

# A Study on Consumer Awareness of green products and its Impact on Green Buying Behavior

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## ABSTRACT

*Consumer's awareness about green products is important in guiding the green consumer purchasing behavior. The study brings out green product awareness among the consumers in Jammu & Kashmir. The main objective of this study is to know the consumer awareness about the green products and its impact on green purchasing behavior. The research design used in this study is exploratory research design. The data was collected from 533 respondents by survey method through structured questionnaire with five point rating scale. Secondary data was collected from the available literature sources. For distribution of questionnaire to the respondent's the multistage random sampling method was used. After collecting the data from the respondents, it was analyzed using frequency analysis and chi-square test. Consumer's awareness towards green products in Jammu & Kashmir is of average level. It was found there is a significant association between green product awareness level of the*

*respondents and green consumer buying behavior. The study reveals that most of the consumers with respect to high to average level of green product awareness show high to medium level of green buying behavior and consumers having awareness to small degree and not at all show low green buying behavior. Hence there is an urgent need to make consumers aware about green products in order to speed up the green buying behavior among all consumers to save this world for future generations.*

**KEY WORDS: Consumer Awareness, Green Product, Green Buying Behavior, Green Marketing and Jammu & Kashmir.**

## Introduction

The green movement has been expanding rapidly in the world. With regards to this consumers are taking responsibility and doing the right things. Consumer awareness and motivation continue to drive change in the marketplace, notably through the

introduction of more green products. Compared to consumers in the developed countries, the Indian consumer has much less awareness of global warming issues. Successful marketing has always been about recognising trends and positioning products, services and brand in a manner that supports buyer intentions. Today, "Green" marketing has moved from a trend to a way of doing business and businesses that sell should recognise the value of going green and incorporating this message into their marketing program and communicating the green concept to their consumers.

Green is slowly and steadily becoming the symbolic colour of eco-consciousness in India. The growing consumer awareness about the origin of green products and the concern over impending global environmental crisis there are increasing the opportunities to marketers to convince consumers. Firms have increasingly introduced GPIs (Green Product Innovations) into their product developments over recent decades. Studies on the consumption of environmentally sustainable products have demonstrated that perceived product performance is a significant barrier to their selection. **Ottman (1998)** shows that some consumers do not buy "green" products because of their perceived inferiority,

citing a study of observable and product-specific information (e.g. use of biodegradable and recycling behaviour) by Roper Starch Worldwide (RSW). Alston and Prince Roberts (1999) found, in their research on environmental strategy and new product development, that there was a willingness to pay slightly more for environmental improvement.

## GREEN MARKETING

Majority of people believe that green marketing refers solely to the promotion or advertising of products with environmental characteristics. Terms like Phosphate Free, Recyclable, Refillable, and Ozone friendly and environmental friendly are some of the things consumers most often associate with green marketing. While these terms are green marketing claims, in general green marketing is a broader concept, one that can be applied to consumer goods and industrial goods and services (Polonsky, 1994). The misconception of green marketing by majority of people makes its definition very critical; yet defining green marketing is not a simple task. Indeed the terminologies and definitions used in this area are varied. The terminologies include; green marketing, Environmental marketing and ecological marketing (Polonsky,

1994). Therefore, there is no universally accepted terminology and definition of green marketing up to today. According to the American Marketing Association green or ecological marketing refers to the “the study of the positive and negative aspects of marketing activities on pollution, energy depletion and non-energy resource depletion” (Henion and Kinnear 1976b, 1). According to Herbig et al (1993) green marketing refers “to products and packages that have one or more of the following characteristics; they are less toxic; are more durable; contain reusable materials and/or are made of recyclable materials”. These two definitions are narrow in scope as they focus on a narrow range of environmental issues thus green marketing need to be broadly defined. Polonsky (1994) defines green marketing as “consisting of all activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchanges intended to satisfy human needs, such that the satisfaction of these needs and wants occurs, with minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment”. This definition is much broader and incorporates much of the traditional components of the conventional marketing definition and also includes the protection of natural environment.

