

# Consumer Awareness and Perception of Green Products in Tamil Nadu: An Assessment of Environmental Consciousness and Marketing Strategies

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## Abstract

As the world becomes increasingly concerned about the environment, there is a growing interest in acquiring environmentally friendly products, often referred to as green products. The practice of promoting products or services based on their environmental sustainability is known as "green marketing." These products and services are produced or packaged in ways that are environmentally responsible and eco-friendly. This study aims to assess consumer awareness of green products in Tamil Nadu, India, using data collected from 200 users across selected districts in the region. The survey provides valuable insights into consumer awareness of green products, particularly among those willing to purchase eco-friendly goods. It was found that marketers must consider strategies to translate environmental concerns into environmentally conscious consumer behavior. The study's findings indicate that the majority of respondents perceived green products as energy-efficient. Male respondents were found to be more knowledgeable about green products and were more likely to consider them in their purchasing decisions compared to female respondents. However, a significant portion of respondents expressed uncertainty when comparing the prices of green products with non-green alternatives. Therefore, while environmental concerns are present, consumers must be persuaded to purchase eco-friendly goods through effective advertising.

**Keywords:** Environmental Protection; Green Product; Marketing Strategy; Green Product Awareness.

## 1. Introduction

Current environmental problems including climatic changes, resource depletions, and global warming are the most studied areas. Three basic life-supporting systems of humans namely land, water, and air have been damaged because of human greed [1] where these factors impact human and other lives globally. For instance, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that air pollution in India results in 5, 27,700 fatalities annually and that contaminated water is a contributing factor to 21% of communicable illnesses in India [2]. Indians are not very environmentally conscious amongst 14 countries surveyed by National Geographic, according to a report in 2008. The term "green marketing" gained popularity around the 1980s. American Marketing Association (AMA) sponsored Ecological Marketing workshop in 1975 led to the first green marketing campaign. Ben & Jerry's was the first corporation to provide Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reports, which offered an extended view of the company's environmental impact in addition to its financial report. The Brundtland Report, issued in 1987, was another step toward incorporating ecological ideals into everyday activity. Two publications bearing the same name, Green Marketing, identified two actual turning points for wave 1. Green marketing evolved throughout time. The evolution of green marketing took three stages. The early stages of green marketing was ecological marketing which addressed environmental concerns and offered solutions. Subsequently, "Environmental" green marketing centered on clean technology in the second phase necessitating the development of novel solutions to problems from wastes and pollutions. The third level included "sustainable" green marketing. It rose in popularity in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Most people have been forced to modify their lifestyles to be more environmentally conscious due to the growing urgency surrounding the environmental deterioration in India [3]. Hence, the effects of environmental issues are becoming more obvious to people, which is motivating them to act. Green marketing has quickly become a global phenomenon that intrigues both marketing professionals and consumers due to a tidal surge of interest in methods to minimize energy usage while also being ecologically and environmentally friendly. As mentioned by AMA. Green marketing is development and advertising of products and services that match customer demands for reliability, affordability, and accessibility while limiting negative environmental impact [4]. "Green products" or "environmentally friendly products" refer to things that try to conserve or enhance environments by using lesser energies, eliminating the use of hazardous materials, pollution, and waste [5]. It is also known as a product that is better for the environment than similar items. As a result, massive corporate houses frequently employ the green marketing technique as a weapon to influence consumers' opinions when it comes to making purchasing selections. This study primarily focuses on consumer awareness levels regarding green products and marketing. The work aims to raise customer awareness of green products and to educate them about green marketing. It also aids in

understanding the choices and willingness to pay made by customers when buying environmentally friendly items. It assists in identifying and attempting to resolve customer issues with green marketing and products. The main purpose of this work is to find if customers are aware of green products, as well as to analyse factors that influence their purchase decisions of green products. The current study is to assess consumer knowledge of green goods in selected areas of Tamil Nadu, India.

