

A STUDY ON CONSUMER AWARENESS TOWARDS BIODEGRADABLE PRODUCTS (PALM LEAF) WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE CITY

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on understanding consumer awareness and perceptions towards biodegradable palm leaf products in Coimbatore City. With growing environmental concerns, the demand for eco-friendly alternatives to plastic has risen, positioning palm leaf products as a viable option.

Keywords: **Consumer awareness, Palm leaf products, Eco-friendly awareness, Coimbatore.**

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

Eco-friendly products are products that do not harm the environment. Some of these green products help in conserving energy, minimize carbon footprint or the emission of greenhouse gases, and do not lead to substantial toxicity or pollution to the environment. Other green products are biodegradable, recyclable, or compostable. There are eco-friendly products that are made out of recycled materials. These recycled products help to reduce the need for new raw materials and the amount of waste sent to landfills and incinerators (because waste can be diverted to making recycled products). Green marketing is inevitable for any type of organization. According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe. It incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes in the production process, packaging as well as modification, and also in advertising. Environmental Marketing consists of all activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchanges intended to satisfy human needs or wants, that the satisfaction of these needs and wants occurs, with minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyse the demographic profile of the respondents.
- To determine the awareness of consumers of biodegradable palm leaf products.
- To analyse the customer satisfaction level in quality, price, and product variety.
- To assess the level of support among respondents for the easy disposal of palm leaf products.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is done to get a deeper knowledge and idea about Eco-friendly palm leaf products. The project's scope concerns the buyer's awareness of various palm products. The research is conducted to discover the factors and the attributes of the product that have attracted people to purchase these palm leaf products.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The sample size may not be representative of the entire population of Coimbatore city.
- The study may be limited to the respondent's self-reported perceptions and may not reflect their actual behaviour.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Limited understanding of consumer awareness levels regarding the environmental benefits and availability of biodegradable palm leaf products. Consumers may not be fully informed about the environmental benefits and easy disposal options of biodegradable products.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Varshini M & Dhanraj K (2024) Title: "Post-Pandemic Consumer Shifts Towards Sustainable Products in Coimbatore" This recent study highlights the impact of this on consumer awareness regarding environmental sustainability. It notes that consumers in Coimbatore have increasingly favoured biodegradable palm leaf products, driven by heightened environmental consciousness and the growing influence of social media campaigns.

Kumar, A. & Latha, P. (2023) Title: "Eco-Friendly Consumerism: Palm Leaf Products as a Sustainable Alternative". This study focuses on consumer behavior toward palm leaf products as a substitute for plastic, with special reference to Coimbatore City. It identifies awareness campaigns by local environmental groups and their role in enhancing consumer knowledge about the benefits of using biodegradable products.

Sharma R & Joseph D (2022) Title: "Consumer Perception of Biodegradable Packaging: A Case Study on Palm Leaf Products". This case study examines how consumers perceive palm leaf packaging in the post-COVID era. It reveals an increased preference for biodegradable packaging solutions due to health and environmental concerns, with Coimbatore emerging as a key market for such products.

Rao M & Singh N (2021) Title: "The Role of Government Policies in Promoting Biodegradable Products in South India". Focusing on Tamil Nadu and surrounding areas, this research discusses the role of government incentives and bans on plastic products, which have driven the adoption of biodegradable alternatives like palm leaf products. It also analyses consumer attitudes toward these products, noting a rise in awareness due to policy changes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction: Research is an academic activity and as such the term should be used in a technical sense of defining and redefining problems, formulating hypotheses or suggested solutions, collecting, organizing, and evaluating data; making deductions and reaching conclusions and lastly carefully

testing the conclusion to determine whether they fit the formulating hypothesis.

SOURCE OF DATA

Data can be collected in 2 ways.

- 1) Primary Data: The primary data are those which are collected for the first time. The Primary data are mostly through Questionnaires.
- 2) Secondary data: The secondary data are mostly collected from journals, magazines, and newspapers.

SAMPLE SIZE: In the study, 70 respondents are taken as the sample size.

SAMPLE DESIGN

Sampling is a part of statistical practice concerned with selecting a subset of individual observations within the population of individuals intended to yield some knowledge about the population of concern, especially to make predictions based on statistical inference.

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES USED: Tools are Simple Percentage Analysis and Chi-Square tests.

TABLE 1

SIMPLE PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS: Table 1 shows the demographic profiles.