### **Green Consumer Behaviour**

The term “green” is typically used interchangeably with “pro-environmental” or “eco-friendly”. However, because of difference in definitions of the environment, the term is necessarily imprecise. The term “green” is simply used to indicate concern with the physical environment (air, water, land). Some authors have made finer distinctions in classifying different types of greenness (Iyer et al. 1994). The term consumer behaviour is defined as the behaviour that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services that they will satisfy their needs (Sciffman & Kanuk 2007). Hence, for this study the green consumer is considered as anyone whose behaviour is influenced by environmental concerns and the environmental concern that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products is considered as “Green Consumer buying Behaviour.”

### **Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of the study is to know consumer’s awareness about green products and its impact on green buying behavior.

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study is basically an exploratory research to give an insight in to the awareness level of green products and its impact on green buying behavior. The study area is restricted to Jammu & Kashmir. Both primary and secondary data is used for this study. The researcher conducts a survey method to collect the primary data from respondents. Primary data is collected from respondents by a structured questionnaire. Secondary data has been collected from various sources like journal, books, websites, reports etc. The green buying behavior is measured by using the ecologically conscious buying behavior scale given by **Robert & James (1999)** and respondents are asked to reveal their agreeableness and disagreeableness for the statements as 1= strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree. Consumer awareness is measured in five point scale of Not At All , To Small Degree, Average, To Great Extend and Fully. The sample size for the study is 533 and multistage random sampling is used to collect the data from respondents in Jammu & Kashmir. Frequency analysis and chi-square test is used to analyze the data.

## Review of Literature

**Meng (2011)** investigated the potential local niche market in Penang as well as the consumer attitudes and perceptions towards eco-friendly product in hospitality industry. This study was based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected from the sample survey (190 respondents) that was conducted in main places that included Komtar government building, Georgetown, Bayan Lepas industry zone as well as Web based (e.g. email) survey. The questionnaire was designed to obtain the consumer's purchase behavior and perceptions regarding to four types of hotel's eco-friendly products: eco-accommodation; eco-meeting & events; eco-cuisine; and eco-service & programs. The study revealed that the hotel's green products have substantial potential market for domestic consumer. Majority of the respondents considered themselves as moderate (they would go for green sometimes) green consumer and it was found that the level of green awareness has significant positive relationship with consumer's education background. Furthermore, green motivators such as price, product quality and social responsibility were found to influence their decision making when purchasing hotel's eco-friendly products.

**Rouf and Rajendran (2014)** highlighted the green marketing as an emerging strategy for sustainable development. Realizing the importance of people's concern for a healthy environment to live and preferring environmental friendly products and services to consume, marketers these days are trying to capitalize on the same to ensure sustainable growth and using these concepts in designing their strategies. Green marketing is a phenomenon which has developed particularly important in the modern market and has emerged as an important concept in India as in other parts of the developing and developed countries, and is seen as an important strategy for ensuring the sustainable development. In this research article the main emphasis has been made to know the role and importance of green marketing for sustainable development. Data has been collected from multiple sources of evidence like books, journals, websites, and newspapers. These days' concepts of green marketing are taking shape as one of the key business strategies of the companies for gaining the competitive advantage, ensuring sustainable consumption of their products in the markets and enjoying a sustainable development in the future. Marketers must realize now that green marketing is not

purely altruistic - it can be a profitable endeavour for sustainable growth.

**Sachin et al (2011)** conducted exploratory study that examined the differences among ecologically-concerned and non-ecologically-concerned consumers with respect to their personal and social characteristics, and their perceptions of the marketing of green products. The variables of study were green product, green price, green promotion and green packaging. The purpose of study was to investigate the consumer attitudes and perceptions towards eco- friendly products in FMCG sector and their willingness to pay on green products. The primary data were collected from the sample survey that was conducted in the Delhi and NCR. The questionnaire was designed to obtain the consumers attitudes and perception regarding eco-friendly FMCG products under four value added areas such as product designing, packaging, place and promotion that lead towards the motivation of consumption. The study revealed, "Green products have substantial awareness among Urban Indian customers and they are willing to pay something more on green products." The majority of customers considered that green package is most important element of such products.

**Ahamed and Ravi (2012)** conducted an empirical study about consumer perception and green marketing impression on Fmcg in Krishnagiri District, Tamilnadu. Researcher selected the sample 160 using combination of convenience and simple random sampling method comprised of college students, academic staffs, Office workers, housewives, business people and managers. The study revealed that the green products have substantial awareness among Krishnagiri District customers and they are willing to pay something more on green products. The majority of customers considered that package is most important element of such products.

