

# Consumer Perception Towards Green Products And Strategies That Impact The Consumers Perception

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**Abstract:** Environmental concerns have highly intrigued consumers, marketers, researchers and policy-makers to choose different green methods and strategies to mitigate the environmental concerns. There this study aims to explore the impact of different strategies used by green marketers to modulate the customer perceptions towards green products and their choice to purchase based on the Theory of Reasoned Action. Therefore, an empirical research was conducted amongst the customers who have at least purchased green product once in their life. Data was gathered from a sample size of 204 customers and the statistical findings implicated a strong association between marketing strategies, product factors, consumer green values and consumer perception. The study has high implications for the stakeholders of the ecology.

**Index Terms:** Consumer Behavior, Buyers Perception, Green Products, Green Marketing Business Strategy

## INTRODUCTION

Green marketing is concerned with the marketing and sales of products produced sustainably or are eco-friendly (Uddin& Khan, 2018). Green marketing does not always focus on the marketing of the green products but also showcase company's operations and structure for the environmental sustainability like modifying an existing product to more sustainable mode of production, packaging, recycling processes and waste disposal. However, in the recent years green marketing have associated with environmental marketing and ecological marketing (Durif et al., 2010). Green marketing concerns the holistic marketing concept wherein the manufacturing, consumption and product disposal occur in a way that is beneficial to the environment. However, the rise of green products has risen from the demand of the concerned consumers as well as environmental policies formed by the government (Boztepe, 2012). Even though shifting to green operations and structure takes a toll on any organization with respect to finances as well as human capital (Sabri&Nadarajah, 2016). Green marketing has paced up in India, as indicated by the study of Nielsen, (2011). The report indicated that Indian consumers are progressively aware of the advantages of eco-friendly and sustainable practices. In the consumer survey the ecological and sustainability aspects that matter to Indian purchasers included; energy saving products 86% followed by use of recyclable products (44%). In another survey conducted by National Geographic Society and Globescan, in 2017 determined the consumers' green attitude termed as "Consumer Greendex". The study implicated that India, Brazil and China were the top countries with the highest level of scores for consumer green attitudes. It was also found that developed and industrial countries like USA, Russia and others were found to have poor attitudes. Various types of green products are currently available in the Indian market, the most prominent being use of recycled textiles and door mats, shoes made from recycled products, stainless steel bottles, environment friendly toilet papers and soaps and other cosmetics. In addition eco-tourism is also on the rise in India with respect to concerns of environmental issues and increased environmental awareness amongst tourists (Goodwin &Chaudhary, 2017). A study by Lokeshwari&Jagadish, (2016) indicated that eco-friendly buildings in India have also incepted by using different forms of waste materials like plastic, granite waste, glass fibre and

other wastes from construction. The Indian government has incepted a policy of mandatory CSR in 2013 under the Section 135 of the Indian Companies Act. This has mandated each and every company in India to contribute towards environmental development (Kapoor&Dhamija, 2017). In addition, the government of India has also developed stringent guidelines to keep a check on the toxic industrial waste and other waste disposed and guidelines to dispose waste materials. Nowadays a majority of organizations working in India are providing their potential customers with a plethora of eco-friendly products, extending from organic food products, electric vehicles and solar operated devices (Ghosh, Gouda, & Shah, 2016). Manufacturers in the lighting and cooling segment are developing highly innovative products which are based on the key differentiating aspect of energy efficiency. The rise of green marketing is rapid and the awareness of Indian customers is also increasing with respect to various initiative and availability of products. Thus, the current study will access different green marketing strategies used by companies and the impact on customer perceptions.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study emphasizes on the need to study the significance of the environmental concern and explore the consumer's perception of green products and strategies adopted by green marketers through the study of theory of Reasoned Action based on an empirical study amongst the Green consumers using green products in Bangalore city.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study was carried out with the primary aim of identifying the consumer's perception towards green products and the strategies that impact the customer perceptions. In the context of the same the objectives of the study include the following:

1. To identify the perception of consumers towards various eco-friendly products
2. To evaluate the impact of green marketing strategies on consumers perceptions on eco-friendly products.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theory of Reasoned Action

