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A RED ALERT TO AN ECO-SYSTEM: NON GREEN PACKAGING



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INTRODUCTION

One of the most popular needs theories is Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. His theory explains the Physiological needs such as food, clothing and shelter are followed by other needs. The prime most need of every human being is food. In today's context whatever might be the food items, it comes in the form of packages. The purchasing behavior of any consumer is solely depends upon the package of any products. Their attitude, preferences and decision regarding purchasing of any product are also based on the packages. Their intention of product without package is unhygienic and unhealthy. Product with good packages attracts the customer to buy the product which contains seven layers of foil and plastic. Therefore consumer's purchasing behaviour is based on the outer layer of the product that is package. Among the seven P's of marketing mix, packaging places a significant role in the marketing scenario. At the point of sale, packaging of product can be a crucial issue in a consumers' purchase decision. Due to improved development and hygienic factor these package becomes havoc to the environment. It creates a number of pollution to the eco-system. The litter collected by way of waste packages finally dumped into the sea or near the sea, is being highly polluted. Hence our globe is in danger zone, the only remedy is to prevent them from its worst situation is, by way of eco practice that is to switch over to Green packaging.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The increasing industrialization, ever increasing urbanization, more hygienic factor, fast adoption of use and throw concept and commonly followed concept of 'making garbage out of sight' not only cause problems related to the allocation of resources and powers, but also severely challenges the natural environment. Environmental degradation such as contaminated water, sinking groundwater levels, unhealthy soils, and polluted air has become a harsh reality in many parts of India. Noteworthy, a damaged local environment hits the most vulnerable groups of society the hardest. Poor and marginalized people lack the resources needed to reduce the negative effects of a degraded environment. Given the current developments, the generation of municipal solid waste in India in the year 2017 has been projected to exceed 260 million tons – a number more than five times the present levels. While the quantity of solid waste generated by society is increasing, the composition of solid waste is becoming more and more diversified. Thirty years ago, the composition of solid waste generated by the Indian farmer was characterized by one-fifth non-biodegradable waste and four-fifths biodegradable waste. At present, this ratio is about to reverse today, a mere 10 percent is biodegradable while 90 percent is non-biodegradable. At the same time, many households do not recycle their waste, but instead, tend to dispose it outside their homes or on the streets. These solid wastes are generated mainly due to waste packages. Packages that are not environmentally friendly and are mostly of plastics made from polyethylene. They are among the most widely used packaging today. After the consumption of product, packages becomes waste it is been thrown as waste, becomes litter. This is the greatest threat to our environment. Particularly in the coastal villages, the coastal villages of Kanyakumari district are highly affected due to waste packages. These packages bring havoc to the environment and to the living creatures. Most of the species which consume these waste packages end up soon. And it is prone to be a threat to the society and the living creatures. To vanish such environmental pollution this Green packages could be a better choice to avoid this crisis for the environment. Hence the researcher coined the title as "A Red alert to an Eco System due to Non Green Packages".


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OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the study is to find out the environmental awareness and the effects of non green packages in coastal belt. The following are the specific objectives.

- To study the demographic profile of the sample respondent.
- To measure the extent of non green packages that affects the environment of coastal villages in the study area.
- To identify the awareness on waste packages that affects the environment.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is empirical in nature based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from the coastal taluks in Kanyakumari district. Kanyakumari District is in the tip of Indian Peninsula and closely linked with the coastal villages of Kerala. The District is divided into four taluks namely Agastheeswaram, Kalkulam, Vilavancode and Thovalai. Among these four taluks Agastheeswaram, Kalkulam and Vilavancode are in the coastal belt. The researcher has selected the Kalkulam taluk where in the village which has the highest and lowest population on the basis of simple random sampling. The size of the sample study is 150. Out of it 100 samples from the village which has highest population and 50 from lowest population.

DATA AND DISCUSSION

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION

Demographic profile is a statistical data characterise the age, gender, marital status, income of the population in the study area of the researcher. Consumers in coastal line are mainly of fishermen community; their occupation and educational status tend to change by their economic status. The following table shows the demographic profile of the respondents which is very much important to know their purchasing behaviour and their level of awareness regarding the factors which affect the environment.

