

FACTORS INFLUENCING AWARENESS AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR OF GREEN MARKETING PRODUCTS: A STUDY IN DELHI - NCR REGION

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ABSTRACT

Green marketing, also known as environmental or sustainable marketing, has emerged as a pivotal strategy for businesses in response to growing environmental concerns. This paper delves into the concept and key principles of green marketing and examines the factors influencing awareness of consumers and their purchase behavior of green marketing products in selected areas of Delhi-NCR region. The study has used a survey method through developing a questionnaire and analysed the results through descriptive statistics, percentage analysis and Chi-Square tests. The results from Chi-Square tests and Fisher Exact Tests revealed that there is significant association of gender, age and occupation with the awareness about Green marketing. Also, it is found that willingness to pay high prices for buying Green products varies with gender significantly. A majority of respondents (88%) were found to be aware about Green marketing and more than 91% about Green products. The most popular source of information is social media for 46.8% respondents. More than half of the sample were found to be unwilling to pay high prices for Green products despite being aware of their advantages. So there should be efforts by the marketers to provide Green products at affordable prices.

KEYWORDS: Green Marketing, Sustainable Marketing, Consumer Behavior.

Introduction

The idea of green marketing developed in the last decades of 19th century, credited to Ottman (1993) and Polonsky (1994). Also referred to as sustainable or environmental marketing, it involves promoting products and services for their eco-friendly qualities. This strategy targets consumers who prioritize environmental concerns and sustainability. Its main objective is to encourage businesses to adopt practices that reduce environmental harm while fulfilling consumer needs.

Green marketing refers to the development, promotion, and sale of products or services that are eco-friendly and designed to minimize their impact on the planet. The basic objective of green marketing is to meet consumer demands for sustainable and eco-friendly options while promoting responsible business practices. This approach incorporates environmental considerations throughout the product life cycle, from design and production to distribution and disposal. The core idea behind green marketing is to integrate sustainability into various aspects of a business, from product design and production processes to communication strategies. This approach not only addresses the growing concern for environmental issues but also recognizes the role of businesses in contributing to positive ecological outcomes.

Green marketing offers a chance for creativity that can lead to financial gains while also supporting environmental sustainability efforts (Grant, 2007). While businesses frequently harm the environment, either directly or indirectly, there is a growing awareness of the importance of environmentally sustainable practices. Particularly, multinational corporations, with their ample resources, should take the lead in implementing eco-friendly initiatives (Tjörnemo, 2001).

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Several key definitions of green marketing provide insights into its nature and objectives:

- American Marketing Association (AMA) has defined "Green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe. Thus green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising."
- Polonsky (1994) says "Green marketing consists of all activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchanges intended to satisfy human needs or wants such that the satisfaction of these needs and wants occurs with minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment."
- According to Peattie (2001), "Green marketing is the holistic management process responsible for identifying, anticipating, and satisfying the needs of customers and society, in a profitable and sustainable way."
- Kotler et al. (2010) have given a more comprehensive definition of green marketing as -"Green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally preferable to others. Thus green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising."
- As per Charter et al. (2002), "Green marketing is the holistic management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying the needs of customers and society, in a profitable and sustainable way. It encompasses a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising. Yet defining green marketing is not a simple task where several meanings intersect and contradict each other; an example of this will be the existence of varying social, environmental and retail definitions attached to this term."

These definitions collectively highlight the comprehensive nature of green marketing, emphasizing its role in meeting consumer needs while minimizing the negative impact on the environment. Green marketing involves a proactive approach by businesses to integrate sustainability into their core strategies, fostering a balance between economic profitability and ecological responsibility.

Key Principles of Green Marketing

- **Environmental Responsibility**

Businesses embracing green marketing acknowledge their impact on the environment and actively take steps to minimize negative consequences. This principle often involves adopting sustainable practices, reducing carbon footprints, and making environmentally responsible choices throughout the supply chain.

- **Sustainable Product Development**

Green marketing emphasizes the creation of products that have a minimal impact on the environment. This involves using eco-friendly materials, reducing energy consumption in manufacturing, and designing products with a focus on recyclability and longevity.

