



CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS GREEN PRODUCTS AND SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION – AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Abstract

Green revolutions, going green, environmental protection, sustainable life style, sustainable development, protecting our earth and many more have become a natural phenomenon in our everyday life. As an initiative many organisations have taken major actions on green marketing. Green products are gaining a lot of importance. Along with which people's mind set has also changed and believe in sustainable consumption. This paper aims at evaluating consumers' perception towards green products and sustainable consumption. An online survey has been employed to check the awareness level, and to evaluate the relationship between eco-labels and buying behaviour of consumers. The survey revealed that majority of the consumers are interested in buying green products and these purchases will not only benefit them but also the society at large.

Key Words: *Green Product, Sustainable Consumption, Eco-labels*

Introduction:

Green Product:

In general, green product can be defined as the product which has lesser or no adverse environmental impacts throughout the life cycle, as compared to any other product performing a similar function.

Sustainable consumption:

Sustainable consumption is the consumption of goods and services that have minimal impact upon the environment are socially equitable and economically viable whilst meeting the basic needs of humans, worldwide. Sustainable consumption targets everyone, across all sectors and all nations, from the individual to governments and multinational conglomerates.

The consumption at individual level has an impact on the environment at large. In a country like India with such large population, every consumer has a potential to mitigate the adverse impacts on the environment by changing their consumption behaviour. However, awareness amongst the customers on environmental sensitivity of products is a major factor to develop customer responsibilities towards consumption. Consumer's usually purchase based on eco-labelling and product certifications. For consumer awareness about green products, they will have to ask a few questions for themselves before making purchase decisions. What were the raw materials used in the manufacture of the product and the process which it underwent? Does it use any recycled material either for packing or for manufacture? Does the product exposed to harmful chemicals in the production process?

This paper aims to understand the consumers' perception towards green products and sustainable consumption of such products.

Literature Review

Green marketing has been an important academic research topic since it came. (Coddinton.1993; Fuller; 1999; Ottman, 1994). Attention was drawn to the subject in the late 1970's when the American Marketing Association organized the first ever workshop on -Ecological marketing in 1975 which resulted in the first book on the subject entitled -Ecological Marketing by Henion and Kinnear in 1976. Peattie and Crane (2005) claims that despite the early development, it was only in the late 1980's that the idea of Green Marketing actually made an appearance because of the consumers growing interest in green products

During 1990s, the concern for environment increased and resulted in to increasing challenges for the companies (Johri and Sahasakmontri, 1998). Dutta, B. (2009, January) in his article on Green Marketing titled Sustainable Green Marketing the New Imperative published in Marketing Mastermind states that Green Marketing involves developing good quality products which can meet consumer needs and wants by focusing on the quality, performance, pricing and convenience in an environment-friendly way.

Objectives of the Study

- To check the consumer awareness about green products
- To understand their perception about the attributes of green products
- To understand and evaluate the relationship between eco labels and their purchase decision.
- To list out the major reasons that prevents consumers from buying green products.
- To draw a conclusion about benefits derived

Methodology

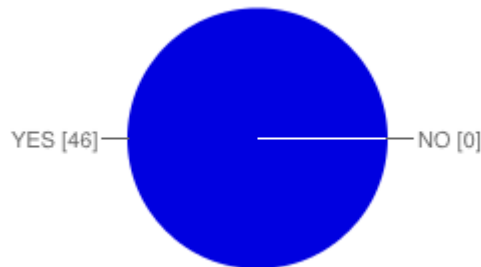
The consumer perception was assessed through an online survey. The online survey was carried out using Google forms. The total number of responses received were 46.

Limitation:

The sample size is always a limitation for any survey. To achieve maximum number of respondents, the online survey method was adopted. This is expected to bring in diversity amongst the respondents. However, there could be limitations in terms of the characteristics of respondents.

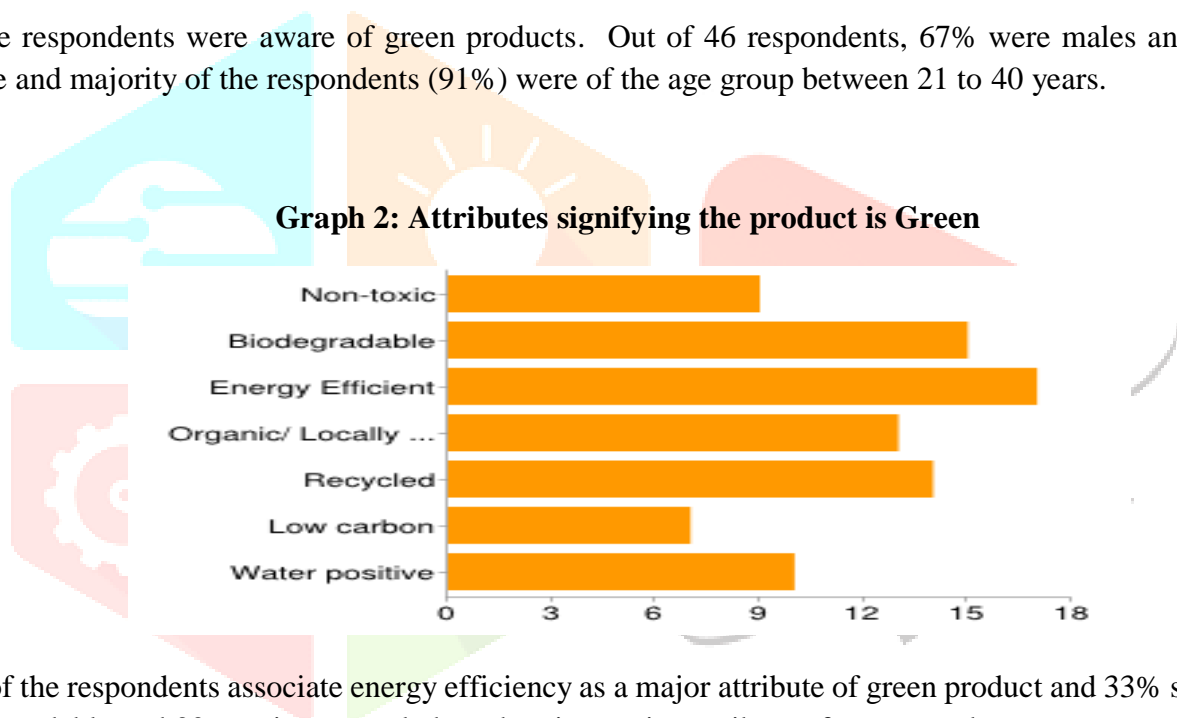
Analysis:

