

# Periodic Research

## Attitude of People Towards Green Consumer Behaviour: A Survey Research



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### Abstract

India's contribution to global warming in an alarming rate states that Indian society needs to engage in Green Consumer Behaviour. Due to the fluctuations in environmental conditions, most of the scientists now agreed upon the concern of adverse effects of chemicals and hazardous elements. In 21<sup>st</sup> century, due to globalization and industrialization, human activities for development have been the major concern for the incredible harm dealt to the environment in the last decade. The present research attempts to study the attitude of people towards Green Consumer Behaviour. The concept of Green Consumerism or Sustainable Consumption explains how consumers who are willing to buy eco-friendly products in which there is a minimum impact on the environment by the contents and methods of production. One hundred and sixty-five participants from Vadodara city were taken as a sample through random sampling method. Result indicates that there is a sound awareness about green consumer behavior though neutral attitude have been measured in applications and implementation of Green Consumer Behaviour.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Consumption, Globalization, Green Consumer Behaviour and Awareness.

### Introduction

The 2007 AMA definition of marketing speaks to marketing's role in the creation of goods and services that have value for both the consumer and society at large (The American Marketing Association, 2007). Environmental responsibility has become an increasingly important component for both groups. Thus, as businesses attempt to incorporate more pro-environmental behaviour and performance into their marketing practices, much of their focus has been on the identification and understanding of the green or environmentally conscious consumer. In fundamental terms, green consumer behaviour is the behaviour of an individual who considers environmental or social issues while making purchasing or non-purchasing decisions (Peattie, 1992). Therefore, consumer attitudes about green products, how they make their purchasing decision with respect to environmental impact, and how, when and where they buy green products and services are the focus of green consumer behaviour. While external and ethical pressures may encourage business to adopt greener practices, it is the acquisition and retention of this elusive and enigmatic segment of customers, the green consumer, which is most appealing to marketers.

### Definition of Green Consumption

Green consumption is the practice of using environmentally friendly products that do not cause risk for human health and do not threaten the function of diversity to natural ecosystems. Consumers have significant influence and direct impact on supply and demand in the market place. Green consumerism comes from the desire to protect resources for future generations and to increase our quality of life.

Green consumption is the regular practice of consumption of only environmentally friendly products that do not cause any damage to human health and do not threaten the functions and working of any natural ecosystem. Studies show that it is the most cost-effective approach for implementing cleaner production efforts.

Green consumption in 1980, the first book 'The Green Consumer Guide' was published in U.K. in response to the idea that in modern industrialized society, 'Shopping has become a leisure activity in itself.' In

Japan, the 'Buy Green' movement has been started by nearly 700 companies. In February 2003, the Government and companies all over Japan, formed Green Purchasing Network (GPN).

The Oslo Symposium in 1994 proposed a working definition of sustainable consumption as "the use of goods and services that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while minimising the use of natural resources, toxic materials and emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle, so as not to jeopardise the needs of future generations".

## **Green Consumer**

Who is mindful of environment related issues and obligations, and is supportive of environmental causes to the extent of switching allegiance from one product or supplier to another even if it entails higher cost.

## **Green Consumerism**

The situation in which consumers want to buy things that have been produced in a way that protects the natural environment.

## **Importance**

Green consumers are more likely to control their consumption in comparison to more traditional consumers and therefore, the environmental impact of green behaviours is direct. For example, the decision on whether or not to purchase a car tends to have much greater environmental impact than changes in the use of the same vehicle. This aspect involves the consumer's responsibility to control her/his consumption choices. There are consumers who are altruistic by nature, and therefore regard environmental issues, such as energy saving, an important matter. This came up in some of the case studies as well; those already motivated take best part in the campaigns. It balances the traditional supply-side focus of environmental management efforts, and complements the current trend towards more efficient and preventative approaches to environmental management in both government and industry. It picks up on the steps being taken to move beyond reactive command and control legislation towards integrated pollution prevention and control measures, and efforts to apply a life cycle approach to product management (eg design for environment, eco-labelling). It builds on the demand-side management (DSM) approach to reducing energy use. It can take advantage of the information revolution and the increasing emphasis on quality and service performance.

