

**SYNOPSIS OF THE THESIS**

**BUYING BEHAVIOR OF CONSUMERS TOWARDS**

**ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS**

**Doctoral Thesis submitted**

**In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**In**

**MANAGEMENT**

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**July 2021**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Eco-friendly marketing is used to satisfy the wants and needs of consumers and protect the environment and benefits to the society in a more environmentally friendly way. If companies are keen to adopt eco-friendly marketing successfully, they should incorporate the concept of eco-friendly marketing into all aspects of marketing activities. Companies should apply eco-friendly marketing strategies to increase the perceived value of their eco-friendly products and reduce the perceived risk of their products concerning environmental consideration to enhance their competitive advantage.

As consumers are more willing to buy eco-friendly products with reliable information, companies should provide trustworthy information for their consumers to reduce their consumer's perceived risk. Thus, the companies improve the eco-friendly buying behaviour of consumers through eco-friendly perceived value, eco-friendly perceived risk, and eco-friendly trust. Besides, companies must bear in mind that consumers are unlikely to compromise on product attributes such as value, quality, price, and performance.

To influence the eco-friendly buying behaviour of consumers, messages through eco-friendly advertising must be informing and convincing enough in reaching the desirable targeted business outcomes. The advertising claims namely "eco-friendly" and "biodegradable" are the general terminology available in the market, but its effectiveness in convincing eco-friendly purchase action is still insignificant. As a result, companies have started to identify the factors affecting buying behaviour of consumers for eco-friendly products to provide valuable

products to various segments of consumers. Environment-friendly consumers are responsive towards the environmental effects when they buy products and are actively involved in the conservation of energy and eco-friendly behaviour.

At present, consumers are becoming fairly educated about their environmental responsibility and gravity of environmental problems and are willing to choose eco-friendly products over traditional products. At the same time, the companies which apply eco-friendly marketing face numerous problems that include variation in demand, unawareness of consumers about eco-friendly products and their utilities, unfavourable attitude and perception of consumers towards eco-friendly products, dynamics in buying behaviour, dissatisfaction of consumers with eco-friendly products, heavy investment in product development and not ready to pay a premium by consumers for eco-friendly products. Given the changes in consumer buying criteria toward environmental responsibility, companies should concentrate on this segment because it provides a competitive advantage in the future.

## **2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The success of legislative measures and business strategies of companies aiming at sustainability are eventually depending on the adoption of the same by the consumers. Consumers are the key player in the marketing of any product and they play a major role in the process of marketing. The success or failure of any business is highly dependent on the buying behavior of consumers and understanding their preference and behavior will ultimately lead to the maximization of the efficiency of marketing strategies.

Nowadays, the environment is emerging as a significant issue for business, society, government. Its importance emerges from increasing environmental

deprivation namely ozone depletion, solid wastes, pollution, global warming, and climate change. It is detected those different activities of companies such as sourcing, producing, distributing and marketing have an unpleasant effect on the environment and are also believed to be the main source of almost all environment-related issues.

To tackle environmental problems, consumers believe that eco-friendly is the way to integrate with their buying behavior that can protect the environment. The result of this attitude is that an increasing number of companies are accepting their responsibility towards the environment.

Marketers are facing a problem in this context in understanding the awareness, attitude, and perception of consumers towards eco-friendly products. With growing environmental realization, companies need to understand not only product categories and brands preferred by consumers but also the factors that affect the buying behavior of consumers for eco-friendly products. At the same time, cultural, social, personal, and ethical values are also influencing the buying behavior of consumers for eco-friendly products.

There are no comprehensive research studies done to examine the influence of demographic profile on awareness, attitude, perception, and buying behavior of eco-friendly products and to identify the factors affecting buying behaviour and its demand in Kerala. Hence, this study will not only assist the marketers in segmenting the market properly and developing production and marketing strategies to meet the needs of consumers but the policymakers in imposing sustainability in the marketing of products and services also. With this background, the present research is made to study “Buying Behavior of Consumers towards Eco-Friendly Products in Kerala”. The product categories selected for this study are food and cosmetic.

