

## CONSUMER PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS ECO –FRIENDLY PRODUCTS: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS ON THIRUVANANTHAPURAM DISTRICT

\*Sunitha.L.F,

Research Scholar,

Department of Economics, University College,

Thiruvananthapuram.

### Abstract

Consumers perception can influence the decision making process and buying behavior of the individuals. According to a study conducted by Bhatia & Jain(2013),consumers have shown positive attitude towards green products at the same time they are concerned with the availability and price of such products. We need Environment friendly products and process. There is increasing awareness on the various environmental problems which has led a shift in the way consumers go about their life. There has been a drastic change in consumer attitudes towards a green lifestyle. People are actively trying to reduce their impact on the environment. It is a challenge for industries to keep consumers and environment safe. Green marketing in a broader sense is corporate social responsibility because it helps business to become a socially responsible as well .In India Consumer awareness about green marketing practices is not widespread and is still evolving This paper aims to understand the perception of consumers towards ecofriendly white goods, awareness about the availability of such products and the demographic profile of green consumers.

### Introduction

The growth of the global economy, over consumption and utilization of natural resources has deteriorated the environment. The climate change which is caused by human-induced greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuel combustion and is now occurring and it has presented a great challenge to everyone around the world (Krause, 1993; Easterling et al., 1996). The green and sustainability trend has emerged due to the pressure on companies from consumers, shareholders, employees, partners and governments (regulations) to embrace more sustainable and green practices (Singh, 2013). Human behavior is a key source as well as the main solution

to the environmental problems. As a result, the personal consumption decision is of growing interest of firms in various fields and some firms have changed their corporate culture to be more environmentally responsible, and have developed environmentally friendly products and services to meet the demand of environmentally conscious consumers (Sachdev & Mahna, 2014). Today's consumer is more aware and well informed about the products social media make it easy to access to anything and competition is one click away from your finger. This paper tells about the consumer behavior towards purchase eco-friendly products. Today products are more customized but consumer will need goods that are healthy and safe to use. Thus their preference for green / eco-friendly products. Nature friendly are marketing terms reforming to goods and services, laws, guidelines and policies that inflict, reduced minimal or no harm these malicious terms to promote goods and services, sometimes with additional, more specific certifications, such as eco label . Their overuse can be referred as green washing. Eco-friendly products are also called green product. These are bio-degradable, reuse and recyclable. Hence they do not harm our environment. Most of the people chooses eco-friendly products because it is less toxic, safer, biodegradable and recyclable.. People who follow eco-friendly lifestyle adopt 3R's, RRR which means to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

Thus, Eco-friendly products are not only safe for the environment but they also help keeping our family protected from being exposed to any toxic chemicals. Most standard duty products now a certain the use of harmful substance to a certain degree which may potentially lead to cancer or other serious help problems of course recognizing eco-friendly products that are truly as safe for our environment and air mother earth.

Key words: Green marketing, perception, eco-friendly, Green products, environmental pollution

### **Scope of the study**

Environmental issues like global warming, ozone depletion, depletion of natural resources, changing weather, are most talked about issues changing weather, are most talked about issues now a day. Tremendous critical issues, such as extinction of rare specious of flora & fauna from earth, various incurable or semi curable diseases, acid rain, excessive pollution especially in urban areas, arises due to these changes that has been proves dangerous to global life. This may directly or indirectly affect the way one behaves, Specially while making a purchase decision. The greediness of a human being and desire to get maximum with minimum

resulted into a ruining the essential supporting system of life i.e. Land, water & air. For examples, the World Health Organization (WHO) Reported air pollution in India causes 5,21,000 deaths every year, 21 percent of communicable diseases in India are related to polluted water. Moreover, National Geographic ranked Indians at the bottoms of the list of 14 nationalities in environmental awareness. A new sense of urgency about Indian environmental degradation has compelled a number of ordinary individuals to make eco-conscious life changes. The environment has become a main stream issue & consequentially consumers are becoming more concerned about their habits and the effect that these have on the environment. These are the evidences in various researches to suggest that consumer is increasingly choosing or avoiding products based on their environmental impact. Thus, Green product are used commonly to describe those that strive to protect or enhance the natural environment by conserving energy and / or resources and reducing or eliminating use of toxic agents, pollution , and waste. It is also referred as a product that is environmentally preferable relative to comparable products. Thus, green marketing approach is largely used as a tool by the gigantic corporate houses in order to make a difference in the consumers, point of view when it comes to making market decisions. All this prompts the present study. Therefore, in the present study an attempt has been made to analyze the consumer preference towards eco-friendly products.

### **Review of Literature**

Ali (2011) evaluated green purchase attitude and green purchase intention of Pakistan consumers and found that there are many customers who have positive and high intention to purchase green products but due to high prices and poor qualities as compared to non-green products.