S. n o	Demographic	No of respondents	percent age	
1.	Age	Below 20 years	12	17.14
		20-30	48	68.57
		30-40	9	12.85
		Above 40 years	1	1.42
2.	Gender	Male	35	50
		Female	35	50
3.	Education	School	6	8.57
		Ug	30	42.85
		Pg	33	47.14
		others	1	1.42
4.	Occupation	Student	20	28.57
		Self-Employee	27	38.57
		Profession	19	27.14
		Others	4	5.71
5.	Monthly income	Below 15,000	18	25.71
		15,001-20,000	34	48.57

	20,001-25,000	15	21.42
	Above 25,000	3	4.28

INTERPRETATION:

The majority of respondents (68.57%) fall within the 20-30 age range, 17.14%, are below 20, while 12.85% are between 30-40 years, and only 1.42% are above 40. The sample shows an equal gender distribution, with males and females making up 50% of the respondents. A majority of the respondents (47.14%) have a postgraduate (PG) education, followed closely by those with an undergraduate (UG) degree at 42.85%. 8.57% have completed schooling, and only 1.42% have other forms of education. The largest group of respondents (38.57%) are self-employed, followed by students (28.57%) and professionals (27.14%), with a small proportion (5.71%) identifying as having other forms of employment. Most respondents earn between ₹15,001-20,000 (48.57%), while 25.71% fall below ₹15,000. Additionally, 21.42% earn between ₹20,001-25,000, and only 4.28% report earning above ₹25,000.

CHI-SQUARE: The Chi-square test is done to check if there is any difference between the observed value and the expected value.

FORMULA: $(O-E)^2/E$

TABLE 2.1

Table Label	Bags	Dolls	Jewellery	Plates and cups	Total
Female	2	11	9	13	35
Male	2	15	6	12	35
Total	4	26	15	25	70

Interpretation: The two variables are gender and the preferred types of palm leaf products by respondents.

Degree of Freedom = (r-1)*(c-1)

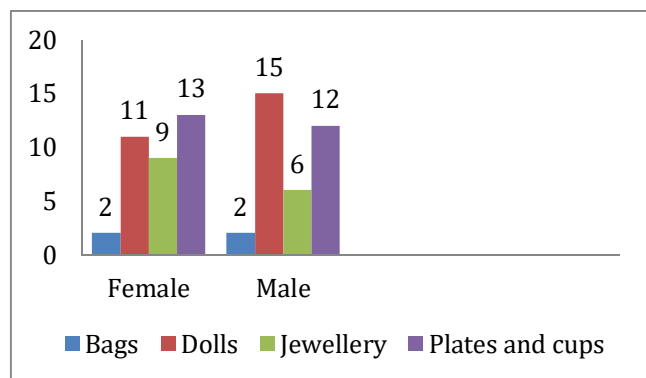


TABLE 2.2

Variable	Degree of freedom	Table value	Calculated value	Accepted or Rejected
Gender & the preferred types of Palm leaf products	3	3.18	1.70256410	Accepted

Level of Significance 5%

Result: The calculated value is 1.702564103 less than the table value of 3.18 and There is a relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

FINDINGS

SIMPLE PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS:

1. The majority of respondents (68.57%) fall within the 20-30 age range.
2. The sample shows an equal gender distribution, with males and females making up 50% of the respondents.
3. A majority of the respondents (47.14%) have a postgraduate (PG) education.
4. The majority of respondents (38.57%) are self-employed, followed by students and professionals.
5. The majority of respondents earn monthly income between ₹15,001-20,000 (48.57%).
6. Most of the respondents are aware of palm leaf products through their (64.2%) Relatives.
7. The Majority (37.14%) of the respondents know about other palm leaf products in dolls.
8. The Majority (73.6%) of the respondents say yes to easy finding of palm leaf products in the market.
9. It is found that the majority (50%) of the respondents buy palm leaf products from Wholesale.
10. The Majority (52.85%) of the respondents strongly agreed that plastic products are harmful to the environment compared to palm leaf products.
11. Most of the respondents buy palm leaf products because it is easy to use (62.85%).
12. The Majority (52.85%) of the respondents buy palm leaf products weekly.
13. The Majority (60%) of the respondents say that the price of palm leaf products is moderate to buy as compared with plastic products.
14. The majority of respondents 32.85% are very satisfied with the quality of the product or service.
15. Most of the respondents agree that palm leaf products

are used in households.

16. The Majority (82.85%) of the respondents say yes to easy disposal of palm leaf products.
17. The Majority (42.85%) of the respondents are aware of other eco-friendly products like handicraft products.
18. The majority of the respondents gave a rating of 3 or 4, as these two categories each received 31.8% of the total responses.
19. The Majority (40%) of the respondents say to excellent for the durability of palm leaf products.
20. The Majority (40%) of the respondents say it is very nice for a variety of palm leaf products.
21. The Majority (95%) of the respondents say yes to recommended palm leaf products to others.

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SUGGESTIONS

- Focus on word-of-mouth, Digital marketing and community-based promotions to increase awareness based on targeting younger consumers.
- Manufacturers should continue to diversify their product range and expand distribution to make these products more accessible in retail and online platforms.
- Businesses could introduce complementary products like handicrafts or packaging made from biodegradable materials to cater to the growing eco-conscious consumer base.

CONCLUSION

This study was accomplished to determine the consumer awareness in Coimbatore city towards Palm leaf products. The study reveals a strong positive sentiment towards palm leaf products among respondents, with most expressing satisfaction with the product's ease of use, quality, price, and environmental benefits. Palm leaf products enjoy high awareness, especially through relatives, and are seen as an excellent alternative to plastic products, given their eco-friendliness and durability. To enhance market penetration, it is crucial to increase awareness of the wide range of palm leaf products, make them even more accessible through diverse distribution channels, and maintain competitive pricing.

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