### **3. RESEARCH GAP**

The literature review suggests that few researches have been done in the area of factors affecting buying behaviour of conventional products. Also, very few researches have been done to explore the aspects of awareness, attitude, and perception of eco-friendly customers towards eco-friendly food and cosmetic products against the demographic profile. Apart from this, the influence of personal value, as well as ethical value of respondent in the buying behaviour towards eco-friendly products, has also been not studied. The factors affecting buying behaviour of the eco-friendly product is also an interesting research area. This research will try to address these problems.

This research will also try to explore if any relationship exists between Attitude, Awareness, and Perception of eco-friendly customers towards eco-friendly products. The insights provided in this research will be useful for the organizations, NGOs working in the field of promoting eco-friendly products and Government bodies for increasing the awareness about eco-friendly products and the importance of using them in the current scenario. Measuring the level of attitude and thereby perception will help them to take necessary steps to increase the customer confidence and lower customer perceived risk.

### **4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To examine the consumer's awareness about eco-friendly products and the influence of the demographic profile of the consumers on their awareness towards eco-friendly products.
2. To know the consumer's attitude towards eco-friendly products to know the influence of the demographic profile of the consumer's on their attitude towards eco-friendly products.
3. To examine the consumer's perception towards eco-friendly products to know the influence of the demographic profile of the consumer's on their perception towards eco-friendly products.
4. To identify the factors that affecting buying behaviour of consumers for eco-friendly products.
5. To understand the influence of personal and ethical values on buying behaviour of consumers for eco-friendly products.
6. To examine and understand if any relation exists between awareness, attitude, and perception of consumers towards eco-friendly products

## **5. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

Hypotheses have been developed because of the research problem and objectives of the research. Null hypothesis have been mentioned below:-

The hypotheses of the study are:

H1. Demographic factors do not have any influence on the awareness level towards eco-friendly products.

H2. Demographic factors do not have any influence on the attitude of consumers towards eco-friendly products.

H3. Demographic factors do not have any influence on the perception of consumers towards eco-friendly products.

H4. Demographic factors do not have any influence on consumer buying behavior towards eco-friendly products.

H5. There is no significant relationship between their awareness, attitude, and perception of consumers towards eco-friendly products.

## **6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The consumer's awareness about eco-friendly products is useful to know their knowledge on eco-friendly products. The consumer's attitude and perception towards eco-friendly products are helpful for a broad understanding of the consumer's insights, feelings, and compassion for eco-friendly products. The factors that affecting buying behaviour of consumers for eco-friendly products are useful to identify the key factors for formulating and implementing effective eco-friendly promotional strategies. The influence of personal and ethical values on buying behaviour of consumers for the eco-friendly product is helpful to understand the extent of the influence of personal and ethical values on consumer's buying behaviour for eco-friendly products.

The outcome of this study is useful to producers and retailers of eco-friendly products to replicate their production and marketing strategies and compete efficiently in the dynamic market environment. In realistic terms, it is also

anticipated that the present study can provide a better understanding of the environment and moral values of consumers by producers and policymakers.

## **7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The descriptive research design is used for the present study. The study is conducted in Kerala . Kollam, Aleppey, Thiruvananthapuram, and Kottayam districts in Kerala State are chosen for the present study. The eco-friendly products selected for the study are food and cosmetic products. Food products considered in the study are Cereals and dairy products whereas cosmetic products used are face wash and moisturizing cream. The consumers of eco-friendly products are selected by using the convenience sampling method. The data are collected from 711 consumers of eco-friendly products through a structured questionnaire. Details of district wise sample collection are as follows:

Data were collected from users and non-users of eco-friendly products from the following centers given below:

- Eco Shop Kollam
- Wellgate Organic, Kollam
- Green Mart, Kollam
- I Mall, Kollam
- Thanal Organic Bazaar, Tvm
- Organic India, Tvm
- Pranathi Eco products, Tvm
- Mall of Travancore, Tvm

- Abtec Eco shop, Kottayam
- INFAC, Kottayam
- MILLIONS, Kottayam
- Kottayam City Centre, Kottayam
- Neeveta Shopping Mall, Alleppey
- Empire Mall, Alleppey
- Eco shop, Alleppey

An online questionnaire was made using google doc and sent to customers. The database for this was obtained from NGOs and the organisation working on the field of green and also the customer data on professional networking websites.