According to Rao (2011) suggest that if business offer environment friendly products to consumer with affordable price and high quality as compared to traditional products along these consumers have positive intention to purchase green products, green product purchase green products.

According to Chang and Fong (2010) made a survey of the consumers who had experienced purchasing green or eco-friendly products in Taiwan and found that green product quality and green corporate image could bring green customers satisfaction and green customers loyalties.

According to Clem (2008) reveals that going green reflect a social consciousness around

saving & advancing the Earth's natural resources, Preserving & Protecting than for the sake of civilization consumers are becoming more & more aware of environmental issues & this has increased the demand for ecological products. If consumers have a favorable attitude toward greening environment they more inclined to purchase eco-friendly product or green products. The continuous awareness of environmental problems may in turn change consumer's attitudes & purchase intension as well.

According to Mahenc (2008) A high price of green products has an indicator of environmental preference, because less polluting products are more costly to produce.

According to Hess and Timen (2008) , A dominating approach to green marketing that evolved during this period was the holistic view which meant that marketers and corporation adopting an environmental friendly strategy must, due to the nature of environmental issues.

1. According to Ozaki & Josephine pickett-Baker (2008) stated that there is a gap between enviournmental believes and customer green behavior and consumer are not likely to exposed with green advertisement if they are well aware of green products and greater marketing of green products will urge customer to do green behavior and those who are conscious about enviournment will even for eco-friendly products.

According to Dsouza (2006) Green products quality is also concerned facto for most consumers green consumers generally trust on these brand & are not ready to comprise on quality. As there is an expectation on the part of consumer that all product offered should be environmentally safe without a need to sacrifice quality, businesses must enhance green product quality as well as focus on environmental benefits of products & share these aspects with consumers in order to achieve recognition in the market.

### **Research objective**

- To understand consumers awareness about eco-friendly products.
- To examine the factors influencing the preference for eco-friendly products
- To study the consumer's perception towards eco-friendly products

### **Research Methodology**

The research design adopted for the study is descriptive in nature; primary data has been collected from the various people who are residing in Trivandrum city. The primary data was collected using the questionnaire, respondents has been selected for study. The data for this study

was collected through self-administered questionnaire to potential respondents across Trivandrum district.

**Source of data:** The study is based on primary and secondary data primary data has been collected by using questionnaire. Secondary data has been collected from internet, Articles and books.

**Data Analysis Sample characteristics:** the below table shows the demographic characteristics of the sample i.e., 100 respondents

CHARACTER	PERCENTAGE	
<b>1.AGE</b>	21-30	54.3
	31-40	30.5
	41-50	11.4
	51 and above	3.8
<b>2.GENDER</b>	Male	42.9
	Female	57.1
<b>3.ANNUALFAMILY INCOME</b>	Less than 20,000	61.0
	20,000-50,000	32.4
	50,000 and above	6.7
<b>4.EDUCATION</b>	SSLC	20.2
	HSC	42.8
	Graduate	24
	Post Graduate	17
<b>5.OCCUPATION</b>	Business	24.8

	Service	38.1
	Professional	10.5
	Home maker	3.8
	Students	22.9
<b>6. NO. OF FAMILY MEMBERS</b>	2	35.7
	3	25.2
	4	26.2
	5	13
	More than 5	0