## 2. Review of literature

Customers are growing more worried about the environment, making it a popular issue [6]. Numerous studies have shown evidence that customers are becoming more selective about the things they buy or avoid depending on how they affect the environment [7]. While there were some early signs of interest in green marketing in the 1970s, the practice did not get widespread attention until the late 1980s and early 1990s. During this time, a popular approach to green marketing emerged: the holistic perspective, which held that businesses implementing an eco-friendly strategy had to consider the full sequence of events the firm was involved in, given the nature of environmental challenges [8]. Research has indicated that the usage of ecological products is expanding quickly, indicating a change in consumer behavior and a rise in the demand for green products [9]. As stated [10], half of the marketing and PR managers held the belief that clients valued green credentials, and eighty-four percent of them anticipated that this relevance would only increase in the future. It was discovered that there was no real development in green consumerism, and by the middle of the 1990s, a distinction had been made between concern and actual purchasing. The prior boom or the extraordinary rise of environmental products was no longer a reality, although the market share of green products is gradually increasing [11]. Planning, production, product characteristics, transportation, packaging, promotion, and advertisement are all included as phases in the marketing process. In 2008, Marketing Daily stated that "marketers hold the power of green." Legislators, engineers, and attorneys did not hold the greatest authority to clean up the environment. The imaginative people with the ability to develop and market greener goods and technology, and assist customers in transitioning to more sustainable lives. According to the study in [12], green marketing could learn a lot from conventional marketing about finding ways to promote green products besides labeling them. These ways could include reaching out to a wider range of consumers, utilizing price, place, and promotion positioning strategies, and actively creating new markets. Green products and green company images can lead to green customer satisfaction and loyalty, according to research [13] that surveyed customers in Taiwan who had purchased green or environmental items. When Pakistani consumers' attitudes about green purchases were assessed in [14], it was discovered that many of them had positive and strong intentions to buy green items, but they chose not to do so because of the products' higher costs and worse quality when compared to non-green options. Therefore, the study in [15] indicates that the purchasing of environmentally friendly items will increase if businesses provide customers with high-quality, reasonably priced, and environmentally friendly products compared to traditional ones, together with these customers' favorable attitudes to purchase green products. Furthermore, research such as [16] also showed that environmental protection messaging in product labels and advertisements affected 70% of customer purchasing decisions. Numerous businesses have adapted to these shifting customer preferences [17]. In addition to reducing environmental harm, companies that adopted environmental sustainability policies and developed green marketing or environmental marketing strategies also saw an increase in their earnings [18]. Meanwhile, research conducted in [19] revealed that consumers place too much responsibility on business and government and are not very concerned about the environment. Most respondents said that people had a responsibility to safeguard the environment and should take the necessary steps to do so. Although consumers are not very worried about the environment, as they have grown more informed, they now need to know exactly how selecting one product over another would help the environment. Regarding which items are better for society and the environment, however, many customers are still unsure. Studies have indicated that customers may not always comprehend the labeling on items that indicate they are ecologically friendly. Eco-labels like "Recyclable," "Environmentally friendly," "Biodegradable," and "Sustainable" are typically foreign or unknown to customers. Most respondents to the survey were also found to be prepared to pay a price premium; however, their level of acceptance varied widely [20]. While most consumers want price parity for more sustainable items, only the top two percent often spend more than 20 percent on many green products [21]. Studies on environmental consciousness and consumers' intentions for green product purchases were found in abundance, but studies on awareness of available green products were found to be wanting. Hence, based on a review of available literature this work focuses on investigating consumer awareness and perceptions of green products.

## 3. Methodology

The primary data used in this study were gathered from respondents belonging to four districts of Tamil Nadu, India. The crafted survey questionnaire was used to gather data from participants. The intention of the questionnaire, based on [22], was to find out the awareness of consumers of green products. Data of 200 consumers from select districts of Tamil Nadu, India, namely Dharmapuri, Krishnagiri, Tirupattur, and Vellore, was used as the basic data for analysis. A pre-test of the questionnaire with 50 participants yielded useful revisions, which were then implemented in a second revision. The population was made up of individuals from Tamil Nadu, India, aged range of 25 to 50. Because the population was so diverse and challenging to reach, purposive sampling was employed. Out of the 300 responders that were contacted, 200 showed the patience to finish the interview. Thus, 100 respondent samples in total were finalized for analysis. Open-ended, closed-ended, and multiple-choice items are all included in the questionnaire, which was administered using the Likert five-point rating system. Secondary data was gathered via books, journals, and websites from any pertinent published material. This exploratory and descriptive study is based on primary data, with 100 samples selected for evaluation. Frequencies, means, cross tabulations, Square Tests, and one-way ANOVAs were used in this study.

