

A STUDY ON ECO FRIENDLY CONSUMERISM

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Abstract

Green behaviour is the choice made by the consumers whether to buy an eco-friendly product or not. A consumers concern towards a safe environment has been frequently increasing. Nowadays the market contains wide varieties of products that are environmentally safe. The purchase behaviour of the consumer depends on the beliefs and the consciousness of the consumer towards environmental concern. If a consumer opts for a green product it is not only has personal benefits for the consumer but also many long term environmental benefits. The decision to purchase these products depends on the behaviour which the consumer might adopt towards these products. The study has been designed and carried out to understand the consumer's behaviour and to come out with recommendations to promote the consumption of green products.

The green consumer is defined as one who is mindful of environment related issues and obligations and is supportive of environmental causes to the extent of switching allegiance from product or supplier to another even if it entails higher cost. The term 'green' or 'sustainable' often refers to product services practices that allow for economic development while conserving for future generation. Now a days, people show greater interest for green products. Consumers are often assumed to be more highly involved when choosing 'green' than conventional products. In the present economy, the consumer would like to prefer eco-friendly products.

The real household disposable income has more than doubled since 1985. With the rise in income, a new middle class has emerged, consumption pattern have changed and which is growing at fast phase. According to Asian Development Bank estimates 2012, Indian's middle class will explode over the next four decades, increasing to 1.2 billion by 2030 and 1.4 billion by 2050. The middle class has emerged as a predominant consumer in India. With the rise in income of the middle class, consumption patterns have changed. In 2007, a study predicted that with India's high growth path, the income levels will triple in the next two decades. This is expected to move India from its position as the twelfth-largest consumer market today to become the world's fifth-largest consumer market by 2025. The study also forecasted that the middle class will account for 59 percent of the country's total consumption by 2025.

Green consumer behaviour is a form of pro-environmental behaviour, which can be defined as a form of consumption that harms the environment as a little possible, or even benefits the environment. Past research has provided empirical support to the claim that green or pro-environmental consumer behavior is a multidimensional construct which is composed of "private sphere behaviour" refers to the purchase, use that have environmental impact, such as automobiles, public transportation or recycling. On the other hand "public sphere behaviour" refers to the behaviour that affects the environment directly through

committed environmental activism or indirectly by influencing public policies, such as active involvement in environmental organizations and demonstrations (direct impact) or petitioning on environmental issues (indirect impact). Green consumption is closely related to the notions of sustainable development or sustainable consumer behavior. It is a form of consumption that is compatible with the safeguard of the environment for the present and for the next generation. It is a concept which ascribes to consumer responsibility or co-responsibility for addressing environmental problems through adoption of environmentally friendly behaviours, such as the use of organic products, clean and renewable energy and research of goods produced by companies with zero or almost impact in societies, during the 60's and the early 70's, the necessity to protect the environment and the people health from the effects caused by pollutants and by the continuous growth of economic and population has developed this new idea of consumption. In the 1980's first American "green" brands began to appeared and exploded on the American market. During the 1990's green products find a slow mild growth, remaining a niche phenomenon. American interest in green products started to increase again in the early 2000's with greater speed and despite the latest recession, it has been continuing to grow.

There are two types of consumers;

1. Prevention-type, consumers that feels a moral duty towards a green lifestyle.
2. Promotion-type, that are more focused on their aspirations and their dreams and don't strongly feel the pressure to quick adjust their behaviour in the direction of becoming more environmental friendly.

Another research find the effect of gender and social identity on green consumption, female declared higher levels of sustainable consumption compared with male participants; however when social identity is salient, male increased their sustainable consumption intentions to the same level as female. In this research are identified two kinds of people that have more self transcendent values, like woman, that are more willing to engage in sustainable consumption. Self enhanced values, like men, that are less interested in green behaviour. The fact is that sustainable consumption is, for men, a way to reinforce their social image, showing to others that they care about environment, instead for women is intrinsically important. The evidence is that green consumer are mainly female, aged between 30 and 44 years old, well educated, in a household with a high annual income.

Objectives of the study

1. To investigate consumers buying intentions regarding of green products.
2. To understand the factors that motivate the usage or purchase of green products.

The study is based on primary and secondary data. The study is designed as descriptive and empirical one. It is descriptive because it describes the state of affairs as it in empirical one because it collects first hand information with a structured questionnaire from the respondents to collect the primary data using judgement sampling method. Primary data is collected from the respondents (individuals from selected families) in Kollam Corporation by using questionnaire with sample size of 40 respondents. Secondary data is collected from online resources internet, Official publications of state government (and other journals) etc. The data collection period for the study was undertaken from May 2016 to June 2016. An

assessment of the consumers behavior towards eco-friendly products can throw light on the popularity of environment friendly products.