#### **Samples collected from users of food and cosmetic eco-friendly products**

<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Name of the district</b>	<b>Number of samples</b>
1	Trivandrum	201
2	Kollam	165
3	Alleppey	155
4	Kottayam	190

#### **Samples collected from nonusers of cosmetic and food eco-friendly products**

<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Name of the district</b>	<b>Number of samples</b>
1	Trivandrum	35
2	Kollam	40
3	Alleppey	25

**Eco-friendly food brands used by users of eco-friendly products**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Food Brands</b>	<b>Number of Consumers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	Nestle	95	22.62
2.	Conscious Food	37	8.81
3.	Vision Fresh	60	14.28
4.	24 Mantra	58	13.81
5.	Ashirwad	85	20.24
6.	Walgreen Farm	28	6.67
7.	Organic India	24	5.71
8.	Just Organics	33	7.86
	<b>Total</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Eco-friendly cosmetic brands used by users of eco-friendly products**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Cosmetic Brands</b>	<b>Number of Consumers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	Garnier	63	21.65
2.	Himalaya Herbals	28	9.62
3.	O' Loreal	39	13.40
4.	Lakme	58	19.93
5.	Biotique	38	13.06
6.	Rustic Art	24	8.25
7.	Jovees	27	9.28
8.	Just Herbs	14	4.81

	<b>Total</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>100.00</b>
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**Category of products bought by occasional/non-users of eco-friendly products**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Category (Type)</b>	<b>Number of Consumers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	Food	84	84
2.	Cosmetics	16	16
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Food brands used by occasional/non-users of eco-friendly products**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Food Brands</b>	<b>Number of Consumers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	Nestle	24	28.56
2.	Conscious Food	3	3.60
3.	Vision Fresh	6	7.14
4.	24 Mantra	5	5.95
5.	Ashirwad	17	20.24
6.	Walgreen Farm	2	2.40
7.	Organic India	6	7.14
8.	Just Organics	3	3.57
9	Other local brand- Avees	18	21.40
	<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Food brands used by occasional/non-users of eco-friendly products**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Cosmetic Brands</b>	<b>Number of Consumers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
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1.	Garnier	3	18.75
2.	Himalaya Herbals	3	18.75
3.	O' Loreal	2	12.50
4.	Lakme	4	25.00
5.	Biotique	---	00.00
6.	Rustic Art	---	00.00
7.	Jovees	4	25.00
8.	Just Herbs	---	00.00
9	Any other brand	----	00.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.00</b>

## 8. FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

As per the research gap mentioned above, the association or dissociation between the demographic profile of consumers and awareness towards eco-friendly products, the association or dissociation between the demographic profile of consumers and attitude towards eco-friendly products, the association or dissociation between the demographic profile of consumers and perception towards eco-friendly products, the association or dissociation between the demographic profile of consumers and factors affecting their buying behavior for eco-friendly products, the association or dissociation between the demographic profile of consumers and personal values influencing their buying behavior for eco-friendly products and difference between the demographic profile of consumers and ethical values influencing their buying behavior for eco-friendly products is examined and to be found out. Similarly to study the relationship between awareness, attitude, and perception of consumers

towards the eco-friendly product is also helpful for producers of eco-friendly products.

The demographic profile of consumers and particulars about eco-friendly products are examined using percentage analysis. Mean and standard deviation are calculated to understand agreement levels on consumer's awareness about eco-friendly products, consumer's attitude towards eco-friendly products, consumer's perception towards eco-friendly products, and influence of personal and ethical values on buying behaviour of consumers for eco-friendly products. Exploratory factor analysis is carried out to identify the factors that affecting buying behaviour of consumers for eco-friendly products.

Simple correlation analysis is applied to study the relationship between awareness, attitude, and perception of consumers towards eco-friendly products. The stated hypotheses were tested using appropriate statistical tools.

### **9. Particulars about non-users of eco-friendly products**

The data collected from the occasional users or non-users through a questionnaire (given as Annexure IX) are based on the assumption that if they are using the eco-friendly products, what would have been their preferences and choices.

