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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Green consumerism to reduce ecological footprints from household

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Abstract

This paper presents the ideas of some households of bikaner city in posh area that how to reduce their ecological footprints after applying green consumerism, which assess the environmental impacts of household activities by measuring footprints arising from their lifestyles like transport, energy consumption, water, shopping, gardening and waste generation. These households deemed as affluent and throwaway society and their anthropogenic activities have led to environmental problems that affect our own lives and threaten future generation of life on this planet UNEP,1999 In developing countries like India by growing awareness on environmental issues like green consumerism most individuals are uncertain how to respond. Green consumerism declined with public cynicism about the way marketers capitalized on consumers environmental concerns to sell products, often with unsubstantiated “green” claims at inflated prices. Since then despite the development of an increasing range of genuinely greener products the inadequacy of green consumerism alone to tackle environmental problems has become increasingly apparent. The another reason for inaction is that peoples lack reliable information on the extent of their environmental impacts and the most effective ways to reduce those impacts. The green consumerism gives a tool to make lifestyle more compatible to environment and makes pattern of consumption more sustainable.

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Introduction

The sustainable lifestyle within any region with their bioproductive capacity, the population become self sufficient from its own resources and reduces the ecological footprints. However in a global economy it may be more relevant to consider a global equitable footprint a so called “earth share” based on dividing the bioproductive capacity of earth by the worlds population.

Ecological footprint analysis is of course a great simplification of a very complex situation. In this paper we have tried to reveal the green ideas to reduce the ecological footprints from household activities. It gives the idea of extent to which any given population can be sustained indefinitely from its own or an equal share of worlds resources at given level of technology .The ecological footprint is a measure of the area of land (and sea) of world average bioproductivity required to provide indefinitely of a particular population with green style and level of technology. (Chambers etal. 2000).

Materials and Methods:

The ecological footprints of the households of bikaner city within posh area can assessed by given questionnaire on different activities of mass consumption as affluent lifestyle of members including children's like mode of transport, energy consumption pattern, utilization of water, shopping as extravagant and different mode of waste generation. Interviewing with residents that how aware they are about green ideas in daily consumption lifestyle and how they contribute to mitigate these problems at extent of greener the consumption.

Results:

Many studies on ecological footprints studies at international and national or regional have conducted Lohl etal,2000.The survey in present study not only assess the footprints of their households but also consider how to reduce those footprints. A qualitative analysis was conducted of the green ideas contained in action plan for achieving more sustainable household reducing household footprints. Roy and Caird, S.2001.

These ideas are generated in discussion with members of their household, and considering environmental benefits, financial cost and practical and other constraints given in Table 1- 4. The outcome of study reveals that posh urban area of bikaner showed that the largest contribution of footprints have led by transport followed by energy consumption, production of waste from household activities and by shopping or water consumption per person in any household.

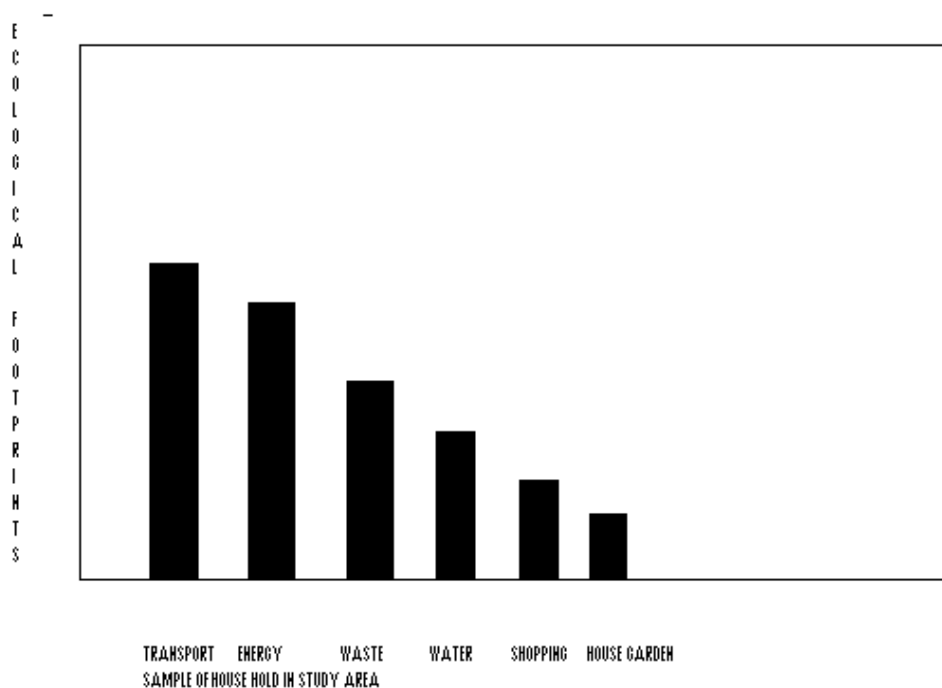


Figure shows the amplitude of ecological footprints due to various household activities in given study area. Graph is not on scale show general view only.