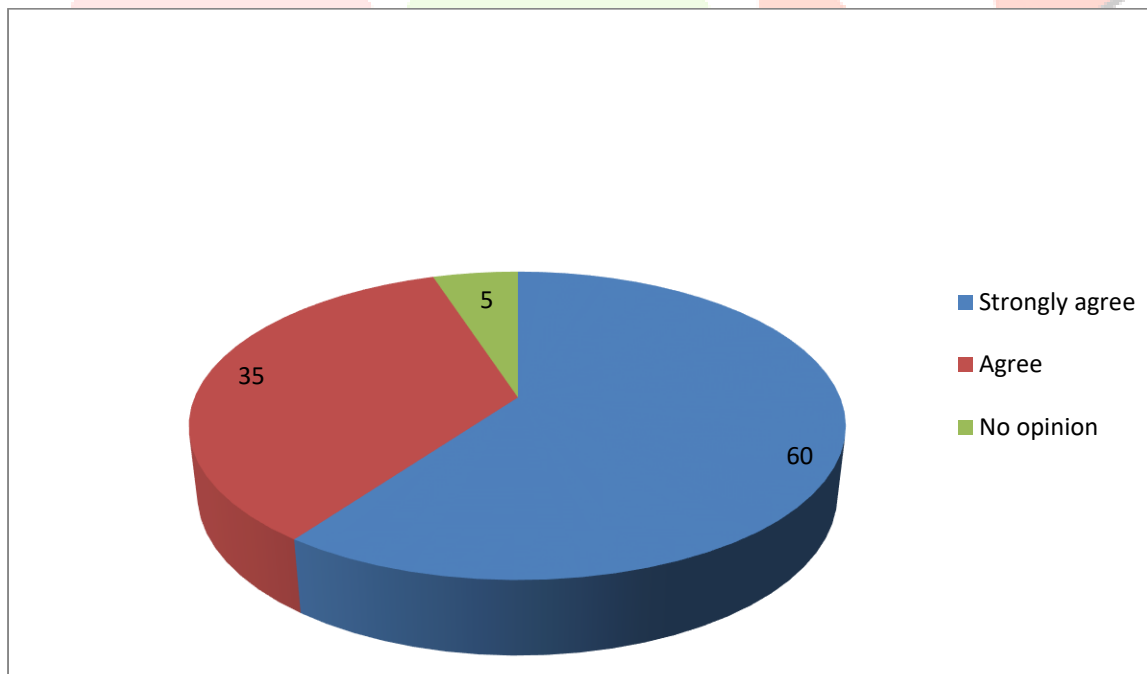
Environment friendly products and green marketing has become a highly attractive subject. Corporate are constantly trying to find the best way to reach the customers with their green message. Customers and businessmen are depending more on environment and have started to pay more attention to the protection of environment. The study aims to identify consumers buying behaviour towards eco friendly products.

In order to get more details the researcher directly interviewed 40 respondents belongs to Kollam corporation. An assessment of the consumers behavior towards eco-friendly products can throw light on the popularity of environment friendly products.

Table 1. PERCEPTION TOWARDS ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS IN PROTECTING FROM HARMFUL EFFECTS OF NON-BIODEGRADABLE PRODUCTS

Opinion	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	24	60
Agree	14	35
No opinion	2	5
TOTAL	40	100