#### **Source of information of eco-friendly products**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Source of Information</b>	<b>Number of Consumers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	Family	5	5.00

2.	Friends	5	5.00
3.	Neighbours	4	4.00
4.	Colleagues	8	8.00
5.	Advertisements	78	78.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>

#### Availability of eco-friendly products in the market

Sl. No.	Availability	Number of Consumers	Percentage
1.	Easily Available	6	6
2.	Not Easily Available	71	71
3.	Available	23	23
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>

#### Price of eco-friendly products

Sl. No.	Price of Eco-Friendly Product	Number of Consumers	Percentage
1.	Less than non-eco-friendly products	9	9
2.	Very less than non-eco-friendly products	4	4
3.	Equal to non-eco-friendly products	9	9
4.	Higher than non-eco-friendly products	47	47
5.	Very high than non-eco-friendly	31	31

	products		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>

#### Category of eco-friendly products used

Sl. No.	Category (Type)	Number of Consumers	Percentage
1.	Food	84	84
2.	Cosmetics	16	16
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>

#### Money spent in a month for eco-friendly products

Sl. No.	Money Spent	Number of Consumers	Percentage
1.	Less than Rs.3000	26	26
2.	Rs.3001 – Rs.5000	34	34
3.	Rs.5,001 – Rs.7,000	18	18
4.	Rs.7,001 – Rs.9,000	13	13
5.	More than Rs.9,000	9	9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>

#### Frequency of buying eco-friendly products

Sl. No.	Frequency of Buying	Number of Consumers	Percentage
1.	Daily	15	15
2.	Weekly	29	29

3.	Fortnightly	39	39
4.	Monthly	7	7
5.	Quarterly	6	6
6.	Half Yearly	4	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**10. Comparison of the finding of users and occasional/non-users of eco-friendly products**

<b>Sl.no</b>	<b>Users of Eco-friendly Products</b>	<b>Occasional/Non-users of Eco-friendly Products</b>
1	27.85 percent say advertisements are the sources of information about eco-friendly products	78 percent say advertisements are the sources of information about eco-friendly products
2	42.76 percent of consumers opine eco-friendly products are available	71 percent, the majority of respondents opine eco-friendly products including eco-friendly food and cosmetic products are not easily available
3	59.07 percent of consumers bought eco-friendly food products	
4	44.87 percent of consumers are buying eco-friendly products fortnightly.	39 percent of the respondents have bought eco-friendly products fortnightly.

5	43.7 percent of consumers spend Rs.5, 001 – Rs.7, 000 in a month for buying eco-friendly products	34 percent of respondents spend Rs.3, 001 – Rs.5, 000 in a month for buying eco-friendly products.
6	51.62 percent of the consumers opine the prices of eco-friendly products are higher than non-eco-friendly products.	47 percent of respondents opine price of eco-friendly products is higher than non-eco-friendly products.
7	22.62 percent of consumers use the Nestle food brand.  21.65 percent, larger than one-fifth of consumers use Garnier cosmetic brand.	29 percent of consumers use the Nestle food brand 25 percent use Lakme cosmetic brand.

## 11. RESULTS

Percentages are used to examine the demographic profile of consumers and particulars about eco-friendly products. Mean and standard deviation are calculated to understand agreement levels on consumer's awareness about eco-friendly products, consumer's attitude towards eco-friendly products, consumer's perception towards eco-friendly products, and influence of personal and ethical values on buying behaviour of consumers for eco-friendly products. Exploratory factor analysis is carried out to identify the factors that affecting buying behaviour of consumers for eco-friendly products. ANOVA test and t-test are employed to find

the difference between the demographic profile of consumers and awareness, perception and attitude of the consumers towards eco-friendly products

Results obtained are as mentioned below:

- 1) Demographic factors do not have any influence on the awareness level of consumers towards eco-friendly products except the education of consumers, monthly income, and marital status.
- 2) Demographic factors do not have any influence on the level of attitude of consumers towards eco-friendly products except age, education, occupation, working experience, monthly income, type of family, and size of the family.
- 3) Demographic factors do not have any influence on the perception level of consumers towards eco-friendly products except the working experience of consumers, monthly income, type of family, and size of the family.
- 4) Awareness and attitude of consumers towards eco-friendly products are positively and highly related. Awareness and perception of consumers towards eco-friendly are positively and moderately associated. The attitude and perception of consumers towards eco-friendly products are positively and moderately interrelated.
- 5) Demographic factors do not have any influence on the buying behaviour of consumers towards eco-friendly products.
- 6) Demographic factors do not have any influence on the personal value and ethics and value, which influences the buying behaviour of consumers towards eco-friendly products except gender and age.