### 3.1. Socio-economic background of respondents

Given that there is a significant correlation between the knowledge of green products and factors like age, location, income, and educational attainment, it is important to comprehend clients' demographic and psychographic backgrounds as well as their perspectives of green goods [23-26]. Table 1 presents a demographic profile of the responder. The chart divides the age group into three categories: 25-30 (as consumers near the end of their schooling and employment), 31-40 (mature consumers with or without families), and 41-50 (economically stable individuals). The income group was divided into four slabs: less than 20000, between 21000 and 35000, between 36000 and 50000, and over 50000. Most responders (40%) were aged 41 to 50 years. Males and females were equally represented; however, the bulk of respondents (40%) had monthly incomes ranging from Rs. 21,000 to Rs. 35,000.

**Table 1:** Socio-Economic Variables of Respondents

Variables	Counts	%
Gender		
Male	50	50
Female	50	50
Total	100	100
Income Level (Rs.)		
Less than 20000	20	20
21000-35000	40	40
36000-50000	20	20
Above 50000	20	20
Total	100	100
Educational Level		
Secondary	20	20
Graduate	40	40
Master Level	40	40
Total	100	100
Age (years)		
25-30	25	25
31-40	35	35
41-50	40	40
Total	100	100

#### 4. Results and discussions

It is significant to comprehend the awareness of green products in customers and how they perceive green products. When asked what comes to mind when one hears the term "green products" (see Table 2), 50% of respondents said they were unaware of the term, with 30% claiming they were energy savers and another 20% claiming they were green in colour. Ten percent thought it was biodegradable, 20% thought it was recyclable, and 20% thought it was environmentally beneficial. Twenty percent of respondents said they had no idea what green products were; to them, green items were just things that had a green colour.

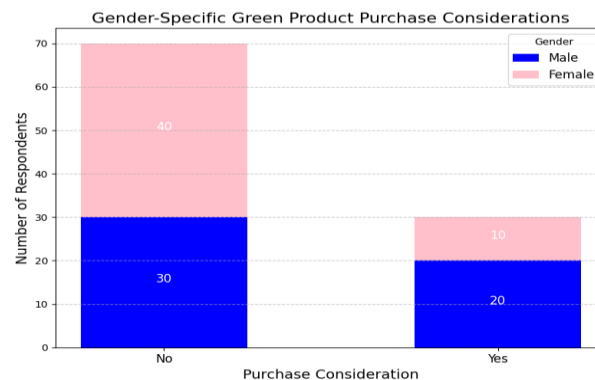
**Table 2:** Understanding the Meaning of Green Products

Notion of Green Products	Freq.	%
Environmental friendly	20	20
Bio-degradable	10	10
Recyclable	20	20
Energy saving	30	30
Green in colour	20	20
Total	100	100.0

Gender-specific buying considerations from respondents for green are displayed in Table 3. 70% of respondents did not consider green items when purchasing, showing that awareness levels were low. While distinguishing between males and females, male respondents (60%) and females (80%) do not consider green products when making purchasing decisions, implying that female respondents were unconcerned about green products and environmental friendliness, most likely due to females' more traditional material usage, as in Figure 1. Furthermore, the Pearson chi-square test reveals substantial connections between males and females and their buying decisions.

**Table 3:** Gender Wise Green Products Purchase Considerations While Shopping

Response	Total Count	Male Count (% of Male)	Female Count (% of Female)
No	70	30 (60%)	40 (80%)
Yes	30	20 (40%)	10 (20%)
Total	100	50	50

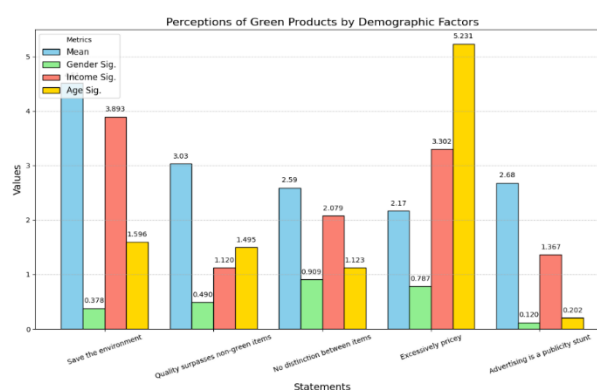
**Fig. 1:** Green Products Purchase Considerations.