Source: Primary Data

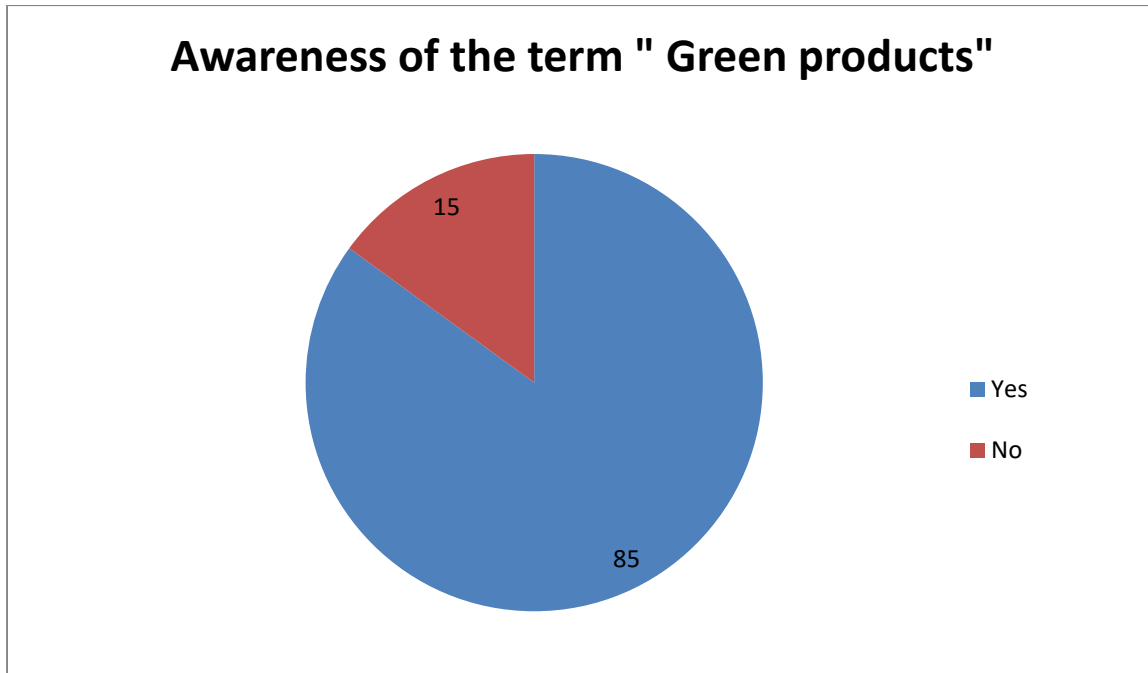


60% of the respondents strongly agree that eco- friendly products protect us from harmful effects of non-biodegradable products, 35% agree, and 5% has no opinion about this statement.

Table2. AWARENESS OF THE TERM "GREEN PRODUCTS"

Opinion	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	34	85
No	6	15
Total	40	100

(Source: Primary Data)

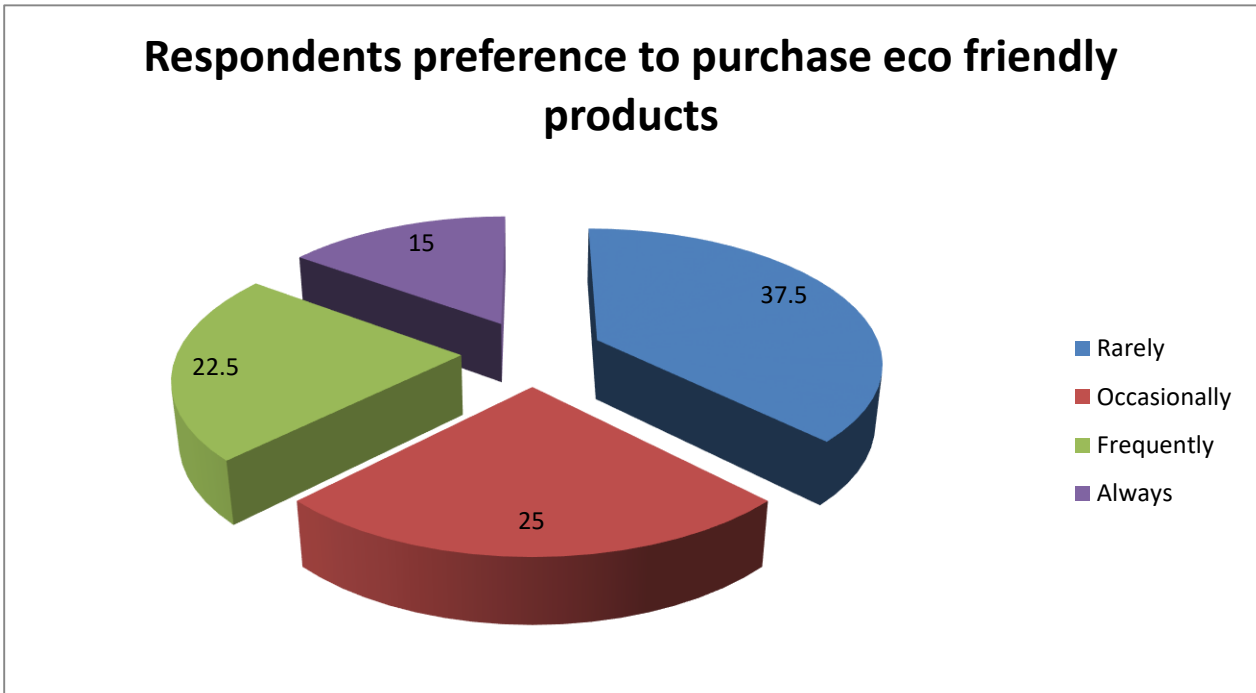


The above table and figure shows that 85% of the respondents have enough knowledge about the term green products and 15% of the respondents are unaware about the term green products.