- **Transparent Communication**

Transparent communication is crucial in green marketing. Companies are expected to communicate their environmental initiatives honestly and clearly. This involves providing accurate information on product labels, in advertising materials, and throughout the marketing communication process to avoid green washing – the misleading perception of environmental benefits.

Consumer Perception and Behavior

With rising awareness about issues relating to environment, consumers are actively looking for products that are in line with their environmental values. Green marketing taps into this shift by offering products and services that address environmental concerns, appealing to the growing market segment seeking eco-friendly alternatives.

Despite the positive trend, barriers to adopting green products still exist. These include perceived higher costs, skepticism about the legitimacy of environmental claims, and a lack of awareness. Green marketing strategies often involve overcoming these barriers through education, transparency, and innovative pricing models.

Literature Review: Factors Affecting Green Marketing

Numerous studies have explored the intricate relationship between consumers and environmentally friendly products and services, shedding light on the factors influencing green purchasing decisions.

- **Consumer Attitudes and Perception**

Numerous studies have explored the impact of consumer attitudes and perceptions on the success of green marketing initiatives. Research by Ottman et al. (2006) suggests that positive attitudes towards environmental issues positively influence consumers' willingness to choose green products. Additionally, Peattie and Peattie (2011) found that perceived consumer effectiveness, or the belief that individual actions can make a difference, plays a crucial role in shaping green purchase intentions.

- **Demographic Factors**

Demographic variables, such as age, gender, and education, have been examined in relation to green consumer behavior (Jain and Kaur, 2006). Gössling et al. (2015) find that demographic factors can influence attitudes towards green products and sustainable practices, highlighting the need for targeted marketing strategies based on demographic segmentation

- **Price Sensitivity and Economic Factors**

Price remains a significant factor influencing consumer behavior in green markets. According to a study by Srivastava and Gupta (2023), consumers may hesitate to adopt green products if they perceive them as more expensive than their conventional counterparts. However, economic factors, such as income and education, can mitigate price sensitivity (Biswas and Roy, 2015). The relationship between green marketing and economic considerations highlights the need for strategic pricing and communication strategies.

- **Trust and Credibility of Green Claims**

Consumer trust in green marketing claims is crucial for successful implementation. A Study by Taufique et al. (2017) emphasize the importance of credible and transparent communication. Greenwashing, or deceptive environmental claims, can erode trust (Laufer, 2003). Research suggests that companies adopting authentic and verifiable green practices build stronger relationships with environmentally conscious consumers (Chen and Chang, 2012).

- **Product Characteristics and Innovation**

The characteristics of green products significantly impact consumer preferences. Research by Ottman et al. (2006) suggests that attributes such as recyclability, energy efficiency, and eco-labeling positively influence purchasing decisions. Furthermore, innovative product development in the form of sustainable design and packaging can enhance the appeal of green products (Peattie and Peattie, 2003).

- **Marketing Mix Elements**

The traditional marketing mix elements, adapted for green marketing, play a pivotal role. Kim (2011) found that green product development positively influences consumer perceptions. Pricing strategies, distribution channels, and promotional efforts tailored to highlight environmental benefits also contribute to the success of green marketing initiatives (Gössling et al., 2011).

- **Cultural and Social Factors**

Cultural and social factors shape consumer attitudes towards green marketing. A study by Chan (2000) emphasizes the influence of cultural values on environmental concern. Additionally, social influence and norms play a role in shaping green behaviors (Tarkiainen and Sundqvist, 2005). Understanding cultural and social dimensions is essential for effective segmentation and targeting in green markets.

- **Regulatory Environment**

The regulatory environment has a significant impact on green marketing practices. Research by Lyon and Maxwell (2008) highlights the role of government regulations in promoting environmentally friendly business practices. A supportive regulatory framework can encourage companies to adopt green strategies voluntarily and may foster a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

The literature on factors affecting green marketing highlights the multifaceted nature of consumer behavior and business practices in environmentally conscious markets. As businesses navigate this evolving landscape, it is crucial to consider the interplay of consumer attitudes, economic factors, trust, product characteristics, marketing mix elements, cultural and social influences, and the

regulatory environment. Future research should delve deeper into the dynamic interactions among these factors, providing businesses with valuable insights to craft effective green marketing strategies.