Table 1

Demographic profile of the respondents

Variables	Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
Age	Below 21 years	26	17
	21-30 years	60	40
	31-40 years	31	21
	Above 40 years	33	22
	Total	150	100
Gender	male	56	37.3
	female	94	62.7
	Total	150	100.0
Educational qualification	Illiterate	10	6.7
	Up to secondary	26	17.3
	Higher Secondary	31	20.7
	Under Graduate	41	27.3
	Post Graduate	27	18.0
	Professional	15	10.0
	Technical	5	3.3
	Total	150	100.0
Monthly income	less than 20000	92	61.3

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	20001-40000	44	29.3
	40001-60000	9	6.0
	More than 60000	5	3.3
	Total	150	100.0

Source: primary data

Table 1 shows that, 17 per cent (26) of the respondents are in the age group of less than 21 years and 40 per cent (60) of the respondents belong to the age group of 21-30 years. 37.3 per cent of the respondents are male and 62.7 per cent of the respondents are female. 93.3 per cent of the respondents are literate while 6.7 per cent are illiterate. 61.3 per cent (92) of the respondents belong to the income group of "less than 20000" while 3.3 per cent (5) are belong to the income group of "more than 60000".

Reason for using non green packaging

Many customers keep away from products labeled "green" because they see such labeling as a marketing gimmick, and they may lose trust in an organization that suddenly claims to be green. With the help of Friedman test the following analysis is made, table 2 depicts the mean rank towards reason for using non green packaging.

H₀: There is no significant difference between mean ranks towards reason for using non green packages.

Table 2
Friedman test for significant difference between mean ranks towards reason for using non green packages

S. No.	Reasons	Mean Rank	Chi-square value	P value
1	Cheap Rate	5.15	96.585	0.009**
2	Easy Availability	5.92		
3	Protect the Product	5.26		
4	Attractive	3.96		
5	Convenient	5.45		
6	Multiple Use	5.47		
7	Ignorance	3.93		
8	Reuse	4.74		
9	Longer Shelf Life	5.12		

Source: Statistically analyzed data

**Denotes significance at 1% level

Since P value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1 per cent level of significance. Hence it is concluded that there is significant difference between mean ranks towards reason for using non green packages. Based on the mean rank the highest score of 'Easy availability' (5.92) is strongly agreed by the respondents, followed by multiple use (5.47), Convenient (5.45) and the least score of Attractive (3.96) and Ignorance (3.93) it inferred that consumers are not ignorant of its negative impact. Since the availability of non green packages are more when compared to green packages, consumers are forced to use non green packages. (Legesse Adane and Diriba Muleta, 2011) found results similar to this study, their study also proves that the main reasons attributed to the wide spread usage of non green packaging were due to low price, easy availability and light weight. The following table depicts, how the wastes packages are been handled after its usage.

Table 3
After the usage of packages

SLNo	Factors	Highly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Total	Mean Score	Rank
1	Throw them as waste	64 (320)	56 (280)	4 (20)	12 (60)	2 (10)	138 (628)	4.18	I
2	Burn the used packages	15 (75)	17 (85)	19 (95)	27 (135)	54 (270)	130 (628)	2.52	VII
3	Sell them for scratch purpose	21 (105)	5 (25)	32 (160)	26 (130)	18 (90)	100 (500)	3.27	IV
4	Reuse to store goods	22 (110)	56 (280)	28 (140)	27 (135)	4 (20)	130 (628)	3.54	III
3	Dispose properly in particular affected area	59 (295)	41 (205)	19 (95)	22 (110)	9 (45)	150 (750)	3.79	II
5	Dump near the trashbox	22 (110)	44 (220)	29 (145)	29 (145)	27 (135)	150 (750)	3.04	V
6	Use for other purpose	12 (60)	30 (150)	29 (145)	43 (215)	43 (215)	150 (750)	2.56	VI

Source: Statistically calculated data

Table 3 shows that 'throw them as waste' on after usage of packages ranked first with the mean score of 4.18, followed by 'dispose properly' and 'reuse to store goods' with the mean score 3.79 and 3.54 respectively ranked second and third. The least score of 2.52 ranked seventh for 'burn the used packages'. Hence it is inferred that consumers are aware about the factors which affect the environment and the activities regarding after usage of packages is environmental friendly. This supports a study by (Clapp et al. 2008) that waste packages were open dumping, burning and burying, were the normal practice of consumers after consumption of the product. The following table depicts the relationship between mean ranks towards factors that affect the environment using Friedman test.