Table 3 RESPONDENTS PREFERENCE TO PURCHASE ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY PRODUCT

Opinion	Respondents	Percentage
Rarely	15	37.5
Occasionally	10	25
Frequently	9	22.5
Always	6	15
Total	40	100

(Source: Primary Data)



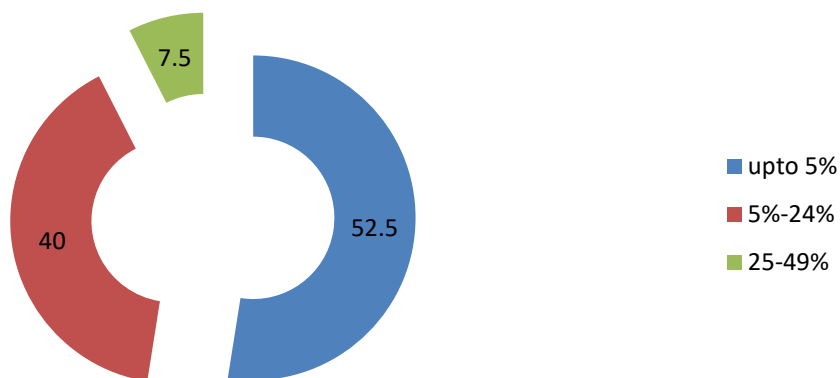
The above table and figure reveals that 37.5% prefers rarely, 25% of the respondent prefers it occasionally, 22.5% of the respondents frequently prefer to purchase environment friendly product and 15% always prefer to purchase this.

Table 4 PERCENTAGE OF INCOME USED TO PURCHASE ECO FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

% of Income	Respondents	Percentage
Up to 5%	21	52.5
5-24%	16	40
25-49%	3	7.5
Total	40	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Percentage of income used to purchase eco-friendly products



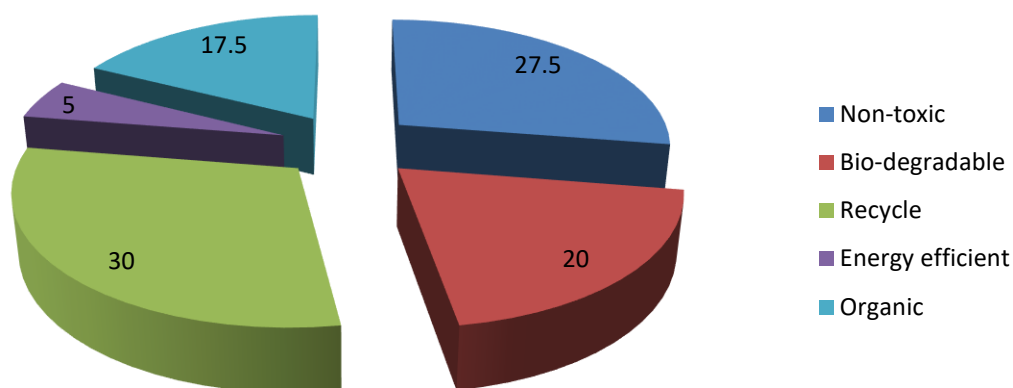
The above table and figure shows that 52.5% of the respondents used up to 5% of their income to purchase eco-friendly products, and 40% of the respondents spend 5-24% of their income and only 7.5% of respondents spend 25-49% of their income to purchase eco-friendly products.

Table 5. UNDERSTANDING OF “GREEN PRODUCTS” BY CONSUMERS.

Terms	Respondents	Percentage
Non-toxic	11	27.5
Bio-degradable	8	20
Recycle	12	30
Energy efficient	2	5
Organic	7	17.5
Total	40	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Understanding of “Green Products” by Consumers



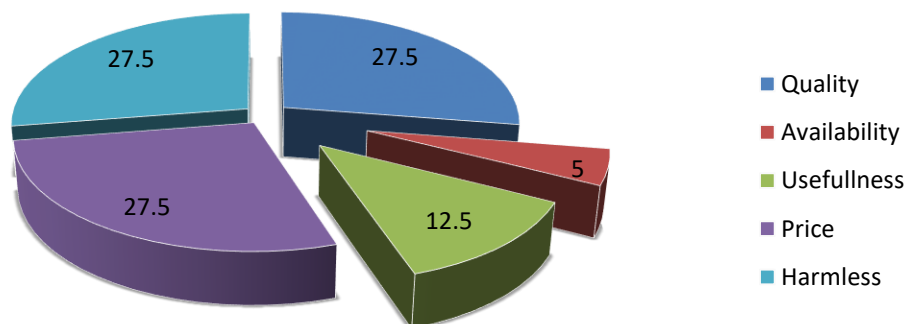
Interestingly, the terms ‘Recycled and Non-toxic’ were more popular amongst those consumers who said they were aware about green products followed by bio- degradable, organic and energy efficient.

Table 6 FACTORS CONSIDERED WHILE PURCHASING ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCT

Opinion	Respondents	Percentage
Quality	11	27.5
Availability	2	5
Usefulness	5	12.5
Price	11	27.5
Harmless	11	27.5
Total	40	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Factors considered while purchasing eco-friendly products.