## **12. Impediments in the path of non-users to purchase Eco-friendly Products**

The majority of the non-users of eco-friendly consumers opine price of eco-friendly products is very higher than non-eco-friendly products. The income of non-users is the main reason for not forcing them to buy especially eco-friendly food products, which is presumably a healthy choice.

They also opined that eco-friendly products are not easily available in the market. According to them, they do not come across eco-friendly products very often in the store or marketplace from where they purchase food and cosmetic store. According to non-users, they do not even trust the claim by manufacturers about the attributes of the products. They also think that the satisfaction level they derived from conventional products is more than their eco-friendly counterparts.

They are cynical about the product claim like bio-degradable, green on the product label displayed in the store citing the reason for an inadequate standardization and lack of stringent legal action against those products and their manufacturers for not meeting the eco-friendly claim on the product label.

## **13. Comparison of the study with the existing literature (Theoretical Implication)**

It is important and valuable for the domain to know the theoretical implication of the study concerning the existing literature to examine for any deviations in the result obtained. This current study in Kerala is the first of its kind and is therefore important to know the reason for deviation behind.

Lee and Green (1991) found that people who had collectivistic cultures were highly worried about environmental problems in comparison with people from individualistic cultures. As per our study, the size of family and type of family has a

great influence on customer perception towards the environment and their attitude also shows concern for the environment. Hence our study matches with the existing literature.

The Literature study revealed that consumers would choose the eco-friendly brand when the quality and satisfaction were similar to the other brand not providing eco-friendly attributes. But as per our study, the buying behaviour is also shaped up by environmental consciousness apart from features of the eco-friendly products. Johri and Sahasakmontri (1998) revealed that consumers did not base their purchasing decision on environmental concerns alone. The attributes of the product namely price, availability, convenience, and quality played a more significant role in the consumers' purchasing decision process. Our study also found that purchasing behaviour is determined by others factors such as product value, health consciousness. Ottman (2000) showed that consumers were price-sensitive to green products and the price attributes affected consumers' purchasing decisions on green products. To satisfy green consumers, a green product must also be priced competitively with alternatives, which our finding fully agrees with. A Survey of literature also found that the customers are concerned about their everyday habits and the outcome of this was that some of the consumers translated their environmental concern into actively purchasing green product commitment. Geetha and Jenifer (2014) revealed that quality, health, variety, reliability, ambiance, advice from friends, environment, and quantity were the factors that influence the purchasing behavior of consumers. Consumers were willing to pay higher prices for products that create less pollution to the environment, but they were not willing to compromise the quality aspects of products for the environment. Our study indicated

that customer buying behaviour is also influenced by eco-friendly customer's healthy consciousness apart from environmental consciousness.

The customer belief and their purchasing behaviour in the purchase of eco-friendly products seem to be different due to factors such as lack of convincing information about the product features, high cost compared to conventional products, and non-attractive packing as that of non-green products and other attributes.

The literature and the information, usage, benefits, and features of eco-friendly products are still limited to the literate and educated section of people. This lack of awareness is creating an impediment in the path of eco-friendly consumption. Jain and Kaur (2004) revealed that various issues relating to the consumer's environmental attitudes, awareness, and behavior had been examined in the past. He analyzed the consumer's awareness towards environment and attitudes width from evaluating the environmental knowledge to understand the importance of environment, being environmentally friendly, consumer effectiveness, or the level to which the consumer felt she or he could create a distinction in the environment quality and ready to pay higher for environmentally friendly products. Zainudin (2013) found that consumers with a high degree of awareness and knowledge about the environment had associated positively with a good attitude on green purchasing behavior. Our study showed that customer awareness, attitude, and perception are positively related, which matches with the literature reviewed.