**Jesmin (2012)** conducted a descriptive study to understand the consumer attitude towards green marketing and identify the factors related to the belief and motivation to purchase green product by the multi characteristics consumer of Bangladesh. This study interviewed 120 sample respondent consumers with a structured questionnaire using simple random sampling method. Majority of the people are not aware of green product and their uses. Based on this research, consumers are very much sensitive in a few factors. These factors are consumer's loyalty about green product, global warming and environmental safety, quality

of product, concern about extra price and luxury and environmental awareness. Male are more aware and positive minded than female in respect of different issues of green marketing in Bangladesh. As per this study "50 years above" people have more favorable attitude than any other age group. Students are unconscious about the green practice and the impact for the future. Consumer's loyalty is the most important factor for taking decision for the purchase of green product by the consumer. So it is an order of the day to generate the concept of green marketing to the young generation.

**Christopher et al (2008)** empirically examines the factors impacting consumers' purchasing behavior toward green products in New Zealand. The research findings revealed that consumers who are environmentally conscious are more likely to purchase green products. Traditional product attributes such as price, quality, and brand are still the most important attributes that consumers consider when making green purchasing decision. This research revealed that consumers who purchase green products are between 18 and 45 years old, hold a postgraduate qualification and have a positive attitude towards the environment. The results also showed that consumers who are married are more likely to

purchase green products. It is possible that this group of consumers purchase green products because they care about the

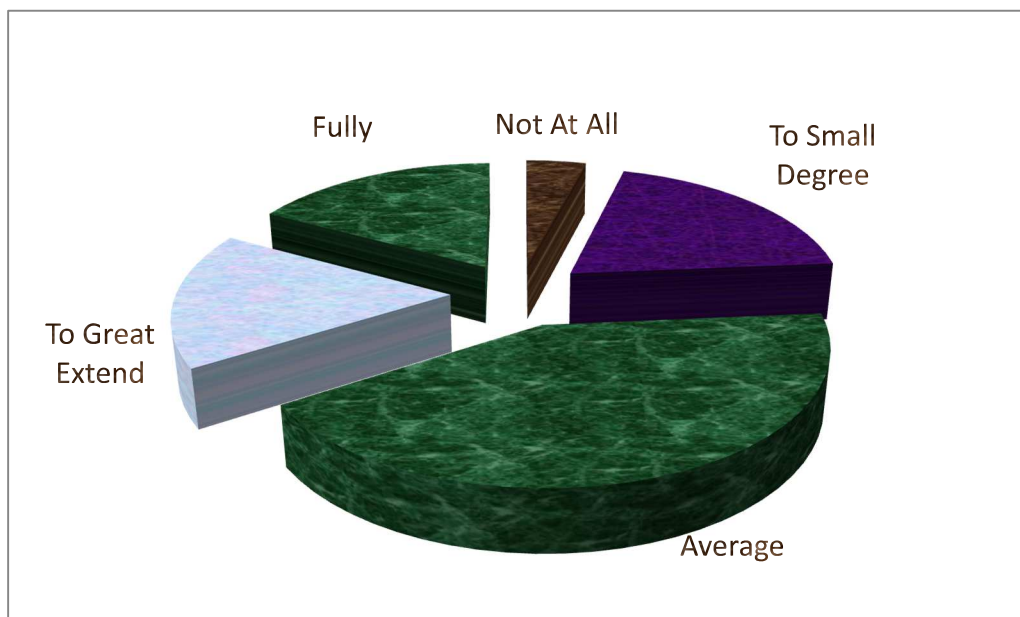
health status of their family including their future generations.

Consumer awareness	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Not At All	22	4.1
To Small Degree	104	19.5
Average	226	42.4
To Great Extend	90	16.9
Fully	91	17.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table-1.1 showing consumer awareness towards green products in Jammu & Kashmir**

The above table shows the awareness level of consumers towards green products in Jammu & Kashmir. It is found that 4.1 % of consumers have awareness level of not at all, 19.5 % of consumers have awareness level to small degree. 42.4 % of consumers have awareness of average level, 16,9 % of consumers have awareness level to great extend and 17.1 % of consumers have awareness of fully level. Hence it can be concluded that majority of consumers in the study awareness towards green products are of average level (diagram-1).