Objectives of the Study

- To know the awareness among Indian consumers regarding green products and green marketing.
- To know the willingness of consumers to pay more for green marketing products.
- To study the consumers purchasing behaviour and sources of awareness about green products.
- To examine the relationship of demographic variables (such as gender, age and education) with awareness of green marketing and willingness to pay higher prices for green products.

Data, Methodology and Sample

The study is quantitative in nature and based upon both primary and secondary data. As the study aims to examine the level of awareness of consumers and their purchase behaviour for green marketing products, it has used survey method by administering a questionnaire on 250 respondents in Delhi NCR region. The study has employed convenience sampling technique and survey was conducted during the months of June-July 2023. The study tries to achieve its research objectives by analysing primary data collected through a self-structured questionnaire consisting of 16 questions in an offline mode. Finally, 240 responses were obtained from consumers by way of questionnaires. The researcher has tried to cover maximum categories of respondents possible, within a limited timeframe. The study has used graphs, percentages and tables and Chi- Squares test for the analysis of the data and to draw inferences. SPSS software has been used for the analysis of data.

Hypotheses of the Study

- H₁:** Gender is significantly associated with their awareness on green marketing
- H₂:** Age is significantly associated with awareness on green marketing.
- H₃:** Occupation is significantly associated with awareness on green marketing.
- H₄:** Gender has significant association with willingness to pay higher prices for green products.

Results, Analysis and Discussion

Firstly, the demographic profile of the respondents is presented in table 1, as covered in question 1 to 5 of the questionnaire which provides an overview of the sample in terms of demographic characteristics like gender, age, educational qualification and occupation of the respondents as follows:

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents in the Sample

	No. of Respondents	%
Gender		
Males	84	35
Females	156	65
Age group		
14-18	25	10.5
18-24	107	44.4
24-32	56	23.4
32-45	34	14.2
45 & above	18	7.5
Occupation		
Student	126	52.5
Working Professional	69	28.8
Self-employed (Business)	23	9.6
Home-Maker	22	9.2
Educational Qualification		
High School (10 th)	20	8.3
Senior Secondary (12 th)	38	15.8
Graduation (UG)	88	36.7
Post-Graduation (PG)	84	35
Doctorate (Ph.D.)	10	4.2
Total	240	100

Source: Questionnaire based survey

As shown in table 1, there is a majority of females (65%) in the sample as compared to males (35%) and most of the respondents fall in the age group of 18-24 years which means they are young adults who are predominantly college students and post-graduates. While only 7.5% respondents are aged 45 years and above. 23.4% of the people belong to the age group 24-32. This category consists of mainly married and working population. Most of the respondents are students (52.5%) and around 29% are working professionals. Around 9% respondents are self-employed and home maker each. Talking about the education level, mostly respondents are under graduates (36.7%) and 35 % are post graduates and only 8.3% are educated till High school, so we can say that a good number of respondents are well educated.

In order to look more closely at the association of demographic characteristics on the awareness about green marketing, the study has used method of cross tabulation for each variable of interest. Hence, cross tabulation of awareness of green marketing was done with the variables- gender, age and occupation and Chi Square tests were conducted to test the hypotheses to know the association between these demographic variables and awareness on green marketing. Further, Chi Square test was used to identify the association between gender and willingness to pay higher prices for green products. The results and interpretation is as follows:

Table 2: Cross Tabulation - Gender and Awareness of Green Marketing

Gender	No Response	No		Yes		Total
		N	%	N	%	
Female	0	13	5.41	143	59.58	156
Male	0	8	3.33	76	31.67	84
Total	0	21	8.74	219	91.25	240

Table 2 shows that females are more aware about green marketing (around 60%) as compared to males (only 31.67%) and overall 91.25% of the respondents are aware of the concept of green marketing. So it can be said that percentage of female respondents is much higher than males with regard to awareness on green marketing.