Convictions that individuals hold about a specific behavior assumes a central role in the reasoned action explanations of behavior. In the expressions of Fishbein & Ajzen (2010), a person's behavior is controlled by his/her goal to enact the specific behavior, and this goal is jointly impacted by his/her attitude toward displaying the behavior just as the apparent social impact of individuals who are essential to him/her which is known as subjective norm. Consequentially, the same is dictated by the consumers convictions in behavior, consequences of performing that behavior and normative beliefs that particular referents think he/she should or should not to display that behavior. The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) gives a fundamental basic theoretical model relating to the examination of individual behavior (Mishra et al., 2014). TRA model clarifies the determinants of volitional behavior, in light of the thought a specific form of behavior will be rightly motivated by an intention to act, and subsequently, the aim to act is indicated by the person's attitude over the demonstration of the act (Namkung & Jang, 2013). The TRA model has been utilized in different settings, especially in the green industry so as to anticipate individual exercises dependent on explicit conditions (Mishra et al., 2014). In other words, the customer perceptions and attitudes towards the perception and intent to choose green products and their purchase behavior is anticipated. As customers become mindful of the decision connected to their purchase pertaining to the ecological and environmental issue, they have now started to adjust their consumption patterns to guarantee a minimal effect and damage to the environment (Nezakati & Hosseinpour, 2015).

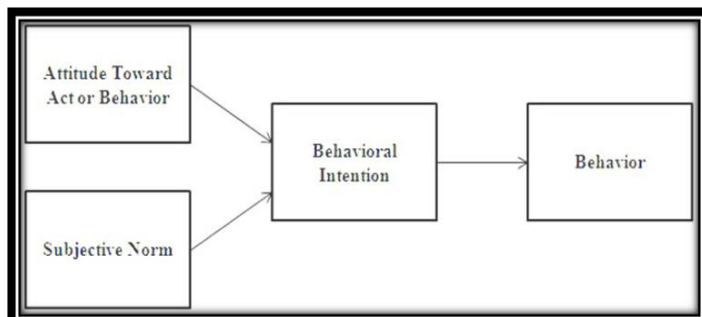


Figure 1: A diagrammatic representation of the theory of reasoned action.  
Source: Fishbein & Ajzen (2010)

### Reasons behind the growth of green products

Marketers can limit the ecological effect related with the consumption of a product and service by, altering the source of materials, observing the carbon footprint, packaging, labeling options, developing pricing options and sustainable distribution channels (Kotler, 2011). Previous studies recommend that buyers are conflicted toward green products, which means they all the while have both positive and negative assessments about those products (Chang, 2011). Related research proposes that product trial and merchandising have also helped to achieve the increased preference of green products by the modern day consumer (Ashley et al., 2012).

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As far as the preference of a consumer is concerned, the degree of greenness of a product is turning into a solid qualifier for a buy (Chang & Chen, 2012). Considering the long term impact of green marketing, specifically in terms of ecological sustainability, the consumption of green products has sky-rocketed and is growing at a vast pace. One of the major driving forces behind this paradigmatic shift is played by effective campaigns which have a prominent role in creating awareness in the minds of consumers. As a result, consumers do not mind paying extra for such a product (García-Gallego & Georgantzi's, 2011). Marketers have also successfully focused in stating emotional brand benefits, which has been an important factor in influencing the purchase decisions of consumers, leading to increased purchase of green products (Van & Verhoef, 2011). The profound regulations developed by the government, coupled with increased competition have also forced marketers to consistently engage in developing greener products (Polonsky, 2011).

### Strategies used in green marketing

Generally, green marketing strategies are representative of eco-marketing orientation within the business philosophy for collaborating towards compelling arrangement of the manufacturing life cycle and distribution arrangements (Kinoti, 2011). In the context of the same, green washing is a strategy, which is which is broadly embraced by the business associations. Benn & Bolton (2011) state that the primary concerns with green washing include confusion about environmental issues among the public, complexity in assessment of the strategy by multinationals and deception concerning the ecological responsibility of the purchases. It may further leave consumers with a positive inclination that they have done their part for ecological preservation by obtaining eco-friendly goods. Cherian & Jacob (2012) indicate eco-labeling as an effective marketing instrument for advancing green consumerism. With the point of expanding the base of green consumers, associations are getting to be engaged with asserting their obligation towards nature. The significance of eco-labeling is advocated as far as its immediate impact on the consumers purchase decision towards buying ecofriendly products. Through the use of eco-labels, firms can check the key attributes of the products, which is extremely in approaching the green buyers. This means that promotional practices can be successfully focused in the market for underscoring the necessities of the green purchasers (Cherian & Jacob, 2012).

### Empirical Review

In their investigation on customers in Ghana, Braimah & Tweneboah-Koduah, (2011) discovered low dimension of awareness towards green marketing issues which influenced the purchase decision of consumers. Cost of green products was additionally observed to be one of the elements that impacted green product purchase. On the other hand, study by Kumar et al., (2012) on Indian youths uncovered that 71 percent respondents see green products as ecofriendly while 12 percent respondents accept it as energy savers. The study also implicated that male customers are progressively aware about green products as compared to their female counterparts. Another study by Ranganathan & Ramya, (2016) implicated that a majority of green customers were prepared to pay 11-20% more for green products and buyers who had

previously utilized a specific green brand, were more likely to keep purchasing that brand in future, irrespective of rise in price. These studies implicated that, customer perception of green products are based not solely on the marketing strategies, but also on the awareness and the attitudes of the customers.