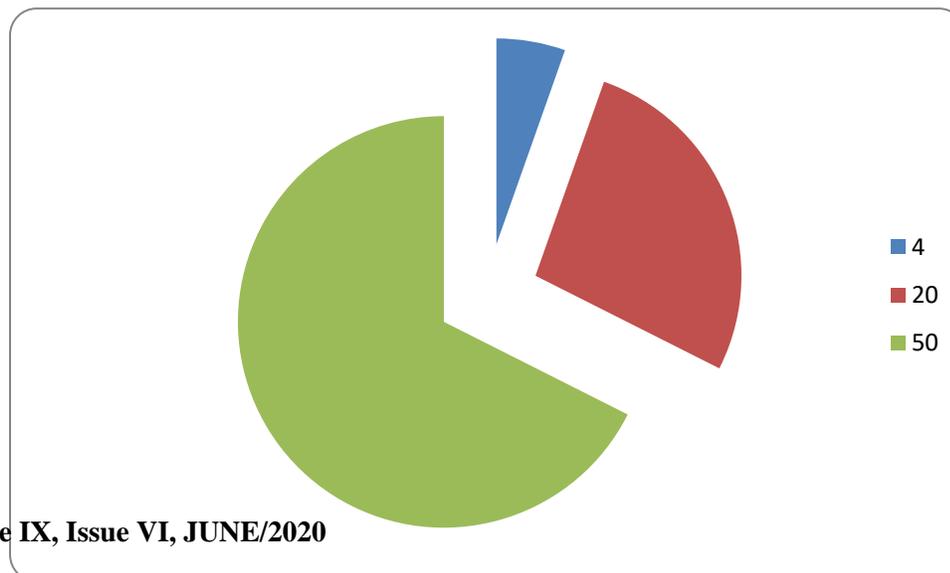
Source: Primary Survey

**Socio – economic characteristics of consumers of Eco-friendly products**

**Gender Distribution of consumer**

Gender is an important variable in a given Indian market situation which is variable affect by any market or customer behavior. Hence, the variable gender was investigated for this study. The distribution of gender of consumers of eco-friendly products was analyzed and the results are

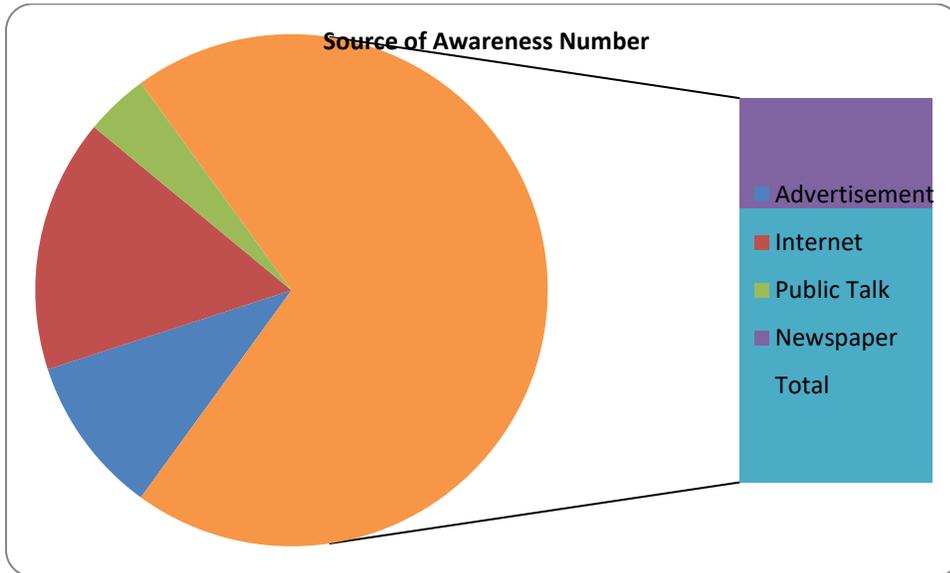
presented in the figure below



Source: Primary Survey

### Source of Awareness about Eco-friendly Products

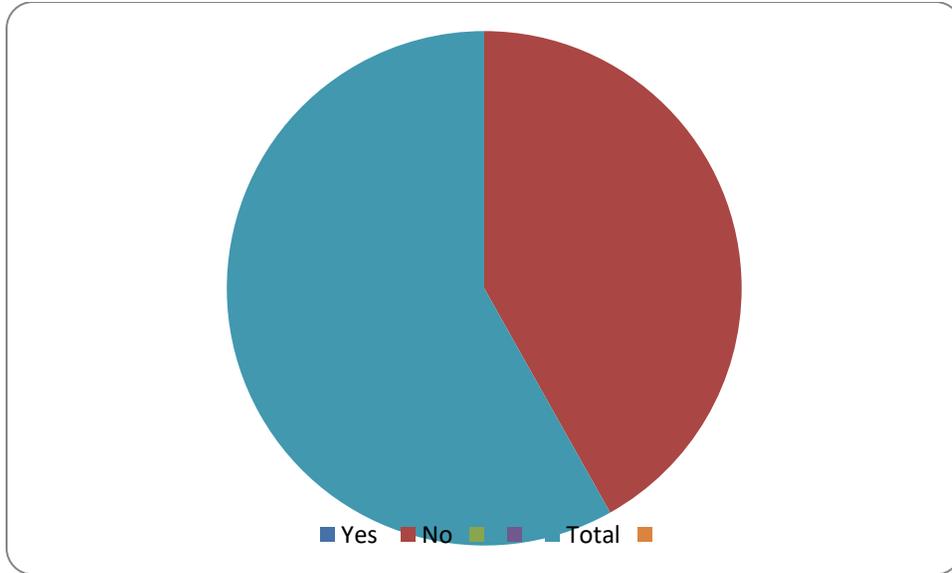
Primary data shows source of awareness of sample consumers. The major media promoting awareness regarding eco-friendly products is Newspaper (40%) followed by internet (32%) , Advertisement (20%) public talk (8%).