**Diagram-1 showing the consumer awareness towards green products in Jammu & Kashmir**



**Table-1.2 showing the green consumer buying behavior based on awareness level of the**

S. No.	Green Awareness level	Green Consumer Buying Behavior			Total	$\chi^2$ Value	df	P value	NS/S
		Low	Medium	High					
1.	NOT AT ALL	6	10	6	22	63.721	8	.000	S
		4.5%	6.0%	2.6%	4.1%				
2.	TO SMALL DEGREE	36	44	24	104				
		27.1%	26.3%	10.3%	19.5%				
3	AVERAGE	61	39	126	226				
		45.9%	23.4%	54.1%	42.4%				
4	TO GREAT EXTEND	10	31	49	90				
		7.5%	18.6%	21.0%	16.9%				
5	FULLY	20	43	28	91				
		15.0%	25.7%	12.0%	17.1%				
Total		133	167	233	533				
		100 %	100.0%	100 %	100.0%				

**respondent**

**Source: Primary Data      NS -Not significant      S -significant**

**Null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>):** There is no significant association between consumer awareness level of green products and green buying behavior of respondents

**Alternate hypothesis (H<sub>a</sub>):** There is a significant association between consumer awareness level of green products and green buying behavior of respondents

**Results and discussion**

The associations between consumer awareness towards green products and green buying behavior among the respondents in Jammu & Kashmir have been studied. The consumer

awareness level towards green products of the respondents is classified into five categories, viz, fully, to great extent, average, to small degree and not at all. The distribution of sample respondents according to their green consumer buying



behavior have been scored as low, medium and high scores shown in the above table no. 1.2.

It is revealed from the above table no.1.2 that the percentage of high level of green buying behavior is highest (54.1%) among respondents of average awareness level and the same is lowest (2.6%) among respondents of awareness level not at all. The percentage of medium level of green buying behavior is highest (26.3%) among the respondents of awareness level of small degree and same is lowest (6%) among respondents of awareness level not at all..On the other hand, the percentage of low level of green buying behavior is highest (45.9%) among respondents of awareness of average level and same is lowest (4.5%) among the respondents of awareness level of not at all.

In order to find the relationship between awareness of green products of respondent and the green buying behavior a Chi-Square test is applied and the results are shown in the above table no. 1.2. It

has been found that the chi-square test of association for value is 63.721 with degrees of freedom at 8 and the 'P' value for the level of significance is .000. As the 'P' value is less than 0.05, it indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted.

The result clearly shows that the green buying behavior varies with awareness level of the respondents and there is a significant association between green product awareness level of the respondents and green consumer buying behavior. The study reveals that most of the consumers with respect to high to average level of green product awareness show high to medium level of green buying behavior and consumers having awareness to small degree and not at all show low green buying behavior.

There is an urgent need to make consumers educated and aware how they can benefit using the green product or service. Through this process the consumers can change their decision to

stop using products that are harmful for the environment. This can be done by spreading the message among the consumers about the benefits of consuming environment-friendly products. One way is to post profiles related to green marketing on social networks which creates awareness among the peer groups. Hence the first rule of green marketing is to focus on customer benefits that they can draw from pure and natural products. The companies need to heavily invest in green advertisement to attract unaware customers for green products.

## CONCLUSION

The study has been undertaken with an objective to explore the consumer awareness about green products and its effect on buying behavior of consumers. Green product awareness is an important tool to guide the consumers for purchasing of green products. As the consumers are getting more awareness about green products and their features the frequency of green buying behavior increases. Majority of the consumers in this study

have average awareness level about green products. The study shows that the green buying behavior varies with awareness level of the consumers and there is a significant association between green product awareness level of the consumers and green consumer buying behavior. The results reveals that most of the consumers with respect to high to average level of green product awareness show high to medium level of green buying behavior and consumers having awareness to small degree and not at all show low green buying behavior. Hence there is an urgent need to make consumers aware about green products in order to speed up the green buying behavior among unaware consumers to save this world for future generations.

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