## METHODOLOGY

### Data type

The study conducted comprised of quantitative methods whereby customers with history of green purchases were targeted. In order to facilitate the process of primary data collection from consumers an online questionnaire survey was conducted for a period of four months, spanning, February 2019-May 2019.

### Sampling plan

The current study used a convenience sampling procedure whereby the customers using green products were targeted from different retail stores in India. The customers were conveniently chosen for inclusion in the study. The sample size was calculated using the formula;

Sample size =  $N \cdot X / (X + N - 1)$ , where N is population size, and X is the calculation using margin of error and confidence level of 95%.

X was calculated using the formula;

$X = z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1-p) / e^2$ , where z is z-score (1.96), p is confidence level (0.05 or 95%), and e is margin of error (5%). After the manual calculations, the expected sample size was found to be 208. However, out of the total sample size, 204 valid responses for the questionnaire were received and 4 responses were rejected on account of inadequacy.

### Data collection and analysis

Since the study used an empirical study, a structured close ended questionnaire was prepared, using which the responses of the green customers were gathered. The questionnaire had two major sections, the descriptive and the inferential assessment. The descriptive section had categorical values, whereas the inferential section was presented in 5-point Likert-type scale was used ranging from 1 strongly disagree, to 3 being neutral to 5 strongly agree. As mentioned the questionnaire was divided in two parts the first section was further divided into two sections, demographic information and the general background of the respondents. On the other hand the inferential assessment part was based on different aspects of consumer perceptions. In order to check the reliability and validity of the questionnaire a reliability test was conducted amongst 20 respondents were asked to fill the online questionnaire for pretesting. Information collected through consumer survey was further analyzed using SPSS v22 and both descriptive and inferential tests were conducted.

### Hypotheses

A hypothetical statement was found as the study uses an inductive research approach to find the consumer perceptions of green products.

H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no strong relationship between Consumer Perception and Product factors

H<sub>A</sub>1: There is a strong relationship between Consumer Perception and Product factors

H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no significant relationship between Consumer Perception and Marketing Strategies

H<sub>A</sub>2: There is a significant relationship between Consumer Perception and Marketing Strategies

H<sub>0</sub>3: There is no significant relationship between Consumer Perception and Consumer Green Values

H<sub>A</sub>3: There is a significant relationship between Consumer Perception and Consumer Green Values

## ANALYSIS

### Descriptive Analysis

A complete overview of the demographic and the general background of the respondents have been illustrated. The findings are presented in the form of tables and graphs. As illustrated in the above table 1 the total number of respondents was for the study was 204, out of which 124 (60.7%) were male and 80 (39.3%) were female. Majority of the respondents belonged to the age group of 25 – 34 years, which forms 36.3% of the total sample. As observed a large number of respondents had completed their Post Graduate degrees (N=138, 67.7%). The number of individuals having a monthly income of more than 39999(INR) was 38 (18.5 %), followed by 88 individuals (43.1%) who had a monthly income between 25000-39999 INR. Also included in the frequency distribution were the employment details of the respondents. As shown in the table, 45.6% (N=93) of the respondents were employed and 34.3% (N=70) owned some of a business. The rest 6.9% were students and 13.2% were unemployed.

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES OF THE RESPONDENTS

Age	Number	Percentage
Below 25	29	14.2
25 – 34	74	36.3
35 – 54	68	33.3
Above 54	33	16.2
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	124	60.7
Female	80	39.3
<b>Monthly Income (INR)</b>		
Below 12000	26	12.8
10000 – 24999	52	25.6
25000 – 39999	88	43.1
Above 39999	38	18.5
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
High School (pursuing)	13	6.4
Under Graduate & Graduate (pursuing)	42	20.6
Post Graduate (pursuing)	138	67.7
Doctorate (pursuing)	9	4.5
Post Doctorate (pursuing)	2	0.8
<b>Employment Details</b>		
Employed	93	45.6
Business	70	34.3
Students	14	6.9
Unemployed	27	13.2

In table 2, the frequency of the customer perspectives on the green products and their strategies were assessed. The awareness of the people or the customers was also generated from this section. For instance, when asked about their awareness on environmental concerns, over 80% of the customers believed that environmental degradation has risen



in last decade. Majority of the customers also implicated that they have been using green products of various types, however, those who do not use green products may be unaware even if they have had used green product at some point of time. Although not all customers are prone to purchase only green products but over 70% customers are surely to purchase them if Green Product is available in a particular product category. Therefore, the current customers as participants of the study implicates that a strong knowledge in green products and green marketing strategies.