Table 4
Friedman test for significant difference between mean ranks towards factors that affect the environment

S. No.	Items	Mean Rank	Chi-square value	P value
1	Degradation of Ozone layer	6.87	60.725	0.000**
2	Water Pollution	7.67		
3	Air Pollution	7.60		
4	Land Pollution	8.21		
5	Drinking Water Contamination	7.53		
6	Global Warming	8.13		
7	Hazardous Waste	7.05		
8	Leads and Catalysts	7.08		
9	Natural Resources Depletion	7.31		
10	Drip in the ground water table	7.31		
11	Climate changes	8.67		
12	Extinction of species	7.16		
13	Greenhouse effect	6.92		
14	Solid Waste	7.44		

source: Statistically analyzed data

**Denotes significance at 1% level

Since P value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1 per cent level of significance. Hence it is concluded that there is significant difference between mean ranks towards factors that affect the environment. Based on the mean rank the highest score of 'Land pollution' (8.31) is extremely serious factor that affected due to non green packaging and the least score of 'Destruction of Ozone layer' (6.82) factor that not affected much due to non green packaging. It is inferred that though the customers are very much aware of the factor which pollute the environment, due to more availability of non green packaging, cheap rate and moreover convenient purpose they are using non green packaging. The researcher analysis the association between educational qualification and awareness on waste packages that affect environment with the help of Chi-square test.

H₂: There is no association between Educational Qualification and Awareness on waste packages that affect environment.

Table 5

Chi-square test for association between educational qualification and awareness on waste packages that affect environment

Educational Qualification	Awareness on waste packages that affect environment			Total	Chi square value	P Value
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree			
Illiterate	6 (60.0)	1 (10.0)	3 (30.0)	10	12.857*	0.379
Up to secondary	18 (58.1)	12 (38.7)	1 (3.2)	31		
Hr. Secondary	20 (76.9)	3 (11.5)	3 (11.5)	26		
UG	25 (61.0)	11 (26.8)	5 (12.2)	41		
PG	15 (68.2)	5 (22.7)	2 (9.1)	22		
Professional	10 (66.7)	4 (26.7)	1 (6.7)	15		
Technical	4 (80.0)	1 (20.0)	0 (0.0)	5		
Total	98	37	15	150		

Source: Statistically analyzed data

Note: The value within () refers to Row Percentage

Since P value (0.379) is greater than the significance level of 0.05 percentages the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence there is no association between Educational Qualification and Awareness on waste packages that affect environment. It inferred that education is not a matter for awareness. If they are environmentally conscious person will know the effects of waste packages.

SUGGESTION

- Government can impose high tax for the plastic bags and levy of those taxes can be utilized for removal of landfills. So that the use of plastic bags will reduce and also can minimize the wastage.
- The local Government can also provide just like city and towns waste removal facility to the villages where the customers find difficult to handle the waste packages.
- Government should impose penalty to the manufacturers and the individual those who violate the rules for using non green packaging.
- The manufacturer should take more interest to promote plastic carry bags (made out of Potass starch and Tapioca starch) which are made out of natural materials that are easily biodegradable, recyclable and reusable. Even it does not harm the living creature.
- The producer of product packaging should take initiative to introduce packages that is natural, biodegradable and recyclable, which will not harm the eco system.
- Consumers should use cloth bags or bags which are eco friendly and take own bag while purchasing things.

CONCLUSION

Green packaging is a boon to the current situation of the society. It is a precaution for the current ecosystem not to push backward to the worst situation. We may enjoy the wealth of the environment today, but what we left behind is question mark. Because of our ancestors who were environmental friendly and that are the reason we enjoy now. Therefore green packaging is a need of the present situation as the coastal villages are highly affected by littering and landfills due to waste packages. This study gives a correct solution for it. As the people of coastal villages are aware of green packaging, it's due to unavailability of green packaging, their purchasing behaviour tends to vary and they go in for non green packaging. And the one more reason behind is they are get used to plastic bags which are cheap, easily available and convenient for their daily use, they avoid leakage while carrying liquid items and perishable goods like fish, meat, etcetera. If the above suggestion is implemented, there will be a quick transformation regarding the problems faced by the society, ecosystem today, due to non green packages. It will be an apt phrase to conclude by quoting the thoughts of Pope Francis "Concern for the environment that needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems society". It's highly go in hand with the title of this present study.

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