Source : Primary Survey

### Perception towards eco-friendly products

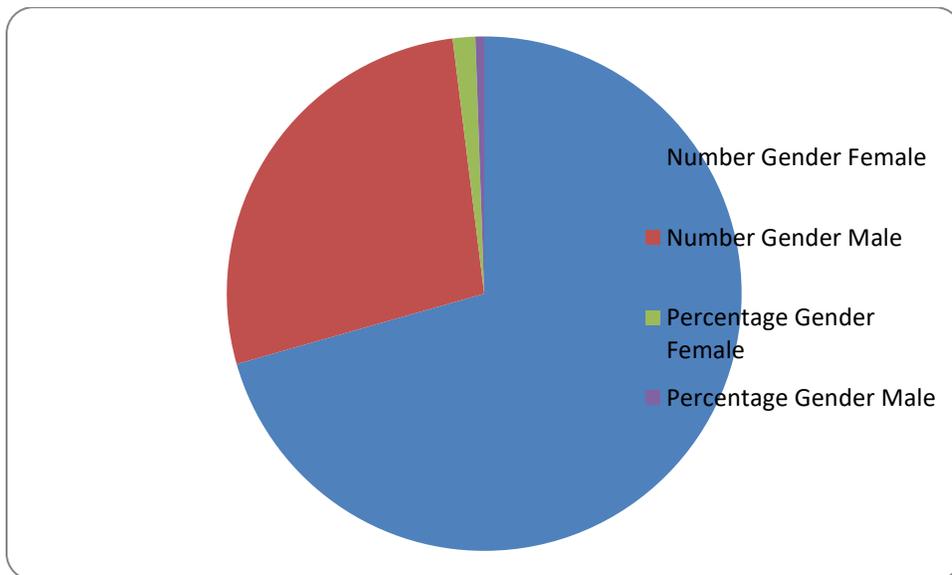
perception of the respondents have been measured for eco-friendly products by asking statements such as, are good for environment, have better quality/performance, are high priced, are well promoted, easy to distinguish and finally appreciate the package/design of such products



Source: Primary Survey

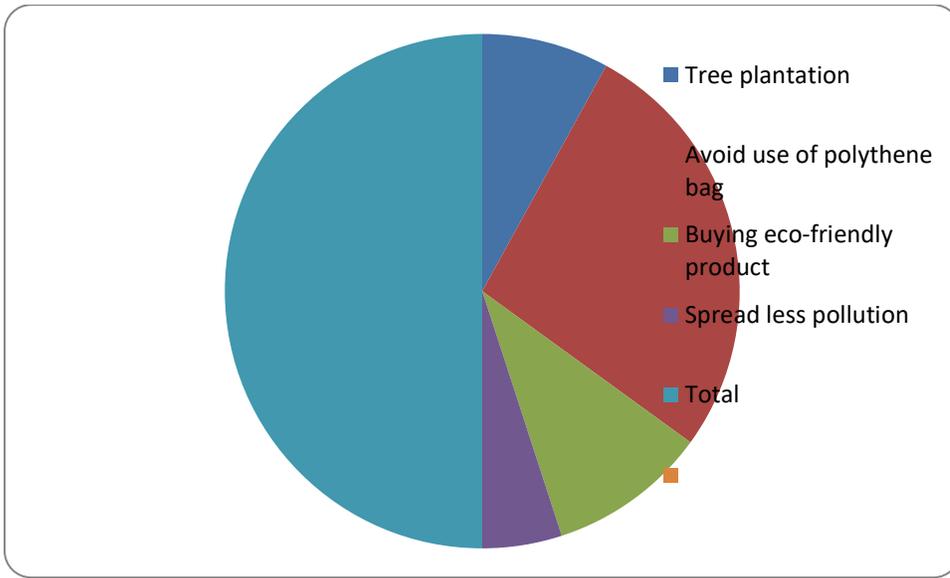
Primary data shows that 10% of the respondent take shopping so it reveals that through awareness level is high while discriminating the respondent among the female and male, female respondents (72%) and male (14%) take into consideration, can friendly pelts while making shopping.