The transportation attributes significantly high footprints due to higher disposable income in service as well as other occupation. The higher income will allow per person more conveyance including children's of adolescent stage. The second significant of impact arises from the key area of energy consumption per capita. The extensive uses of energy have led by electronic appliances, and the appliance based routine lifestyle besides this the households in urban areas not designed to alternative technologies or energy inefficient houses. The third important factor to accumulate the footprints are waste generating activities that entails on cost of throw away and affluent nature of inhabitants or the psychological disorder or syndrome NIMBY(Not in my backyard) in the vicinity of study area. The major contributor is thin; cheap waste intermingled plastic which is exorbitant in nature and having burden on

air, water and the land environment. The hierarchical of problem of waste is more prevalent as waste generation, waste minimization, waste segregation and safe waste disposal. This waste disposal on adopted site like jorbeer itself possess nuisance and land burden on outer fringe areas of posh area. The dumping ground contributed maximum municipal waste from such areas leads to enhance footprints on the vicinity. The attributes like shopping is another casual factor aspired by mass consumption of contained food articles, papers electronic items plastic articles, glassware, clothing and other modalities related to the so called lifestyles in the name of modernization and luxurious manner of living. The other prominent footprint that can visualized as agent is excessive consumption of water as a free commodity in daily life from wakeup to sleep in form of drinking, washing, flushing, gardening cleaning and showering. The limiting factor regarding the water is that it is a scarce resource in this vicinity deemed to be part of western rajasthan as desertic province of the country. The major concern of unscrupulous use of such water in urban area is due to easily accessible up to tap by harnessing from Indira Gandhi nahar project for drinking water. The sustainable pattern of consumerism should be achievable with relatively modest change in technology and behavior of human attitude and reorder their priorities according their genuine needs not in vogue of their lavish or so called lifestyle. It is now demand of our common earth and our common future that leaves dilemma of lifestyle and lives the sustainable livelihood.

Table 1: Household green ideas for reducing transport impact in the study area

| Green ideas and action plans | Perception to environmental benefits | Constraint for implementation |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Flexible household transport with pool and using public and pedal power | Low fuel consumption, avoid traffic congestion, reduces vehicular pollution and wear and tear cost, more sociable, saves money, avoid stressful parking and increase local knowledge with health and fitness concern | Difficult to sustain less convenient habits, inflexibility in time management, extra planning for unusual hours and other social commitments or adverse weather problems. |
| Drive at low and no risk speed | Reduces 25% less fuel, more comfort , safe and saving for high mileage or wear and tear cost | Increase journey time with incite road rage |
| Use more efficient engines as per emission standards and discard old vehicles | Less emission, fuel efficient, reduces service and maintenance costs | Limited choice and not perceptive about standards of emission |
| Travel by train or public conveyance for long journey | Less polluting and stressful, reduce cost on tax or insurance and accidents | Not time effective and unreliable |
| Work more from home or home move closer to work | Less polluting. Reduce emission more flexible lifestyle and time | Hamper recreational facilities |

Table 2: Household green ideas for reducing Energy impacts in study area

| Green ideas and action plan | Perception to environmental benefits | Constraint for implementation |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Insulate cavity walls, loft and window and designed as energy efficient | Lower energy consumption and save money | Initial expensive or poor ventilation |
| Replace appliance with energy efficient models of daily uses | Save energy, lower bills and emission | Too costly |
| Switch electric appliance off when not in use | Lower energy consumption | Not in habit and practice |
| Use alternative source | Reduces fossil fuel use more | Not easy to harness as well as |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| of energy | environmental friendly | space problems |
| Use ventilated and aerated space in houses | Lower energy consumption in household activities | Inconvenient to weather |
| Clear the internet space in computer system and avoid unusual techno savvy. | Save energy and instrumentation cost | |

Table 3: Household green ideas for reducing water consumption impacts

| Green ideas and action plan | Perception to environmental benefits | Constraints for implementation |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Mend dripping taps and turn taps off including when brushing teeth | Lower water consumption drive less energy | Habit and easily accessible up to tap |
| Collect and rain water harvest | Reduces under ground water consumption and healthy | Household not designed for harvest |
| Use less water when flushing | Save water and prevents overloading on sewage system | May not clear waste if flush is inadequate |
| Wash kitchen utensil in mass and by hand | Save appx.30 litres of water a day | Inconvenient and require extra time |
| Shower rather than bath | Save water and more hygienic | Expensive to install and in practice generally |
| Wash full clothing load and replacing washing machine with dish water | Saving water and energy consumption and prevent to became sewage water | Effluent water common connected to sewerage |
| Recycle used "grey" water for garden, plants toilet and cisterns | Save water up to 30% of usual use | Require installation and planning |
| Reduce use of detergents | Less polluting water | Impact of TV advertisement on women's |
| Rational utilization of water | Proportionate use leads supply of water more judiciously | No conceptual framework by PHED department |
| Penalty and cess imposes on indiscriminate use of water | Low use or no use enhance reduce, reuse and recycling | Lack of political and social commitments |

Table 4: Household green ideas for reducing shopping, garden and waste generation impacts

| Green ideas and action plans | Perception to environmental benefits | Constraints for implementation |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Reduce use of fast food and take away meals | Less packaging and waste | Less convenient |
| Reduce use of goods in plastic container and packaging | Reduce waste and their disposal cost | Cheap alternative |
| Use recyclable or less paper and disposable items | Reduces money and waste generation | Initially expensive |
| Buy rechargeable batteries and other green | Reduces accumulation of heavy metals | Initially expensive |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| goods | | |
| Watering at night in lawn and promote high plantation according to environmental condition | Avoid loss of evaporation and increase photosynthetic rate | aesthetic |
| Grow natural and wild garden or habitat | Encourage wilderness and stability of manmade ecosystem | Difficult in address of wild habitat |
| Avoid chemical paints to decorate houses | Reduces toxic chemicals inoculation in air, water and land environment | Lavishing lifestyle |
| Use recyclable products | Reduce cost and optimum utilization of resources | Not cost effective |
| Composting at home | Biodegradation of waste | Space and fouling smell |
| Waste segregation onsite as degradable and non degradable | Convenient to dispose and transportation at municipal sites | Lack of enthusiasm in family |

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