It can ensure that environmental problems are not shifted from one part of the life cycle to another: it will be especially important to ensure that developed world changes in consumption are managed so as to support rather than undermine the prospects for sustainable development in developing countries. It acknowledges the wide array of driving forces behind consumption including: need and price, quality and performance, regulatory requirements and stakeholder demands, competition and technological innovation, marketing and advertising, the imperatives of financial markets, peer pressure and fashion, as well as values, altruism and cultural imperatives. It can

have an important educational and communications value by revealing the connections between consumption practices and environmental impacts in distant places. It recognises that a bottom-up approach driven by local action can make substantial progress within an enabling framework provided by national governments.

## **India's Role in Green Consumer Behaviour**

India's contribution to global warming in an alarming rate states that India should engage in green consumer behaviour. In India, it is reported that consumers are still easy prey to high tech products (Chitra, 2007) and as such, the Market for eco-friendly products is yet to become mainstream. There is very little academic information available about green consumers in India. It is within the background of this research gap that the present Research was conducted to assess Indian consumers' pro-environmental concerns, knowledge of environmental issues, awareness of eco-friendly products, and any potential effect that these factors may have on green buying behaviour. On the basis of data collected between 1995 and 2010, the experts panel of the World Bank certified that India is one of the fastest progressing countries in the world in terms of addressing environmental issues and improving environmental quality (World Bank 2010). Still, India has a long way to go yet to reach the environmental quality enjoyed in developed economies. The challenge that India faces on the pollution front is large indeed, and marketers have a great opportunity to develop environmentally friendly technologies and products (World Bank 2011).

## **Types of Value of Green Brands**

### **Economic Value**

Economic value of a product or a consumption experience appears when this serves as a means to the accomplishment of a consumer's own objectives. Extensive prior research suggests a positive relationship between product performance, as evaluated through perceptions of product quality, and CV, as well as between product quality and RQ. Thus, it is expected that the functional performance of the green brand will be a significant prerequisite and source of value to the consumer.

Apart from their adherence to the same functional standards as conventional brands, green brands may as well offer another type of economic value that has so far received little empirical evidence. Although consumers may not generally experience an immediate individual benefit from the reduced environmental impact of a green brand in some cases direct longterm personal benefits can be obtained, such as the perceived health advantages of organic food and the savings on domestic heating and electricity bills that may offset higher initial costs (Hartmann and Ibanez 2006).

### **Hedonic Value**

It arises from "consumers' own pleasure in consumption experiences appreciated for their own sake as ends in themselves" (Holbrook 2006). Other researchers (Mathwick et al. 2001; Sheth et al. 1991; Sweeney and Soutar 2001) have also proposed

playfulness and aesthetics as sources of value; yet the role of this factor on the relationship development with the brand remains under researched. Limited evidence also supports that emotions elicited during consumption have a positive relationship with satisfaction (Szymanski and Henard 2001). However, in comparison to other types, the relative effect of this type of value on the development of consumer relationships with green brands has not been examined, which initially drives us to propose that hedonic value of a green brand will positively affect evaluations of CV.

### **Altruistic Value**

Finally, altruistic value entails a "concern for how my own consumption behaviour affects others where this experience is viewed as a self-justifying end-in-itself-as when engaging in ethically desirable practices in which virtue is its own reward". Bhattacharya et al. (2009) state that consumers gain psychosocial benefits, such as helping others in need, through their purchases of ethical brands, which in turn lead to a sense of wellbeing and contentment.

Further in the specific context of green brands, previous research supports that buying brands from manufacturers whose products and processes are more environmentally friendly enhances a desired self-concept, allowing consumers to "feel good about it" (Pickett-Baker and Ozaki 2008). Customers experience an intrinsic value in using green products or services, an individual motivation to adopt the brand that sources from a "...warm glow of giving, which could be seen as an impure form of altruism" (Hartmann and Ibanez 2006). (a) Economic, (b) social, (c) hedonic and (d) altruistic values are positively related with perceived CV of green brands.