**Consideration regarding Green product while shopping**



Source :Primary Survey

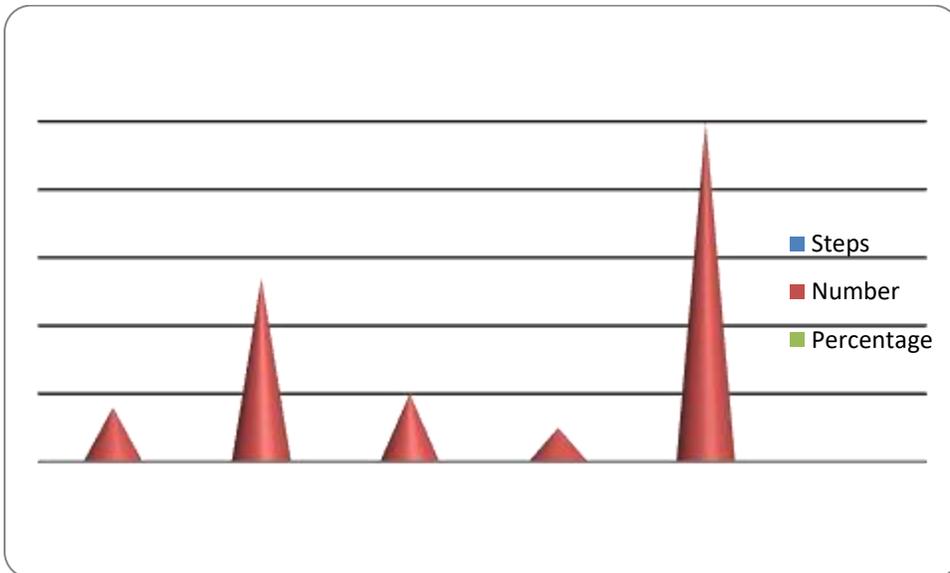
**Frequency of purchase of Green Products**



Source: Primary Data

Primary data shows that the frequency of purchase by sample consumers. Majority had spent for one month an amount of Rs. Below 500 (50%) . Only 5 (10%) had spent, above 1000 in a month.

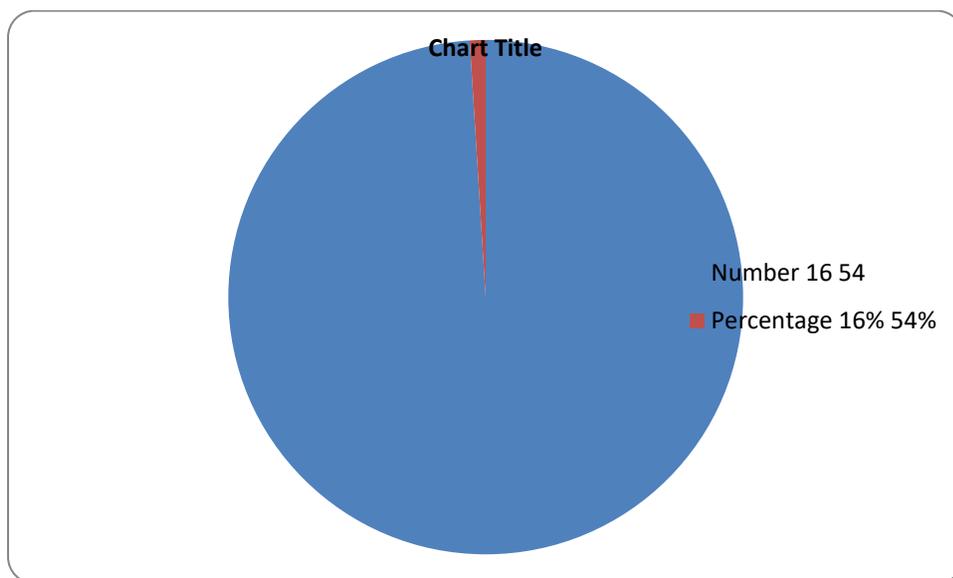
**Green products purchased by Respondents**



Source : Primary Survey

Primary data shows the purchase of the different type of eco-friendly products. Majority of respondents purchase paper bag followed by herbal products (30%), organic vegetables (16%) and electrical appliances 12%. This indicates that paper bag is less expensive when compared to other products. Consumers often choose products whose price is neither costly nor very costly.