Table 3: Chi-Square Test between Gender and Awareness of Green Marketing

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	249.101 ^a	4	.000	.000
Likelihood Ratio	77.531	4	.000	.000
Fisher's Exact Test	69.053			.000
Valid Cases	240			

In order to test H1, Chi Square test is performed and its output is presented in table 3, which shows that there exists significant association between gender of the respondents and awareness on green marketing with $X^2(4, N=240) = 249.10, p = 0.00$ which is less than $p = 0.01$. The subscript letter a in each value shows that more than 20% cells have expected count less than 5 and in that case, Fisher's exact test results will be used for interpreting results, which is also highly significant at 1% level ($p < 0.01$). Hence H1 gets accepted and we can say that awareness on green marketing varies with gender of respondents.

Similarly, age of the respondents is cross tabulated with awareness on green marketing as presented in table 4, showing that people belonging to the age group of 18-24 (40.4%) and 24-32 years (22.08%) have more awareness on green marketing than other age groups and respondents in 32-45 years age group are least aware about it as 11 of them said 'No' while asking if they know about the meaning of green marketing.

Table 4: Cross tabulation - Age and Awareness of Green Marketing

Age Groups	No Response	No		Yes		Total
		N	%	N	%	
14-18	0	2	.083	23	9.58	25
18-24	0	9	3.75	97	40.41	106
24-32	0	3	1.25	53	22.08	56
32-45	0	11	4.58	24	10	35
45 and above	0	4	1.67	14	5.83	18
Total	0	29	12.08	211	87.91	240

Table 5: Chi-Square Tests between Age and Awareness of Green Marketing

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	295.618 ^a	14	.000	.000
Likelihood Ratio	104.054	14	.000	
Fisher's Exact Test	93.628			.000
Valid Cases	240			

As shown in table 5, the results of Chi –Square and Fisher Exact test both indicate that the age is significantly associated with awareness on green marketing as they are highly significant at 1% level of significance with $p < 0.01$. Hence, H2 also gets supported.

Table 6: Cross Tabulation of Occupation and Awareness

Occupation	Awareness					Total
	No Response	No		Yes		
	N	N	%	N	%	
Home Maker	0	5	2	17	7.08	22
Self Employed	0	3	1.25	20	8.33	23
Student	0	7	2.92	119	49.58	126
Working professional	0	6	2.5	63	26.25	69
Total	0	21	8.67	219	91.24	240

While talking about the relation between occupation of respondents and awareness as shown in table 6, it is found that mostly students and working professionals are aware about green marketing concept. It is encouraging to find that very few among each category of occupation replied 'No' on awareness of green marketing.

Table 7: Chi-Square Tests between Occupation and Awareness

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	256.809 ^a	10	.000	.000
Likelihood Ratio	83.627	10	.000	
Fisher's Exact Test	72.764			.000
Valid Cases	240			

Further, the results of Chi- Square test and Fisher Exact test as given in table 7, reveal that there is significant association between occupation of respondents and awareness on green marketing as the tests are highly significant with $p < 0.01$ at 1% significance level. Hence, H3 is also accepted.

Table 8: Chi-Square Tests between Gender and Willingness to pay Higher Prices

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	256.687 ^a	14	.000	.000
Likelihood Ratio	86.394	14	.000	.000
Fisher's Exact Test	78.365			.000
Valid Cases	240			

In table 8, the results of Chi- Square test and Fisher Exact test both indicate that there is significant association between gender and the willingness to pay higher prices for green products as $p < 0.01$ is highly significant at 1% level, leading to acceptance of the fourth hypothesis H4 that gender and willingness to pay are significantly associated with each other.

Q.6 Do you know what Green Marketing is?

Responses	N	%
Yes	211	87.91
No	29	12.08
Total	240	100

It is encouraging to out find that 87.91% respondents are aware about concept of green marketing whereas 12.08% are not aware about green marketing. Thus, the ratio of people knowing about the green marketing is much more than those who do not know about Green marketing.

Q.7 Are you aware of Green Products?

Responses	N	%
Yes	219	91.25
No	21	8.75
Total	240	100

The above data shows that there are 91.25% respondents who are aware about green products whereas only 8.75% are not aware of green products. So, we can say that now a large number of consumers are quite aware about green products still there is scope for further increasing awareness to protect the environment for the future generations.