The factors such as Environmental awareness, Environmental product advantages, Eco-friendly product features, Eco-friendly product quality, Eco-literacy, Eco-friendly product placement, Environmental attitude, General perception of eco-friendly products, Buying behavior pattern, Healthy consciousness, Eco-friendly product price, Eco-friendly product value, Environmental sensitivity, Green product

purchase commitment, Price-sensitivity, Environmental-sustainability, Price and quality perception, Environmental product scarcity, Environmental consciousness, Interpersonal influence, Environmental knowledge, Product quality, and Personal safety; the findings of the study matches with that of the existing literature. But, for the Age, Monthly income, Gender, type of family, Education, and Occupation of the consumers, the finding of the study does not match with that of the existing literature. The Age of the respondent is influenced by their attitude on cosmetic products, and gender influences ethical purchasing behaviour for eco-friendly food and cosmetics products shows the peculiar nature of the eco-friendly market in Kerala. The family has a great influence on their perception and thereby attitude towards green food products. Gender-wise, there is no significant difference in perception towards cosmetic products.

For studying income and occupation of the respondents', the sample units considered in this study are customers both from the sophisticated organized retail outlet in malls like Mall of Travancore and local brands from small outlets in supermarkets.

#### **14. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The research finding will help the organizations to identify the key factors leading to more acceptability of the green cosmetic and food products in the Indian market, more specifically in Kerala and the districts taken inside the state. It will also help all the concerned persons to identify the factors which act as barriers to green products' popularity and take corrective actions to overcome these barriers.

The customers can be made more aware of the positive aspects of the green cosmetic and food products as a result of which they will be accepting these for their daily use. While comparing the results of the literature reviewed, contrary to the

awareness stated in that, awareness in this study of the customers regarding eco-friendly products is high for consumers with more education, monthly income, and marital status. Nonetheless, the awareness can be further increased with the latest technological advancement in the future. But as found in the literature review – age, education, occupation, working experience, monthly income, and family plays a substantial role in their attitude towards eco-friendly products. From the thesis, it is found that consumer perception leads to the attitude in most situations except gender, education, and occupation. Another finding is that the implication of this research carried out is that the outcomes of this study are highly helpful to producers of eco-friendly products to improve or modify their production strategies and features of eco-friendly products. These findings give ideas for marketers of eco-friendly products for revisiting and enhancing their marketing and promotional strategies to increase awareness and attitude of consumers for eco-friendly products and also their perception. The results of this study pave the means and ways for eco-friendly products and marketers to fulfill the requirements and needs of consumers of eco-friendly products.

Furthermore, it is useful to marketers and retailers to formulate and implement efficient advertisement strategies to increase awareness among consumers about products and brands of eco-friendly products. The results of this study provide suggestions for producers and retailers to adopt effective pricing and quality improvement strategies to improve the buying behaviour of consumers towards eco products. The findings of this study are also helpful to producers of eco-friendly products for providing competent and value addition to consumers by adopting innovative production and marketing practices. Since, features, environmental concerns, health consciousness, and values are factors affecting the

buying behaviour of consumers for eco-friendly products, producers and marketers must consider these aspects in their production and marketing strategies.

The educated customers are skeptical about the claim by manufacturers of its feature. Hence the producers of eco-friendly products have to take proper initiative to manufacture products with attractive features and trustworthy information to customers in gaining their confidence. The green certification boards and institutions also need to gain customer confidence through their service and action.

Male is predominant in using eco-friendly food and cosmetics aged between 26-35 years. Hence companies produce eco-friendly products and NGOs working in the field of green and Governmental organisations shall concentrate on conveying the benefits of this product at the age group below 26 years and above 35 years through a social media campaign, endorsement by a celebrity, and advertisement. Governmental and labour unions shall take initiative to make the employees the customers of eco-friendly products through their societies and structured work as this segment lacks in the consumption of eco-friendly products.