Graph 1: Level of Awareness:



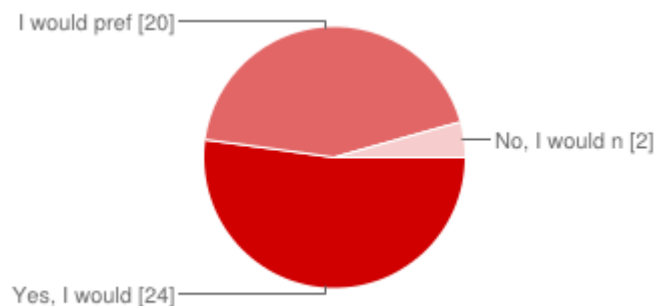
All the respondents were aware of green products. Out of 46 respondents, 67% were males and 33% were female and majority of the respondents (91%) were of the age group between 21 to 40 years.

Graph 2: Attributes signifying the product is Green



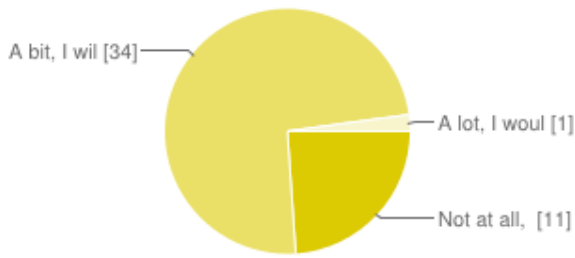
37% of the respondents associate energy efficiency as a major attribute of green product and 33% says that it is bio-degradable and 30% opines recycled product is a major attribute of green product.

Graph 3: Claims of greenness (certifications / eco lables) and buying decision



52% of the respondents are interested in buying only certified green products and 43% opines that they would prefer green products over other products.

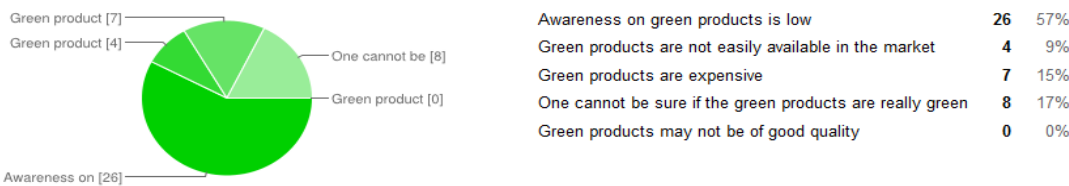
Graph 4: Cost of Green product and Purchase decision



Not at all, I will buy green products whatever the cost	11	24%
A bit, I will buy green products if the cost is comparable to other products in the same category	34	74%
A lot, I wouldn't buy green products because they are too expensive	1	2%

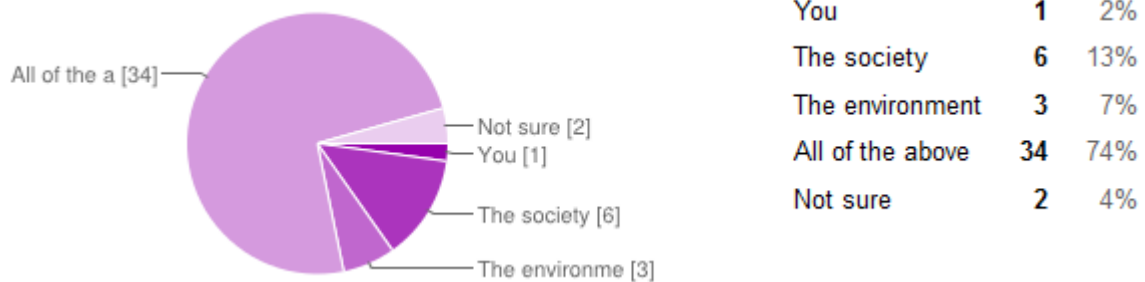
74% of the respondents opines that cost of the green product to a smaller extent affect their purchase decision and 24% of the respondents opines that they are ready to purchase green products at any cost.

Graph 5: Factors preventing customers from opting green products



26 respondents claim that the general awareness on green products are low, 8 respondents claim that customers are not sure whether green products are really green.

Graph 6: Green products Benefits



74% of the respondents opine, purchasing green products it benefits the individual, society and the environment.

Conclusion:

In the modern era, consumers have huge disposable income and flair for green products. People are becoming more conscious about sustainable consumption. Majority of the respondents have also responded that buying green products not only help them but also the society and environment.

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