TABLE 2: GENERAL BACKGROUND OF THE RESPONDENTS

Statement	Response		
	Yes	No	Not Sure
Has the environmental degradation increased since last year?	191	6	7
Will the state of the environment degrade in the next 5 years?	116	85	3
Do you understand "Environment Friendly or Green Marketing" concepts?	179	15	10
Do you use any type of green products	153	51	0
I would buy a green product if it is available in the store	153	51	0
Do you believe that the organizations associated with green manufacturing are actually concerned?	174	21	9
Have the customers become environmentally aware?	191	10	3

**Reliability Test**

In order to assess the construct reliability Cronbach's alpha has been presented in Table 3 illustrates all the resulting alpha values. The overall alpha value was 0.801 which used good reliability and the alpha coefficients for all items used in the scale were above the threshold value of 0.70.

TABLE 3: RELIABILITY TESTS

Items	Cronbach's Alpha
The products used do not have impact on the environment.	.800
My concern for environment is the reason for my purchase habit.	.797
I am environmentally responsible	.798
I worry about resource wastage.	.795
I buy only green and sustainable products that have been recycled or run on clean energy.	.801
I do buy green products but do not have time for joining environmental groups.	.813
I buy green products but not involved in any environmental programmers	.793
I do not buy green products as it is the work of the business and government to mitigate the issues.	.791
Product Price	.790
I am aware about Green Products	.788
I know about the availability of Green Products	.795
My past experience	.799
I look for information provided on product	.803
I look for the ill effects made from manufacturing and consumption on the environment.	.800
I choose green products over non-green products.	.797
Green products are always priced higher.	.796
Higher price of green product may affect my purchase behavior.	.796
I believe in the importance of building eco-friendly product	.799
Every products manufactured must go through sustainable methods	.799
Eco-friendly modes of communication helps in generating awareness of green products	.798
Green marketing practices must include branding of products	.795
The conventional products must be turned to environmental friendly	.798
Product packaging must become eco-friendly	.796
Awareness generation amongst the customers must be done in environment friendly steps	.810
Every supply chain must use green models for procurement and distribution.	.803

**Correlation Statistics**

In the below table 5 the correlation statistics between consumers perception of marketing practices and the measures that indicate consumer green values are presented. From the results presented, it was proved that consumers actually care for the environment and their purchase decisions are based on the same with a value of 0.456. This shows high correlation between the consumer's perception and actual purchase behavior. It was further observed that there was a significant correlation between the consumer's environmental responsibility and concern about wasting the resources of our planet at 0.320.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
The products used do not have impact on the environment.	Pearson Correlation	1	.456**	.205*	.018	.033	.173*	-.072	-.117	-.126	.005	.013	.027
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.794	.664	.014	.305	.095	.075	.940	.857	.706
	N	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204
My concern for environment is the reason for my purchase habit	Pearson Correlation	.456**	1	.145*	.148*	.105	.180*	.002	.079	.084	.280*	.112	.093
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.038	.035	.133	.023	.975	.259	.253	.000	.112	.186
	N	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204
I am environmentally responsible	Pearson Correlation	.205*	.145*	1	.320**	.074	.134	-.133	.170*	.166	.118	.080	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.038		.000	.297	.057	.189	.055	.015	.017	.094	.391
	N	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204
I worry about resource wastage	Pearson Correlation	.018	.148*	.320**	1	.003	.043	-.056	.241**	.117	.132	.087	.200*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.794	.035	.000		.965	.544	.420	.003	.015	.060	.340	.004
	N	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204
I believe in the importance of building eco-friendly product	Pearson Correlation	.033	.105	.074	.003	1	.372**	.200*	.080	-.134	-.104	.055	.007
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.664	.133	.297	.965		.000	.004	.396	.056	.140	.437	.926
	N	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204
Every products manufactured must go through sustainable methods	Pearson Correlation	.173*	.164*	.134	-.043	.372**	1	.124	-.144*	-.063	.080	.107	.025
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.014	.023	.035	.544	.000		.079	.048	.368	.394	.128	.723
	N	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204
Eco-friendly modes of communication	Pearson Correlation	.072	.002	.095	-.056	.200*	.124	1	.321**	.133	.118	.177	.172*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.305	.965	.023	.664	.014	.057		.000	.048	.093	.011	.014
	N	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204
Helps in generating awareness of green products	Pearson Correlation	.095	.133	.134	.043	.003	.043	.003	.048	.093	.093	.011	.014
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.305	.297	.297	.664	.965	.664	.965	.664	.664	.664	.664	.664
	N	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204
Green marketing practices must include branding of products	Pearson Correlation	.117	.079	.133	.241**	.080	-.144*	.321**	1	.282**	.201*	.129	.001
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.259	.305	.035	.000	.396	.048	.000		.000	.003	.087	.987
	N	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204
The conventional products must be turned to environmental friendly	Pearson Correlation	.124	.080	.170*	.043	.134	.063	.095	.282**	1	.229*	.113	.059
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.259	.305	.035	.664	.259	.544	.420	.003		.000	.107	.460
	N	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204
Product packaging must become eco-friendly	Pearson Correlation	.003	.241**	.134	.043	-.056	.117	.200*	.282**	1	.238*	.108	.066
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.965	.000	.297	.664	.420	.057	.014	.000		.001	.219	.391
	N	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204
Awareness generation amongst the customers must be done in environment friendly steps	Pearson Correlation	.079	.117	.118	.080	.107	.170*	.170*	.229*	.238*	1	.257*	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.305	.259	.259	.305	.259	.170*	.170*	.113	.113	.059	.059	.257*
	N	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204
Every supply chain must use green models for procurement and distribution.	Pearson Correlation	.025	.093	.080	.200*	.003	.025	.170*	.117	.093	.086	.233*	.1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.723	.186	.391	.000	.965	.723	.014	.396	.400	.219	.000	
	N	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	204