From the research study, it is found that awareness and subsequent attitude seem to have a positive relationship with higher education, monthly income, and marital status. State policy like free education to all, providing loan scholarship for the needy and eligible one and making higher education more reachable to all strata will help to increase the awareness and attitude which in turn the eco-friendly consumption of food and cosmetic products while keeping in my

that attitude of the eco-friendly customer changes in all demographic factors except gender and marital status. Liquidity seems to have an impact on eco-friendly consumption and hence government should take steps to have more disposable income on hand for the customers through financial measures.

As per the findings of the study variables such as awareness, attitude and perception correlate them. This again underlines the fact that steps shall be taken to make awareness for the eco-friendly products among the population more and its benefit for the individual and to the planet we live in.

The important outcome of the research is the identification of factors affecting buying behaviour of eco-friendly consumers against eco-friendly products. The increase in the level of awareness, attitude, and perception of the customers has a positive impact on consumption and eco-friendly products demand, which is a positive sign for the producers who can thereby invest in innovations for more eco-friendliness in their product attributes. Apart from this, the derived factors such as features, health-consciousness, eco-consciousness, and price are the main factors affecting buying behaviour of eco-friendly customers towards eco-friendly products. Eco-consciousness and health consciousness are achieved through their awareness and perception about the products mainly the environmental concern and their health. But product

features needed to be originally generated effectively communicated and conveyed to the minds of eco-friendly customers and non-users also through trustworthy information, providing a certificate from approved agencies such as eco-labels, ISO, etc. about the product attributes.

### **15. Suggestions**

As per the study and analysis among the customers, advertisements are the sources of information about eco-friendly products to 27.85 percent of consumers, friends are the source of information for 26.86 percent, the family is for 18.43, neighbours are the source of information for 15.61 and colleagues are for 11.25.

As per the finding of the study, producers and marketers of eco-friendly products shall improve awareness of consumers on features and effectiveness of eco-friendly products through efficient and attractive advertisements and may increase the intensity of campaigns, and promotional measures.

As per the study and analysis among the consumers, 42.76 percent of them opine eco-friendly products are available, 39.94 percent said it is easily available but, 17.30 percent of them opine eco-friendly products are not easily available. Hence retailers may place eco-friendly products in their shops and also across marketplaces in such a manner that consumers can recognize them without any difficulties.

Also, producers shall make consumers identify eco-friendly products easily through product and brand features and they may produce eco-friendly products with a good smell. Producers may improve attributes of eco-friendly products including design and appeal to attract consumers effectively.

The study finds that among the consumers, 51.62 percent of them opine the price of eco-friendly products is higher than non-eco-friendly products, 33.89 percent opine price of eco-friendly products is very higher than non-eco-friendly products. Producers shall keep qualities of eco-friendly products consistently and they may price rationally and they shall make eco-friendly products easily available to consumers.

Producers and marketers of eco-friendly products shall have commitments towards society and they may give security to the personal life of consumers in using eco-friendly products.

Producers shall adopt ethical practices in the production of eco-friendly products and producers or retailers may differentiate their eco-friendly products or brands with unique features for improving the familiarities of consumers about them.

Producers and retailers shall provide clear and complete information to consumers about their eco-friendly products. Besides, producers and retailers may give real information to enhance the trust of consumers in their eco-friendly products.

Simultaneously, consumers shall also put little extra effort to buy and consume eco-friendly products to decrease the damage to the environment and conserve scarce natural and environmental resources.

Marketers can also use tag lines namely “bio-degradable”, “eco-friendly”, “saving money and energy” and “safer the family”, for attracting more consumers towards buying eco-friendly products.

In general, the steps taken by organizations in a segmented way where appropriate attention is needed varies depending on the socio-economic profile will ultimately increase the number of customers for eco-friendly products.

New Way of Working virtually in the current COVID scenario and changes in the work culture, product positioning by knowing the pulse of customers now and foresee the market condition after six months will be an added advantage apart from differentiating capabilities, dynamic and resilient strategies. Improving online presence, building a virtual relationship with customers through social media, get creative with an online demo on eco-friendly subjects, reassure the customers with positive messages through dashboard, social media, and email updates will enhance the eco-friendly customer confidence during this pandemic crisis.