### **Price**

In the case of green brands, previous research has revealed a general consumer tendency to accept higher prices (e.g. Auger et al. 2003; Creyer and Ross 1997; D'Souza et al. 2007; Laroche et al. 2001; Vlosky et al. 1999), which, however, is widely based on consumer self-reported data; thus, in practice higher prices are found to often put off would-be customers (De Pelsmacker et al. 2005; Peattie 2001; Stern 2000). More evidence on the role of price as a barrier stems from the research in the specific context of organic food. Following the more pragmatic evidence on the role of price, it is suggested that the augmented price of a green brand has a negative impact on perceptions of CV and as such, serves as a barrier for the development of the customer relationship with the green brand.

### **Effort**

Effort in terms of brand search costs, but also physical effort to make a purchase is largely determined by the availability of the brand in many distribution channels. Yoo et al. (2000) provide empirical evidence that making a brand available in more stores offers convenience, time savings and service accessibility; thus, increasing customer satisfaction (Ferris and de Kluyver 1989; Smith 1992). On the other hand, limited availability of the brand

may increase the effort required from the customer to find and purchase it, thus lowering the perceptions of brand-delivered CV (Baker et al. 2002; Zeithaml 1988).

Effort is negatively related to various environmentally friendly behaviours, such as recycling (Schultz and Oskamp 1996). Limited availability of green brands, in particular, is a major obstacle to desired purchase consumer behaviour, as the majority of consumers may not be willing to change their retail outlet or brand on account of non-availability (Bhate and Lawler 1997; De Pelsmacker et al. 2005; Peattie 2001; Shaw and Clarke 1999). Even if a person is motivated to buy green brands, he or she cannot buy such goods if they are not offered for sale in an accessible location (Tanner and Kast 2003).

### **Time**

Apart from the time costs related to the search of information and evaluation of alternatives, a different category of time costs involves the waiting time and travel time required for the purchase, as initially proposed by Bender (1964). In the specific case of green brands, perceived time barriers, i.e. lack of time to look for, decide and buy restrain one's motivation to buy green brands (McDonald et al. 2009; Tanner and Kast 2003; Young et al. 2010). These findings lend support to the argument that green brands, due to their limited availability and resulting lack of convenience, apart from physical effort, often involve increased time requirements for the customer to make the purchase, which may have a negative effect on the evaluation of brand-stemming CV.

### **Aim of Research**

The aim of the research was to study the Attitude of people towards Green consumer behaviour. For this, 165 consumers within Vadodara district were taken as sample, this way data was collected.

### **Objectives**

1. To study the attitude of people towards Green Consumer Behaviour.
2. To study the awareness of people towards Green Consumer behaviour.

### **Hypothesis**

1. People will have positive attitude towards Green Consumer Behaviour
2. People will have higher awareness towards Green Consumer behaviour

### **Method**

#### **Sample**

165 Consumers were taken as sample through random sampling method. Include criteria of sample were sample must be consumer, age above 18 years, mentally healthy and knowing English language and excluding criteria were mentally unhealthy, uneducated and not known English.

### **Research Design**

Survey Questionnaire was used to collect data. Survey research is defined as "a technique where by the researcher studies the whole population with respect to contain sociological and psychological

variables” (Singh, 2010). The survey research Questionnaire was used as data collection tool.

**Tools**

1. The Survey research questionnaire was developed and face validated by experts.
2. The survey questionnaire consisted of 50 items on 5 Point Rating Scale; 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree and to measure unawareness of people about GCB 6<sup>th</sup> point of Not Thought of was added. Reliability of scale is 0.749.

**Procedure**

1. Items were written and face validated by experts.
2. The sample taken from the population was approached in malls, markets, universities, public areas; some of the samples were in close networks of the researchers.
3. The sample was briefed about the survey, they were instructed the purpose for its conduction and was also told that the data collected from their responses was only for research purpose

and the data will be kept confidential. After the data was collected the data was analyzed by using the SPSS software.


**Result and Discussion**

**Table 1**  
**Attitude of People toward Green Consumer Behaviour**

Total no. of items	Total no. of sample	Mean (overall)
50	165	3.30

Table no.1 indicates attitude of people towards Green Consumer Behaviour. All over mean is 3.30 that means people have neutral attitude towards Green Consumer Behaviour. On five-point scale, mean is 3.30 that mean people have neutral attitude toward Green Consumer Behaviour. First hypothesis assumed that people will have positive attitude towards Green Consumer Behaviour, is rejected because people have neutral attitude toward Green Consumer Behaviour.