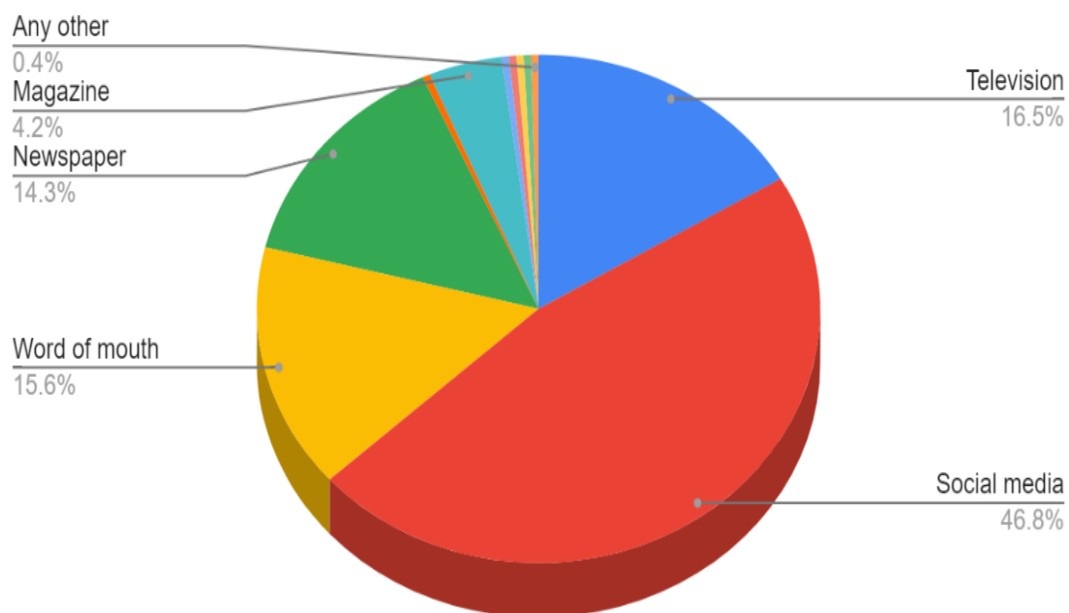
Q.8 How you became aware of Eco-friendly/ Green Products?

Figure 1: Sources of information for Green products

As per the pie chart, the most popular source of information is social media as 46.8% of the total sample got informed through social media about green products. Thus, Social media has played an important role in promotion of green marketing and spreading awareness among the prospective consumers. The next popular means of information is the television as a lot of promotion has been done through advertising with 16.5% of the total respondents opting for it. Other sources like word of mouth, newspapers, magazines and related sources also played an important role in spreading awareness among people.

Q.9 Have you purchased any Green Product, so far?

Responses	N	%
Yes	193	80.41
No	47	19.59
Total	240	100

After doing the analysis of the above data it is clear that 80.41% of people are already using the green products as they are aware of the advantages of the green products while only 19.59% respondents have not purchased any green product so far. Hence, marketers should adopt more effective marketing strategies to attract more consumers to purchase green products.

Q.10 What kind of Green Product have you used?