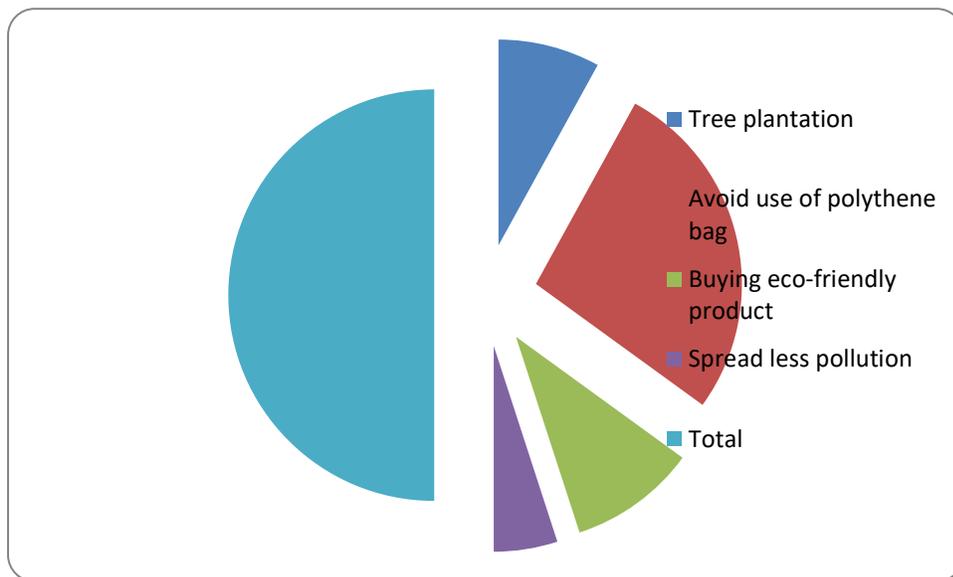
**Level of satisfaction**



Source: Primary Survey

Primary data shows the level of satisfaction in Eco-friendly products. 100% of the respondents are satisfied using eco-friendly products. This reveals that eco-friendly products are those products which do not harm air health, ecosystem and surroundings by its use, consumption or disposal.

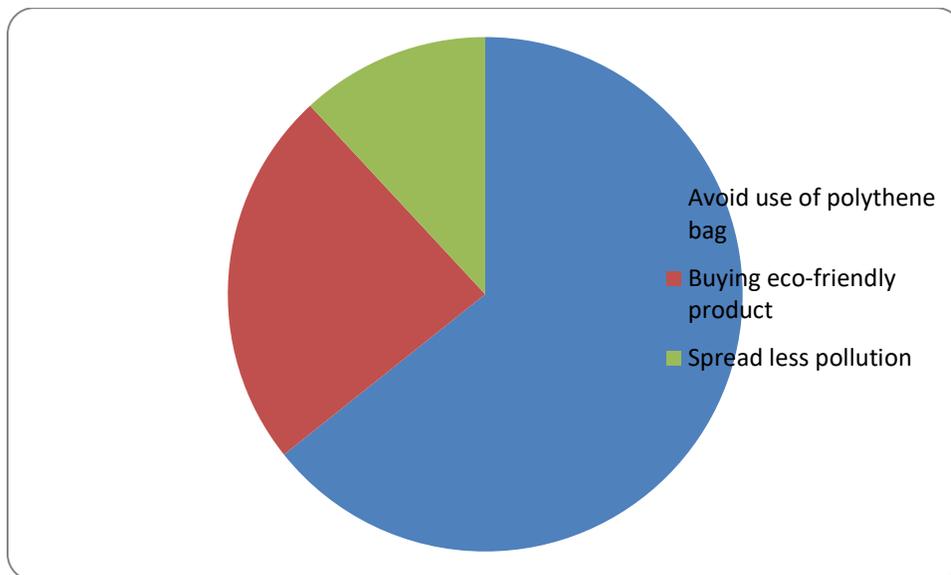
**Factors that influencing consumer’s purchasing decision of Eco-friendly products**



Source: Primary Survey

It can be seen from the figure that according to 56% of consumers, benefits of health is major factor that influencing consumer purchasing decision behavior. This is followed by (18%) environmental concerns, price reasonable (16%), packaging, size and design (10%) from the above table, it is found that when it comes to purchase of green products, price, health, packaging, environmental concern are still the key factors influencing their purchase decision.

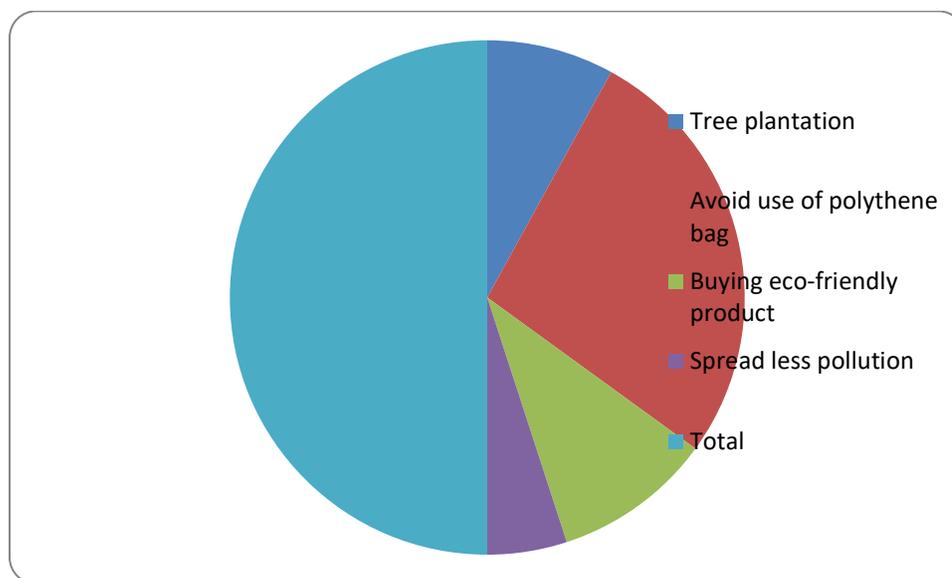
**Problems in purchasing Eco-friendly products**