**Table 2**  
**Showing the Percentage of Unawareness**

S. No.	Item No.	% of Unawareness
1	I am aware that purchasing eco friendly products will contribute to sustainable future	0
2	I know products and services that are eco-friendly and safer for the environment	2.4
3	I feel that there is enough information about eco friendly features while buying the products	2.4
4	I find the available information about the eco-labelled products sufficient	6.7
5	I get information about eco-friendly products from newspaper/magazine before purchasing the product	3
6	I understand the environmental phrases and symbol on product packages. E.g.- 	1.8
7	I mostly try to buy eco friendly products	4.2
8	I change to other products for environmental reasons	5.5
9	I avoid buying certain products because they have potentially harmful environmental effects. E.g.- Polythene bags	1.2
10	I think about the effect I create on the environment as a consumer before purchasing day to day products	5.5
11	I believe that young people shows more sensitivity toward eco-friendly consumer behaviour	3.6
12	I would buy the product if the product and its package are designed to be recycled before making a purchase	4.8
13	If the product is labelled eco friendly, the information would affect my purchase	9.1
14	I feel good when I purchase an eco-friendly product.	2.4
15	When choosing between Non-eco-friendly and eco-friendly products, the price of the product affects my choice	6.7
16	I feel the emotion of regret and disappointment, when I consume the products that are not eco-friendly in nature	3.6
17	I get anxious about the environment when I don't purchase eco-friendly product	9.1
18	Happiness and pleasure are my first immediate emotions when I purchase eco-friendly product	6.7
19	I am emotionally favourable towards buying an eco-friendly product	3.6
20	I trust the information provided on the packaging about the eco-friendly product	4.8
21	When I use eco-friendly product I feel inner peace and harmony	6.7
22	I feel natural connection when I use eco-friendly product	3.6
23	I believe that both male and female should have same attitude towards eco-friendly consumer behaviour	3
24	I believe that Sustainable development is the basic requirement of 21st century	1.8
25	I believe it is important to be environment friendly	1.2

# Periodic Research

26	I have a need to consume eco-friendly product	2.4
27	I believe political leaders have an effect on the eco-friendly consumer behaviour	9.7
28	I am influenced by the celebrities to purchase a eco-friendly product	6.1
29	I believe environment related laws influence my decision related to consuming eco-friendly products	5.5
30	I believe human's choice of politics influences the eco-friendly consumer behaviour	8.5
31	I feel that politics is a reliable source for getting information about eco-friendly consumer behaviour	7.9
32	I believe political leaders affect my purchase decision related to eco-friendly products	9.1
33	I check if the product is eco-friendly or not before making any purchases online	8.5
34	I believe media is able to give me enough knowledge for using eco-friendly products	3.6
35	I believe media influences my purchase decision related to the eco-friendly product	3
36	I believe media is reliable source for getting the information about eco-friendly consumer behaviour	3
37	I believe eco-friendly consumer behaviour related advertisement promotes the sale of the product	3
38	I don't mind spending extra money for paper bags	3.6
39	I am willing to pay more for eco-friendly product	6.1
40	I have paid more for an eco friendly product than a normal product in the past	7.9
41	I feel young people are insensitive towards eco-friendly Consumer Behaviour	3
42	I feel that Religion does not play an important role in the purchase of eco-friendly product	6.1
43	Media demotivates me for purchasing eco-friendly products	7.9
44	I don't feel happy when I purchase eco-friendly products	6.7
45	I don't like to pay Rs. 2 for paper bags in the malls	3.6
46	I use the products where child labour is not used in the manufacturing unit/process. E.g.- Fireworks and Crackers nowadays	10.3
47	I would purchase a product over another product if the label states that its manufacturing follows all the laws related to environment	9.7
48	I inspire other members of my group to purchase eco-friendly products	7.3
49	It doesn't affect me if my consumption of non eco-friendly products harm the environment	5.5
50	Political leaders have effect on my choice of consumption of eco-friendly products	10.9