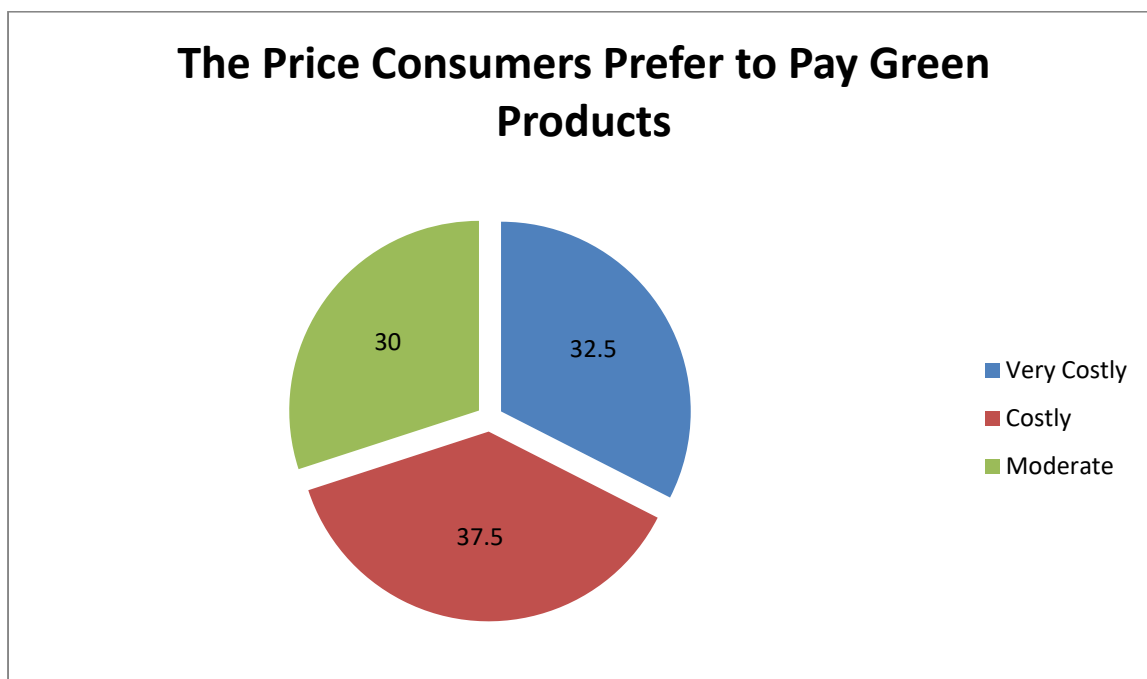


The table and diagram reveals that 27.5% of the respondents purchase the eco-friendly product because of its quality, price and harmlessness. 12.5% of the respondents purchase eco-friendly product because of its usefulness and 5% of the respondents are consider its availability while purchasing eco friendly products.

Table 7 THE PRICE CONSUMERS PREFER TO PAY GREEN PRODUCTS

Opinion	Respondents	Percentage
Very Costly	13	32.5
Costly	15	37.5
Moderate	12	30
Total	40	100

(Source: Primary Data)



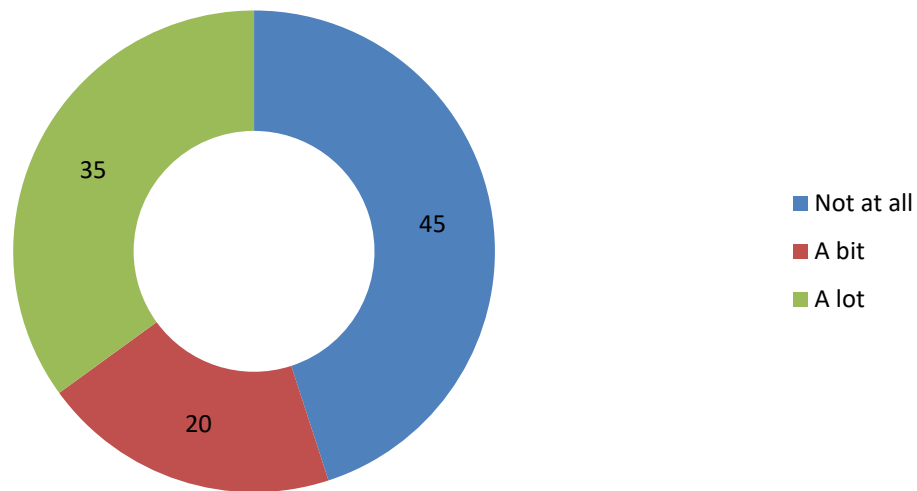
37.5% respondents hold that eco-friendly products are costly, 32.5% of the respondents hold that the prices of green products are very costly and 30% of respondents choose eco-friendly products having moderate prices.

Table 8.CONSUMER’S SENSITIVITY TO COST OF GREEN PRODUCTS

Opinion	Respondents	Percentage
Not at all	18	45
A bit	8	20
A lot	14	35
Total	40	100

Source: Primary Data

Consumer's sensitivity to cost of green products



From the above analysis it can be concluded that 45% of the respondents will buy green products whatever the cost. 35% wouldn't buy green products because they are too expensive and remain 20% of the respondents will buy green products if the cost is comparable to other products in the same category.