Source:Primary Survey

Primary data shows the problem faced by customers in purchasing eco-friendly products. Majority say due to lack of green shop (74%).26% of respondents opinion is eco friendly products reduces pollution and helps from environmental depletion

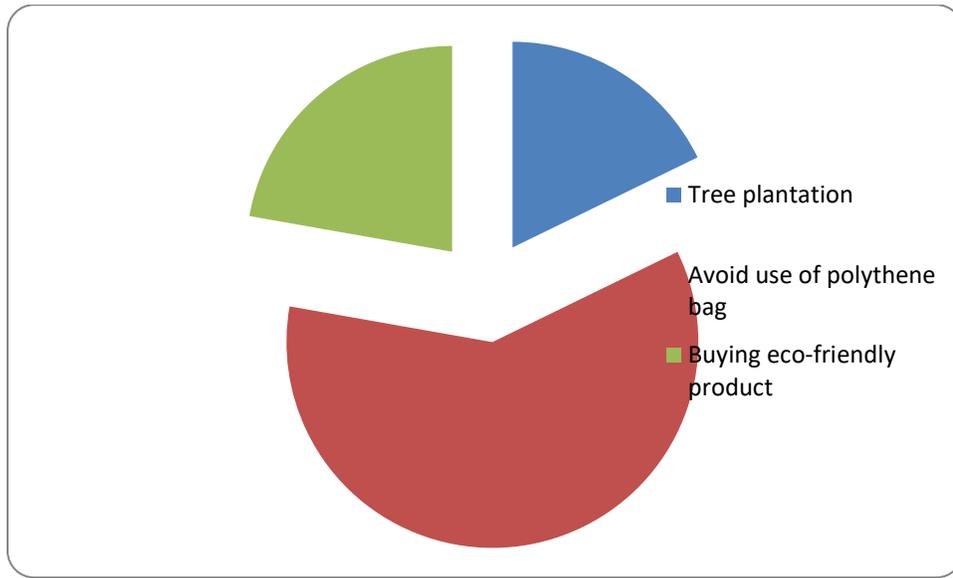
### Preference of customers to pay for eco-friendly products



Source :Primary survey

From the figure above, 48% of the respondent hold that price of the green products should be moderate only 12% prefer cheap green products. Thus, they are willing to purchase eco-friendly products which are neither costly nor very costly.

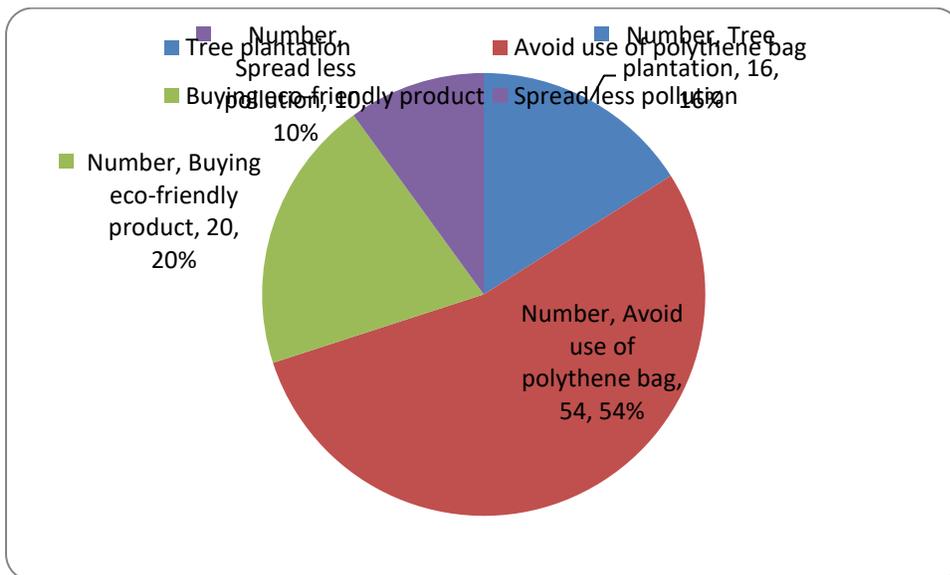
**Willingness to pay higher price for green products**



Source: Primary Survey

The above figure presents that 60% of the majority respondent are not willing to purchase eco-friendly products if price is high 40% of consumer are ready to pay higher price. This indicate that the respondents are aware and desire to purchase eco friendly products at reasonable price. This calls upon the role of marketers.They should reduce the price of eco-friendly products, consumer demand for eco-friendly products is high because green marketing assumes even more importance and relevance, that should minimize negative effects on environment.