Item No. 4 (I find the available information about the ecolabelled products sufficient) 6.7% consumer are not aware, its shows that there is a less awareness about GCB. Item No. 13 (If the product is labelled eco-friendly, the information would affect my purchase) 9.1% consumer are not aware, its shows that there is a less awareness about the GCB. Item No. 15 (When choosing between Non-eco-friendly and eco-friendly products, the price of the product affects my choice) 6.7% consumer are not aware, its shows that there is a less awareness about GCB. Item No. 17 (I get anxious about the environment when I don't purchase eco-friendly product) 9.1% consumer are not aware, its shows that there is a less awareness about GCB. Item No. 18 (Happiness and pleasure are my first immediate emotions when I purchase eco-friendly product) 6.7% consumer are not aware, its shows that there is a less awareness about GCB. Item no.21 (When I use eco-friendly product I feel inner peace and harmony) 6.7% consumer are not aware, its shows that there is a less awareness about GCB. Item no. 27 (I believe political leaders have an effect on the eco-friendly consumer behaviour) 9.7% consumer are not aware, its shows that there is a less awareness about GCB.

Item no. 28 (I am influenced by the celebrities to purchase a eco-friendly product) 6.1% consumer are not aware, its shows that there is a less awareness about GCB. Item no. 30 (I believe human's choice of politics influences the eco-friendly consumer behaviour) 8.5% consumer are not aware, its shows

that there is a less awareness about GCB. Item no. 31 (I feel that politics is a reliable source for getting information about eco-friendly consumer behaviour) 7.9% consumer are not aware, its shows that there is a less awareness about the GCB. Item no. 32 (I believe political leaders affect my purchase decision related to eco-friendly products) 9.1% consumer are not aware, its shows that there is a less awareness about GCB. Item no. 33 (I check if the product is eco-friendly or not before making any purchases online) 8.5% consumer are not aware, its shows that there is a less awareness about GCB. Item no. 39 (I am willing to pay more for eco-friendly product) 6.1% consumer are not aware, its shows that there is a less awareness about the Economics dimension of GCB. Item no. 40 (I have paid more for an eco-friendly product than a normal product in the past) 7.9% consumers are not aware, its shows that there is a less awareness about GCB.

Item no. 42 (I feel that Religion does not play an important role in the purchase of eco-friendly product) 6.1% consumer are not aware, its shows that there is a less awareness about GCB. Item no. 43 (Media demotivates me for purchasing eco-friendly products) 7.9% consumer are not aware, its shows that there is a less awareness about GCB. Item no. 44 (I don't feel happy when I purchase eco-friendly products) 6.7% consumer are not aware, its shows that there is a less awareness about GCB. Item no. 46 (I use the products where child labour is not used in the manufacturing unit/process. E.g.- Fireworks and

Crackers nowadays)10.3% consumer are not aware, its shows that there is a less awareness about GCB. Item no. 47(I would purchase a product over another product if the label states that its manufacturing follows all the laws related to environment) 9.7% consumer are not aware, its shows that there is a less awareness about GCB. Item no. 48 (I inspire other members of my group to purchase eco-friendly products) 7.3% consumer are not aware, its shows that there is a less awareness about GCB. Item no. 50 (Political leaders have no effect on my choice of consumption of eco-friendly products) 10.9% consumer are not aware, its shows that there is a less awareness about GCB.

Second hypothesis assumed that People will have higher awareness towards Green Consumer behaviour. It is true that people have higher aware about Green Consumer Behaviour that means hypothesis is accepted.

**Table 3**  
**Reliability Statistics of Developed Scale**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.749	50

Table No. 3 indicating internal reliability of developed scale.

Internal reliability of developed scale is 0.749 and N of items is 50

#### Limitations of Research

The area chosen (Baroda) was small; hence the results cannot be generalized. The sample size was small (N=165). The scale wasn't developed in the local language.

#### Implications of Research

Results can be applied to generate positive attitude of consumer towards green consumer behavior. Organizations can use this research to generate a market for green consumer products. Media and political leaders should take an initiative to spread awareness regarding green consumer behavior. Results also indicate that the community can be made aware about green consumer behavior. Results can be applies to make consumer aware about green consumer behavior, save the environment and minimize environmental issues like global warming and increase cleanliness.

#### Conclusion

People have a neutral attitude towards Green Consumer Behaviour. People are not aware about the influence of political leaders and media on Green Consumer Behaviour

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