Pearson Chi-Square Test Results  
 Value: 5.913  
 Degrees of Freedom: 1  
 Significance (p-value): 0.021

Table 4 displays the respondents' opinions about green products using a Likert scale with 1–5 representing strongly disagree to strongly agree. The T-test and ANOVA were used to determine if there was a significant difference, at the 5% level of significance, between perception and demographic characteristics, as in Figure 2.

**Table 4:** Relationships between Perceptions on Green Products and Demographic Variables

Questions on Green Products	Overall	Genders		Ages		Incomes		Education Levels	
	Means	Freq	Sig	Freq	Sig.	Freq	Sig.	Freq	Sig.
Green products, in my opinion, will enable me to save the environment.	4.51	.735	.378	1.596	.231	3.893	.021	.523	.761
In my opinion, its quality surpasses that of non-green items.	3.03	.689	.490	1.495	.273	1.120	0.325	.723	.553
In my opinion, there is no distinction between green and non-green items.	2.59	.000	.909	1.123	.372	2.079	.160	1.561	.108
I think green items are excessively pricey since a higher price doesn't offer any value in them	2.17	.070	.787	5.231	.070	3.302	.022	.891	.478
I believe that the firms' green product advertising is a publicity stunt.	2.68	2.723	.120	.202	.830	1.367	.260	.876	.405



**Fig. 2:** Perceptions on Green Products and Demographic Variables.

Table 5 presents responses on the pricing of Green and Non-Green items. Of the respondents, 20% thought that the costs of Green items were greater than those of other products. Remarkably, 10% of respondents thought that the cheap cost of green products outweighed by their advantages, and over 50% of respondents were ignorant of the price differential. This illustrates the fallacy and ignorance surrounding green products once more. However, just 20% of respondents believe that the average cost of green/non-green items is almost equal.

**Table 5:** Green Product vs Non-Green Product Prices

Product Price	Freq.	%
Higher	20	15
Same/average	20	25
Don't know	50	50
Lower	10	10
Total	100	100

According to Table 6, the majority of respondents (45 percent never and 16 percent often) said they would be willing to pay the same price for green items, implying they were unaware of the green products. Merely 45% of participants expressed that they never budget monthly for buying environmentally friendly items, though respondents intended to help protect the environment. This highlights the need for advertisements to play a part in raising awareness. In developing nations like India, the significance and applicability of green marketing are much greater. Hence, there is a need to urge customers, producers, and suppliers to reduce the negative environmental consequences of green goods while also spending money on ads, as most consumers are uninformed of green products and the distinctions between them and non-green items.

**Table 6:** Budgeting Purchase of Green Products

Green Product Prices	Freq.	%
Always if lesser	24	24
Often if manageable	16	16
Seldom	15	15
Never	45	45
Total	100	100

Table 7 offers data on buying intention and preparedness to acquire green items for various reasons. Most respondents indicated a low level of understanding by saying they would buy environmentally friendly items even at high prices if they were healthier and less polluting (4.12) and that they believed they were helping to safeguard the environment (4.51 and 3.58), as in Figure 3.

**Table 7:** Green Product Purchase Intentions of Respondents and ANOVA Values Based on All Income Categories

Environment-aware questions: Questions	Overall Mean values	F Value	Sig.
Because they produce less pollution, I would want to purchase ecologically friendly items.	3.93	.909	.440
Compared to non-green items, they are safer, higher-quality, and healthier, which is why I would prefer to purchase them.	4.12	4.974	.004
Even if buying green items costs more than purchasing non-green ones, I still want to buy them.	3.27	1.329	.205

I like to purchase eco-friendly products because they make me feel good about the environment.	3.58	1.498	.232
Purchasing eco-friendly things makes me feel better about the environment.	4.51	.325	.798

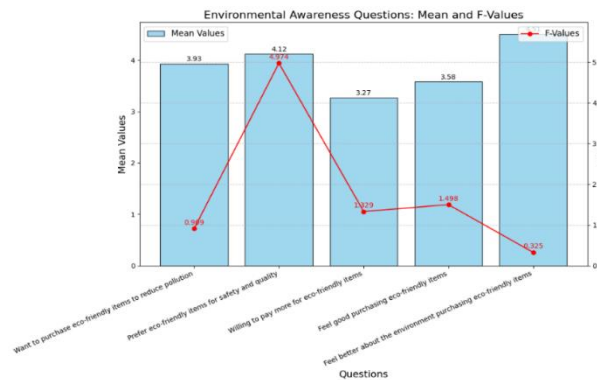


Fig. 3: Green Product Purchase Intentions of Respondents and ANOVA values.