## **16. LIMITATIONS & SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

### **Limitations of the Study**

1. The data collected from the consumers of eco-friendly products are subject to recall bias.
2. Present study is limited to respondents related to only green food and cosmetic products in Kerala State.
3. The research study is limited to data collected over a period from 2017 to December 2018.

### **Scope for future research**

1. The present study is carried out on the buying behaviour of consumers towards eco-friendly products in four major districts in Kerala and hence this study can be extended to all district levels in Kerala.

2. A comparative study on consumer behaviour towards eco-friendly products between urban and rural areas in Kerala may be studied in future research work.
3. The knowledge, expectation, and purchase intention of women towards eco-friendly products in Kerala may be extensively examined as future research work.
4. Future studies may be done to examine the effect of cultural, social, and economic values on the buying behaviour of consumers of eco-friendly products in Kerala.
5. The impact of advertisements and celebrity endorsements on the buying behaviour of consumers towards eco-friendly products in Kerala may be investigated as a separate study in the future.

## **17. CONCLUSION**

Advertisements are the sources of information about eco-friendly products to 27.5% of consumers and 42.76% of consumers opine eco-friendly products are available.

Advertisements are the main source of information for non-users of eco-friendly products also

Among the eco-friendly customers, 59.07% of consumers bought eco-friendly food and 44.87% of consumers are buying eco-friendly products fortnightly.

84% percent of non-users prefer to buy eco-friendly food products.

Out of the total consumers, 43.74% spend Rs.5,001 – Rs.7,000 in a month for buying eco-friendly products.

The majority of non-users of eco-friendly products are willing to spend only 3001-5000 per month.

Most of the customers, that is, 51.62% opine price of eco-friendly products is higher than non-eco-friendly products.

Majority of the non-users of eco-friendly products customers, opine price of eco-friendly products is higher than non-eco-friendly products.

22.62% of consumers use the Nestle food brand and 21.65% of consumers use Garnier cosmetic brand.

Most non-users prefer to use the Nestle food brand and Jovees cosmetic brand.

Demographic factors do not have any influence on the awareness level of consumers towards eco-friendly products except the education of consumers, monthly income, and marital status.

Demographic factors do not have any influence on the level of attitude of consumers towards eco-friendly products except age, education, occupation, working experience, monthly income, type of family, and size of the family.

Demographic factors do not have any influence on the perception level of consumers towards eco-friendly products except the working experience of consumers, monthly income, type of family, and size of the family.

Awareness and attitude of consumers towards eco-friendly products are positively and highly related. Awareness and perception of consumers towards eco-friendly are positively and moderately associated. The attitude and perception of consumers towards eco-friendly products are positively and moderately interrelated.

Demographic factors do not have any influence on the buying behaviour of consumers towards eco-friendly products.

Demographic factors do not have any influence on the personal value and ethical value, which influences the buying behaviour of consumers towards eco-friendly products except gender and age.

## **18. CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY**

This study primarily concentrates on awareness, attitude, perception of consumers towards eco-friendly products, factors affecting the buying behaviour of consumers for eco-friendly products, and the influence of personal and ethical values on buying behaviour of consumers for eco-friendly products. This study makes additional knowledge in these areas and also contributes to existing literature. It provides a valuable research structure for research scholars, academicians, Government, and environmentalists to find out various features of buying behaviour of consumers towards eco-friendly products. This study also gives an empirical confirmation for the interrelation between awareness, attitude, and perception of consumers towards eco-friendly products.

Furthermore, this study has a high level of credentials for generalization of findings due to very limited analytical and quantitative aspect in the current research studies regarding buying behaviour of consumers towards eco-friendly products particularly in Kerala state and this research develop new and creative thoughts to researchers for doing research works in this area in future and discovering other facets of buying behaviour of consumers towards eco-friendly products band using the advanced and accurate methodology.

## **19. CHAPTER SCHEME**

The present study on, **“Buying Behavior of Consumers towards Eco-Friendly Products”** is organized into six chapters.

The first comprises the introduction and design of the study.

The second chapter elaborates the review of literature that is related to the present research.

The third chapter consists of Research Methodology.

The fourth chapter includes Data Analysis and Interpretations.

The fifth chapter analyzes Results, Discussions, and Conclusions.