Table 9 TRUST ON ECO-LABELS/CERTIFICATIONS

Opinion	Respondents	Percentage
Yes I definitely I do	20	50
Yes, sometimes I do	5	12.5
No, I don't	15	37.5
Total	40	100

Source: Primary Data

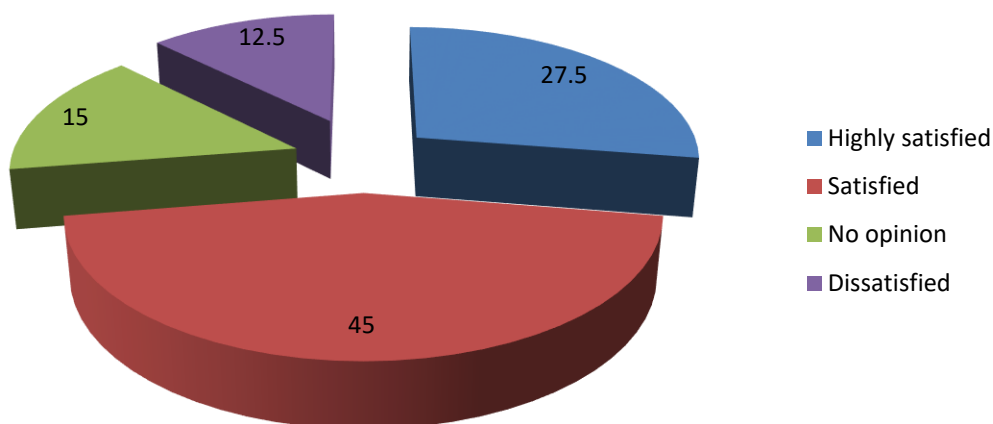
The above table shows that the ecolabels or certifications on green products also influences the buying decision. Consumers would prefer ecolabels that are understandable and would definitely influence their buying decision.

Table 10 LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WHILE CHOOSING AN ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCT

Opinion	Respondents	Percentage
Highly satisfied	11	27.5
Satisfied	18	45
No opinion	6	15
Dissatisfied	5	12.5
Total	40	100

(Source: Primary Data)

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WHILE CHOOSING AN ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCT.



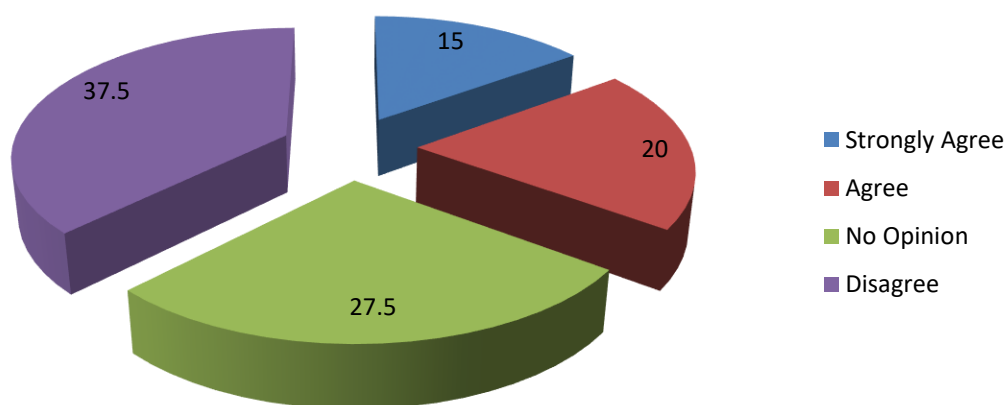
From the table and diagram it can be find out that 45% of the respondents are satisfied while choosing an eco-friendly product and 27.5% of them are highly satisfied. 12.5% of the respondents are dissatisfied while choosing an eco friendly product. There is 15% of respondents who have no opinion.

Table 11. ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS ARE CLOSE SUBSTITUTE FOR PLASTIC PRODUCT

Opinion	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	6	15
Agree	8	20
No opinion	11	27.5
Disagree	15	37.5
Total	40	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Eco-friendly products are close substitute for plastic products