#### 4.1. Discussions

Benefits of environmentally friendly items include preserving energy, like solar panels are inexpensive, low-maintenance, and ecologically beneficial products that generate power from the sun. strengthens the immune system, conserves water, improves the environment, and promotes mental wellness. The initial outlay for green products might be a lot higher than for normal market items. People can use green products, like changing light bulbs or switching to reusable shopping bags instead of disposable ones. In addition, improved comprehension of environmental issues might lead to more advantageous environmental strategies. It is important to emphasize that the inability to find select green products at points of sale has hindered green purchases. Companies need to showcase their goods and raise consumer confidence while lowering perceived risks. Recycling and purchasing environmentally friendly goods and services did not indicate a willingness to pay extra for such goods and services. Pricing doesn't have a significant influence on how they behave. Hence, the quality and performance of green goods may also be taken into consideration as a factor that impacts customers' intent to buy a certain green product. Businesses may get a competitive edge and enter new markets with the help of proper advertisements. Product creations and executions of promotional and distribution strategies designed specifically to promote and safeguard environmental welfare are all included in the green marketing mix, supplying details on the many aspects of green marketing and how awareness of green products affects customers' decisions to buy. Furthermore, modifications in marketing tactics could result in notable advancements. It is important to ascertain the needs and preferences of customers as well as the elements that most influence them, such as demographics, eco-labels, eco-brands, environmental awareness, environmental advertising, eco-friendly products, eco-friendly costs, and eco-friendly promotions. One aspect of green product availability is how simple it is for consumers to locate and get the product for their needs. The availability or lack thereof can have a significant impact on a consumer's choice and change their intention to make a purchase. The results suggest a more complex relationship between behaviors, environmental knowledge, and awareness of green products. Customers' established green ethics and understanding are reinforced by their purchasing experiences and knowledge gained from each purchase, as well as their self-reproach for not choosing the most ecologically friendly goods, all of which influence their next purchase. Comprehension might function as a determining factor for environmental strategies and behavior. In addition, a growing number of people are starting to see the financial advantages of being green in numerous aspects of their lives, as more environmentally friendly products hit the market. Ideas to encourage green behavior in customers include (1) sharing with them environmentally friendly goods and services; (2) starting by posting pertinent content on blogs and social media accounts, and working together as a group to volunteer for an ecologically responsible project. Individuals can facilitate recycling. Quick and simple methods to get green are: (1) Changing existing light bulbs; (2) Turning off computers at night; (3) Ensuring all lights in the home are turned off when not in use; (4) Avoiding rinsing of dishes before washing them, and mainly avoiding throwaway bags.

#### 5. Conclusion

This study made clear that, aside from educational backgrounds, demographic factors like ages, genders, and wealth had little impact on customers' decisions to buy environmentally friendly goods. According to the current study, customers are driven to adopt environmentally friendly items by their environmental concerns and the products' sustainability. But their ignorance prevents them from using them. To reduce the barrier to using green products, awareness should be raised through advertisements and proper marketing, where public awareness campaigns and promotional initiatives with an emphasis on the environmental component are needed, as it is that awareness is the most influential element in the use and purchase of green products. Furthermore, customers' consciousness must be considered in addition to marketing because it is a motivating factor. Along with the numerous types of green products available to clients, awareness campaigns about environmental deterioration and the benefits of green products should be established. Understanding the factors that impact a consumer's decision to purchase green products, whether consciously or subconsciously, may improve product quality and contribute to environmental protection. Marketers should be aware that marketing communication may not always have an impact on the Level of Awareness (LOA). Increased social or community vigilance is one reason for the high degree of awareness in the community and society. The level of economic development at which a certain economy (society) is located might inform concerns about the environment. Customers in a developed market, for instance, would have faced the challenges of unchecked expansion toward their communities and the environment. Customers and governments would have been more wary of unchecked growth and its detrimental effects on the environment as a result. It's crucial to start by persuading customers of the superiority of green products and raising the required degree of awareness.

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## Data availability statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

## Conflict of interest statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this study.

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