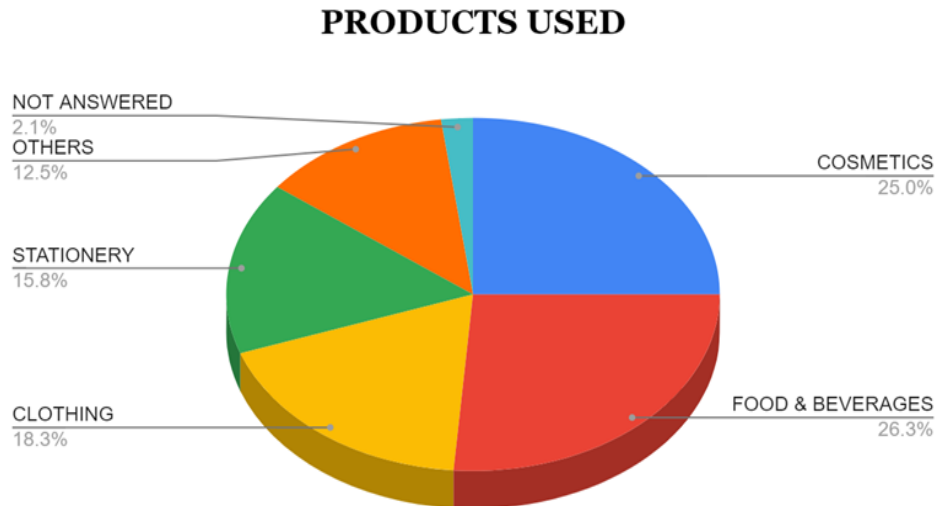


Figure 2: Kinds of Green Products used

The above figure 2 shows that a majority of people are aware and are using green products in some form or the other like stationery, clothing, cosmetics and food and beverages, which is the most widely used green product with 26.3% of the people using them. Cosmetics takes a close second position with 25% of the people buying and using green cosmetics products. While clothing is next highly used green product with 18.3% respondents using it in the form of sustainable clothing or green clothing. Around 16 % were using green products for stationery. Only 2.1% of the people didn't answer this question as they are the people who have not used any green products so far.

Q.11 Which factor influences your buying behaviour for Green Products?

As we can see from figure 3 that the most cited reason by the respondents in our sample (48.8%) for buying green products is 'the protection of environment'. The consumers are aware how green products can save our environment and minimise the negative effects of harmful chemicals on our environment. The second major reason opted by the respondents is the 'product features' that comprises 25% of the sample as they can get their needs fulfilled without harming the environment. Around 16% respondents are also fond of green products due to their innovative and attractive packaging.

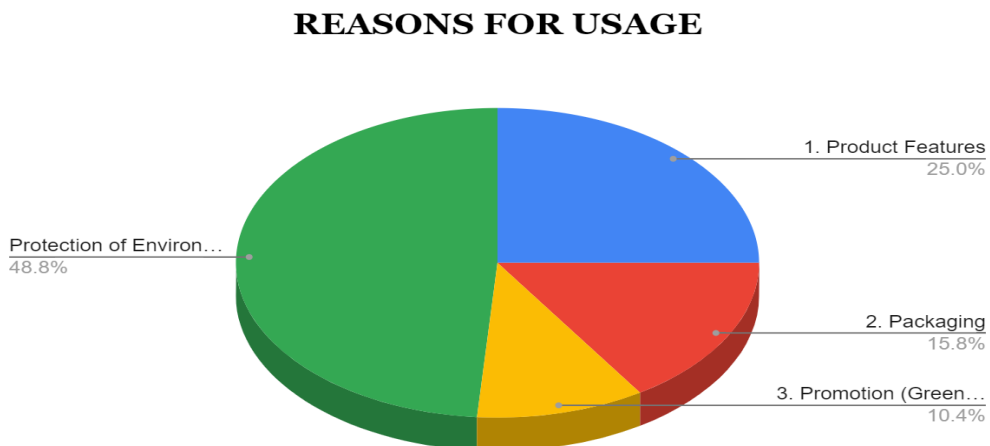


Figure 3: Reasons for using Green products

Q.12 Do you support the high pricing of the Green Products by the Seller?

Responses	N	%
Highly agree	14	5.84
Agree	57	23.75
Neutral	107	44.58
Disagree	50	20.83
Highly disagree	12	5.00
Total	240	100

The above data shows that mostly people have a neutral approach towards the support of high prices of green products by the seller as it was found that 44.58% of people reported it. While 23.75% of people agreed to pay a high price on green products and 20.83% of them disagreed. The responses show that only 5.84% respondents highly agreed to pay high prices whereas 5% have highly disagreed.

Q.13 Are you willing to pay high prices charged for Green Products?

Responses	N	%
Yes	72	30
No	124	51.67
Doesn't matter	44	18.33
TOTAL	240	100

The analysis of above data pertaining to willingness to pay high prices for green products shows that the majority of respondents (51.67%) do not agree to pay higher prices for green products even if they are aware of the advantages of the green product from the other products. So, it leads to conclusion that sellers or producers will have to make efforts to provide green products at lower prices in order to enhance the sales and market share of such products.