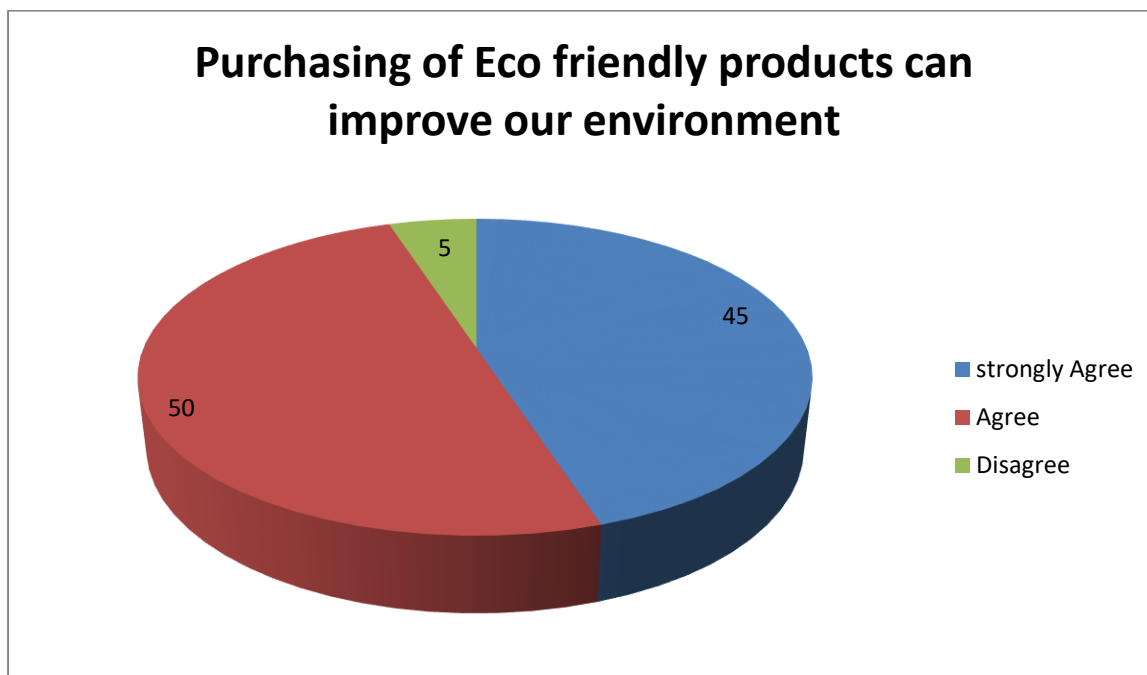
The table and diagram, reveals that 37.5% of the respondents disagree and 27.5% have no opinion about the eco-friendly products are close substitute for plastic product. 20% of the respondents agree with this

and 15% of the respondents strongly agree that eco-friendly products are close substitute for plastic products.

Table 12. PURCHASING OF ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS CAN IMPROVE OUR ENVIRONMENT.

Opinion	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	18	45
Agree	20	50
Disagree	2	5
Total	40	100

(Source: Primary Data)



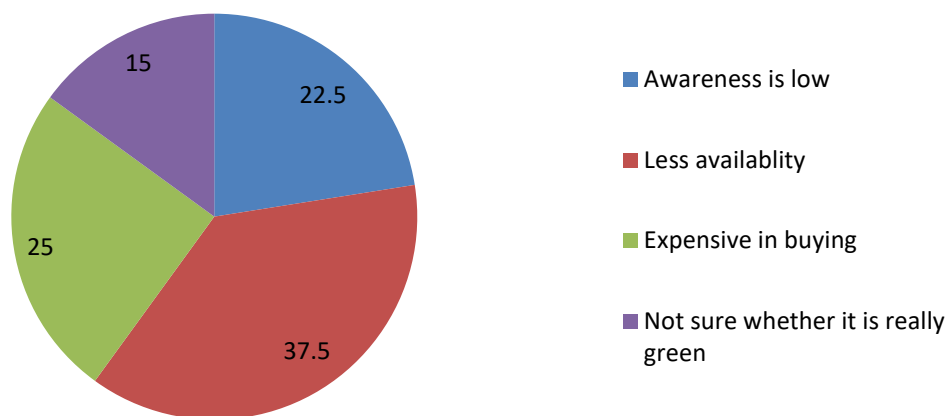
From the above table and diagram it can be find out that 50% of the respondents agree and 45% strongly agree that we can improve our environment by purchasing eco-friendly product. 5% of the respondents disagree that we can improve our environment by purchasing eco-friendly products.

Table 13 BARRIERS TO BUYING DECISION OF ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

Opinion	Respondents	Percentage
Awareness is low	9	22.5
Less availability	15	37.5
Expensive in buying	10	25
Not sure whether it is really green	6	15
Total	40	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Barriers to buying decision of eco-friendly products



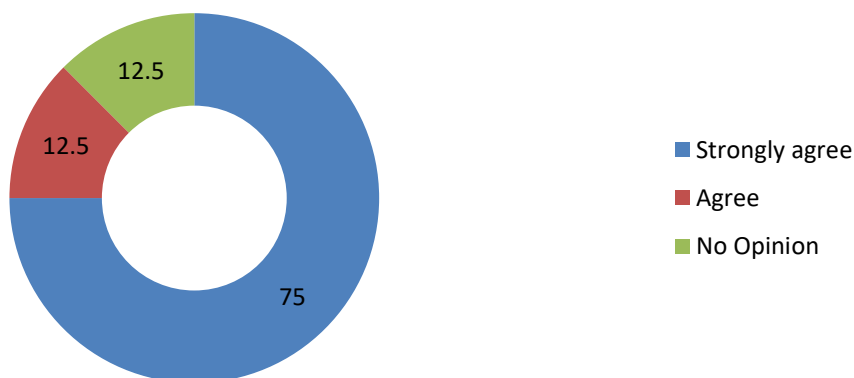
Amongst the various barriers to buying green products, less availability(37.5%) in the market and expensive(25%) in buying green products emerge as the major barriers. while Low awareness(22.5%) of the product and doubts of the green claims(15%) are the other two barriers identified in the survey .