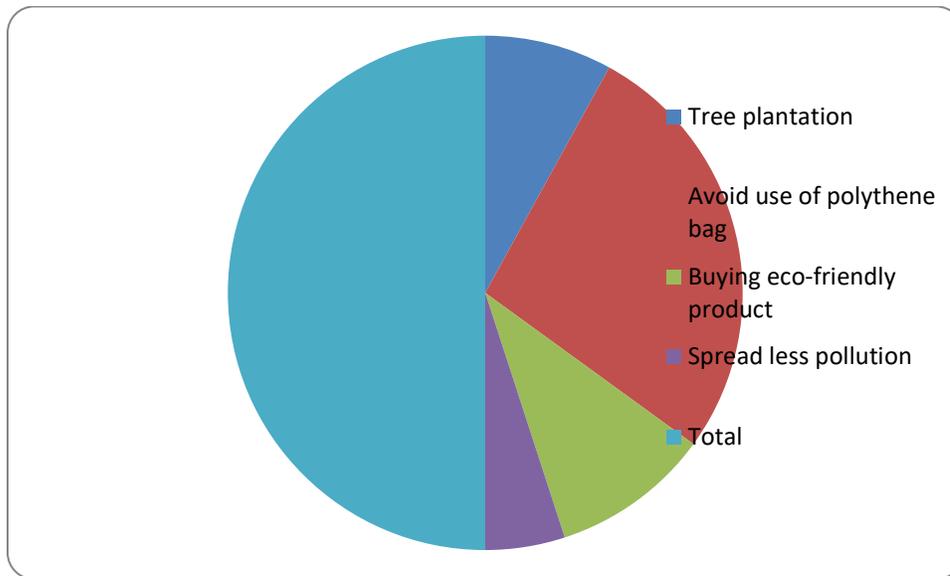
**Understanding level of green products**



Source;Primary Survey

Primary data shows that 54% of respondents are aware of what makes green product. 20% respondent thinks eco-friendly products as biodegradable, whereas 16 percent of respondents meant them to recyclable products.

### Initiatives taken by the respondent to save the environment



Source: Primary Survey

Primary data shows that avoiding use of polythene bag and buying green products are the major steps taken by the respondent to save the environment. Majority are of the opinion that eco- friendly products reduces pollution and protects our environment.

### FINDINGS

- Age wise distribution summarized that majority of the respondents of young age group purchase and prefers eco-friendly products.
- Females are always conscious about shopping more than males.
- Education is not found as a factor for purchase decision on eco-friendly products. Regardless the education consumers prefer eco-friendly products. Its notable that post graduates is comparatively lower.
- Employed are occupational categories with fixed income. Therefore they purchase eco-friendly products.
- Major source of awareness of sample consumer are Newspaper.

- Majority of the respondents are strongly agreed that eco-friendly product is very important.
  - Majority of the consumer take in to consideration while making shopping.
  - Majority of the respondents purchase the type of Eco-friendly products that is paper bag (42%)
  - Majority of the respondents (100%) “Strongly agrees” that Eco-friendly products are beneficial.
  - Majority of the consumers enjoy high level of satisfaction in using green product
  - Major factors influencing the consumers purchase decision of Eco-friendly products of sample consumers is benefit of health (56%)
  - Major problems in purchasing Eco-friendly products of sample consumers is lack of green shop (74%)
  - Majority of the consumers one willing to purchase eco-friendly products which are neither costly nor very costly.
- 56% of the respondents are aware of what makes green product

## CONCLUSION

Today’s consumer is well aware of social, economic and environmental responsibilities consumers of today want products which have good quality and safe to use for them and their families. Eco-friendly products are such items which are safe for consumer to use. While on the other hand we should considered quality while making green purchase. Quality should be good enough and at a reasonable price so will consumer will be more attractive of the price is little but less and quality is good well, so the consumer prefer green products over non green in our country people are more conscious about price but to some extent quality can be ignored. And quality of the product is measured on the basis of past experiences normally consumer think that green products are better in quality as well as compatible in price to the non green products. But sometime some of consumer considered quality of the products as well as the price of the product is equally important consumers will likely to but such products if they are of good quality or equal to the non green products in quality but of the price is compatible with the quality.

Thus, we can conclude government should strengthen its effort in informing the public

about the safety issues and policies related with the concept green by exploring mass and social media. In addition, government authorities should put their efforts in promotions consumer's positive perceptions towards green products. A certification system should be created whereby marketers would be granted certificate on of their products are guaranteed to have met the safety requirements. The local policy makers should also consider making environmental certification a mandatory requirement throughout all industry.

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