Q.14 How often have you seen or came across Green Products in your local/regional market?

Responses	N	%
Very frequently	19	7.91
Frequently	73	30.41
Sometimes	88	36.66
Rarely	43	17.91
Very rarely	16	6.66
No answer	1	0.41
Total	240	100

The above responses on question regarding the visibility of Green products in their local or regional market indicate that around 37% respondents reported that they have seen such products 'sometimes' in local market. Further, it was found that only 7.91% people have come across these products very frequently while 30.41% of people have seen them frequently in their local market. 17.91% respondents reported to have rarely seen and 6.66% of them have very rarely seen green products in the local market.

Q.15 Are you satisfied with the Green Products and the Green Marketing?

Responses	N	%
Highly satisfied	33	13.75
Satisfied	99	41.25
Neutral	89	37.08
Dissatisfied	18	7.5
Highly dissatisfied	1	0.41
Total	240	100

While asking about the satisfaction derived from Green products and Green marketing, 13.75% respondents said that they are highly satisfied with green products and green marketing. A good number of people (41.25%) are satisfied while 37.08% are neutral, 7.5% are dissatisfied and 0.41% are highly dissatisfied. So, there are very less people who are dissatisfied with green marketing.

Q16. In the long run, do you think that Green Marketing will contribute towards Sustainable Growth?

Responses	N	%
Highly satisfied	91	37.91
Satisfied	116	48.33
Neutral	29	12.08
Dissatisfied	3	1.25
Highly dissatisfied	1	0.41
Total	240	100

As we can see from the above table of responses for the last question of the questionnaire which asks about the opinion of respondents regarding contribution of Green marketing for sustainable growth, 48.33% of people answered that they are 'satisfied' and 37.91% are 'highly satisfied'. The percentage of people who are not sure about whether green marketing will contribute towards the sustainable growth is very less (around 2%) after combining the responses of 'dissatisfied' and 'highly dissatisfied'. This shows that although perception about green marketing among the minds of people is fairly good but it can be further improved by proper advertising and spreading awareness about Green products.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study is an attempt to identify the factors affecting Green marketing and consumer behaviour for green products while analysing the awareness and perception of consumers on Green products. The results from Chi-Square tests and Fisher Exact Tests revealed that there is significant association of gender, age and occupation with the awareness about Green marketing. Also, it is found that willingness to pay high prices for buying Green products varies with gender significantly. A majority of respondents (88%) were found to be aware about Green marketing and more than 91% were aware about Green products. The findings from the study show that females are more aware about green marketing (around 60%) as compared to males (only 31.67%). Overall 91.25% of the respondents are aware of the concept of green marketing and 80.41% of people are already using the green products as they are aware of the advantages of the green products so these findings are quite encouraging.

The most popular source of information is social media for 46.8% respondents followed by television. Food and beverages is the most widely used green product with 26.3% of respondents using them followed by Cosmetics with 25% of the people buying and using green cosmetics products. The most cited reason by the respondents (48.8%) for buying green products is 'the protection of environment' which shows their concern for environmental issues. Mostly people (44.58%) were found to have a neutral approach towards the idea of high prices of green products. While 23.75% of people agreed to pay a high price on green products but 20.83% of them disagreed on the same. More than half of the sample were found to be unwilling to pay high prices for Green products despite being aware of their advantages. So there should be efforts by the marketers to provide Green products at affordable prices. A good number of people (41.25%) are satisfied and very less people are dissatisfied with green marketing and products in the sample. Around 49% respondents felt that Green marketing will lead to sustainable growth but this number can be further increased by spreading more awareness about Green products and their advantages for the environment through advertising in newspapers, television and social media by the Government, sellers and NGOs (Non-Government organisations). We need to encourage the customers to embrace green marketing through various awareness programs and by providing information about eco-friendly products and their environmental benefits. The underlying philosophy of green marketing should be communicated to a wide audience of consumers.

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