Table 14. NOW A DAYS PROMOTING ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS IS A NECESSITY

Opinion	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	90	75
Agree	5	12.5
No opinion	5	12.5
Total	40	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Now a days promoting eco-friendly products is a necessity

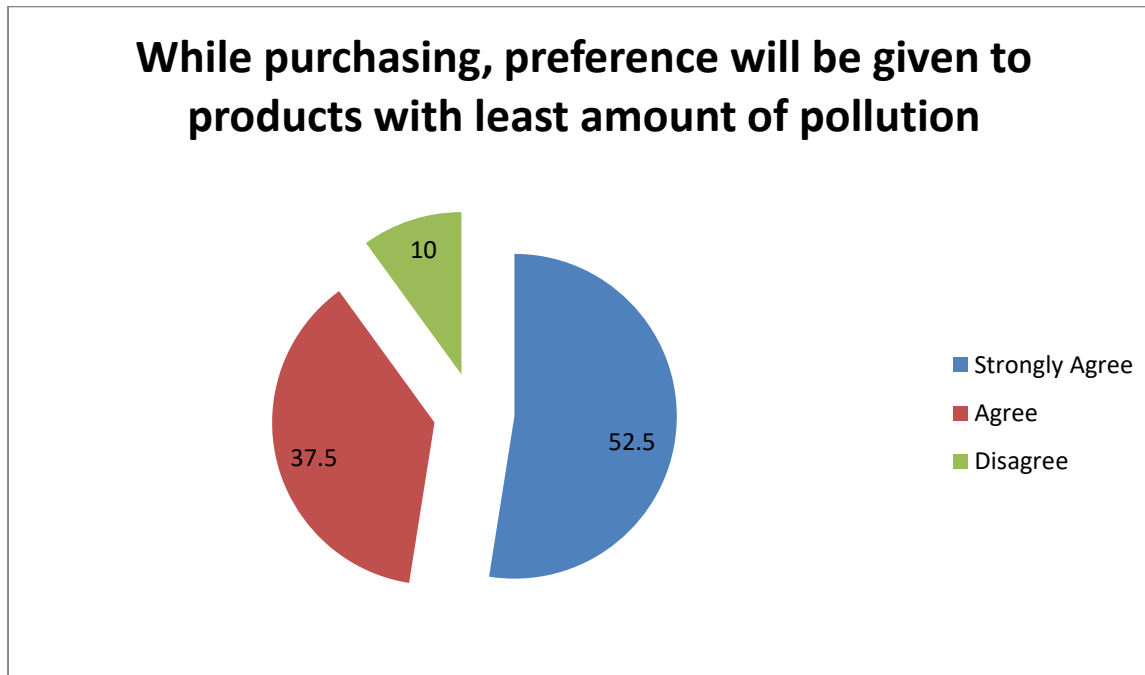


From the above table and diagram, it can be find out that 75% of the respondents strongly agree that promoting eco-friendly product is a necessity. 12.5% of the respondents agree with the statement and 12.5% of the respondents have no opinion.

Table 15. WHILE PURCHASING, PREFERENCE WILL BE GIVEN TO PRODUCTS WITH LEAST AMOUNT OF POLLUTION

Opinion	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	21	52.5
Agree	15	37.5
Disagree	4	10
Total	40	100

(Source: Primary Data)



The table and diagram reveals that 52.5% of the respondents strongly agree that they will give preference to products with least amount of pollution while purchasing. 37.5% agree, and 10% of the respondents disagree with the statement.

CONCLUSION

Promoting eco-friendly products is very important now days. Because the plastic produced are creating so many problem in the environment. Most of the customers are aware about eco friendly products and its advantage. Consumers have strong emphasis on the value of the products in order to repeat purchases. The result of the satisfaction of the consumer would lead to increase in sales market shares and brand loyalty. Many scholars agreed consumers are concerned on the satisfaction of the product and activities of the companies not harm to the environment. However, the product quality should be overlooked since consumers relate price with quality when making purchasing decision, and the consumers research not only green products claiming environmental values but also product with high quality, because consumer are not ready to make a compromise on the quality just for the benefits green attributes. Environment sustainability has become an essential ingredient to doing business responsibly and successfully. So,

constant efforts should be taken by the Government, NGO's, Educational Institutions, Business Houses, and society at a large to create awareness among the consumers to promote eco-friendly buying behaviour.

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