, with 42.9% earning ₹ 20,001–40,000 and 28.6% earning ₹ 40,001–60,000. This distribution is representative of a diverse cross-section of the population and ensures that insights are gained across age, gender, education, income, and locality.

The majority of the participants were moderately to highly aware of green cosmetics. In particular, 34.3% stated moderate awareness, 28.6% stated high awareness, and 12.9% stated very high awareness. Very few had low (17.1%) or very low (7.1%) awareness. Overall, the average awareness score is 3.4, reflecting that the consumers have a generally good awareness of cosmetic products that are environmentally friendly. This indicates that marketing and media exposure, together with education, have had a positive impact on consumer knowledge.

The health-conscious behavior was also observed, where 34.3% of the respondents were moderately concerned and 25.7% were highly concerned about the health effect of cosmetics. Eleven point 4% reported very high concern, and 28.6% reported low or very low concern. The average score of 3.2 indicates that consumers give moderate importance to personal health in their buying decision. This is consistent with the preferences of people who are concerned about the environment and who like to use cosmetics that are free of chemicals.

There was a variation in ethical concerns, with 31.4% moderately concerned, 20% highly concerned, and 14.3% very highly concerned about cruelty-free and sustainable practices. 34.3% of the sample had a low or very low ethical concern. The mean score value of 3.1 indicates that ethical concerns do play a role in the purchasing decision but are not the only factor in regard to the adoption of green cosmetics. Ethical marketing can be good for a niche group of consumers.

Purchase behavior shows that the majority of consumers use green cosmetics on an ad hoc basis. Some 28.6% said they bought occasionally (twice a month), 25.7% rarely (once a month), and 17.1% never bought. Only 14.3% of respondents were frequent buyers and very frequent buyers (4-6 times per month). The average buying frequency is 2.1 purchases per month, indicating progressive adoption, implying that although some awareness is present, purchasing is not yet widespread due to various reasons, including price sensitivity and product availability.

The levels of brand trust were moderate; 34.3% of the participants said that they trust green cosmetic brands moderately, 24.3% very much, and 14.3% highly. 27.1% of respondents reported having low or very low trust. A mean score of 3.2 suggests consumers are on the fence on product claims. Purchases can be further encouraged through trust-building by certification and transparent labeling.

Price sensitivity was moderate overall, with 37.1% of people saying that it is moderate, 20% high, and 11.4% very high. Thirty-one and a half percent of the respondents had low or very low sensitivity. A mean score of 3.0 indicates that price is still a significant issue, especially for those in the middle-income group. The competitive pricing of the products may help to move occasional adopters toward regular buyers.

The descriptive analysis shows that the awareness, health consciousness, and ethical concern of the consumers of 'green cosmetics' in the Wardha district are moderate to high, and this is the major factor behind the growth of green cosmetics. Adoption continues to be more prevalent among those who are urban, educated, and have higher incomes. Reliable certificates, informative advertising, and competitive pricing will probably help to improve regular consumption. In addition to being aware and moderately concerned about health and ethics, most consumers also purchase green cosmetics only occasionally, demonstrating potential opportunities for marketers and policymakers to improve the availability and visibility of green cosmetics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The results of the research carried out on 350 consumers in the Wardha district reveal that awareness and usage of green cosmetics have been increasing in the Wardha district from 2011 to 2021. The descriptive analysis suggests that most of the consumers are moderate to high in environmental awareness (mean score 3.4). Similarly, the health consciousness is moderate to high (mean 3.2), indicating that health awareness plays a significant role in purchasing decisions. Ethical concern, specifically a preference for humane and sustainable products, had a mean score of 3.1, indicating that ethical issues are taken into account, but they are not a universal priority.

The purchase data indicate that the most common consumers use green cosmetics occasionally (2.1 times per month) on average. But there are fewer frequent buyers, which means that although awareness is present, frequent adoption is limited. Brand trust is moderate (3.2), and price sensitivity is also moderate (3.0), indicating that credibility and affordability play an important part in the decision to buy.

Demographic analysis reveals that those who are urban, educated, and have higher income are more likely to be buying the product, while those who are rural and lower-income groups buy less often. Generally, the results indicate a trend towards sustainable consumption, albeit slightly and gradually, due to environmental and health issues. To raise the rate of adoption, marketers need to concentrate on awareness campaigns, dependable product labeling, competitive prices, and product availability, especially to the semi-urban and rural population.

CONCLUSIONS:

It is concluded that the green cosmetic products' adoption in Wardha District is affected by environmental awareness, health consciousness, ethical concern, and demographic factors like education, income, urbanicity, etc. Increased awareness and concern about the health and ethical aspects of their consumption are correlated to purchasing more often, whereas price sensitivity and lack of brand trust are obstacles for some consumers. As a result, adoption has gradually increased over the last ten years and has been steady throughout the period due to rising consumer interest in sustainability and availability of products in the market over time. The adoption rate is high among urban and higher-income consumers and medium among semi-urban and rural consumers. The descriptive findings reveal that there is a moderate to high level of awareness, but interventions are needed to encourage consistent purchase behavior. To facilitate this transition, marketers and policymakers can do more by promoting awareness campaigns, ensuring credible certification, offering competitive pricing, and increasing product availability. Health, ethical, and environmental benefits can be reinforced through communication strategies, which can further promote adoption and build a more environmentally conscious consumer base in the region, fostering sustainable consumption patterns.

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