## Regression statistics

In order to test the significance level of impact independent variables have on dependent variable was conducted. The model summary as shown in table 6 shows the statistics from ANOVA where the R value is 0.998, which indicates a high degree of correlation and the R-square value is 0.996 which specifies that the dependent variable, "Consumers Perception", can be explained by the independent variables, i. e. "Product Factors, Marketing Strategies, and Consumer Green Values" by 99.6 percent, which is a very promising indicator. Since majority of the responses lay on the regression line it may be implicated that the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The F-test (**ANOVA**) has also been presented at a significance of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). The F value is found to be very high at 24407.454 with a p-value less than 0.05. This means that the null hypothesis of the study can be rejected.

TABLE 4: ANOVA

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig.
.998	.996	.996	24407.454	.000

In this section, it was found that out of the 12 sub-variables majority of the variables were found to have significant values less than 0.05 at 95% CI. Consumer and product factors like 'products do not harm the environment', 'product manufacturing concern for environment' and 'environmentally responsible products' were found to have high significance in impacting the customer perceptions or norms to choice of green products. On the other hand, marketing strategies like show casing 'eco-friendly product' tags, 'environmentally safe manufacturing', 'promotion if products in eco-friendly manner' like social media and digital media and others were all found to have significant value of less than 0.05 at 95% CI. On the basis of the Theory of Reasoned Action, the last hypothesis was formed to find the relationship between the consumer's green values or behavior to purchase green products. For instance, companies using methods to 'improve the knowledge of customers', and 'green supply chain for procurement' were found to have significant relationship to impact the customer's green values and their perception to purchase the product. Based on the regression findings, the following alternative hypotheses have been found to be accepted.

H<sub>A1</sub>: There is a strong association between Consumer Perception and Product factors

H<sub>A2</sub>: There is a significant relationship between Consumer Perception and Marketing Strategies

H<sub>A3</sub>: There is a significant relationship between Consumer Perception and Consumer Green Values

TABLE 5: REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS

	Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Product Factors	.267	.001	.939	293.919	.000
Marketing Strategies	.073	.001	.258	80.878	.000
Consumers Green Values	.031	.001	.110	34.449	.000

## CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Considering the responses received in the study it is clearly

understood that the consumers were quite concerned regarding environmental protection. Their overall attitude towards green products was actually positive and they really want to protect the present and future state of affairs as far as ecological sustainability is concerned. The acceptance of green products by consumers has increased rapidly, be it food or daily use products. Majority of the consumers are aware of green products and the organizations marketing the same. They are of the belief that the organizations manufacturing and marketing green products are really concerned about the environment. These marketing practices have enhanced the awareness levels of buyers in terms of green product features and availability. Considering the price sensitiveness of Indian consumers it is a real challenge for marketers to manufacture the products and sell them at ideal price points. Further, it is extremely crucial for consumers to understand that adoption of green products has to be ensured at a mass level in order to foster environmental sustainability. Marketing organizations also have to ensure maximum customer value in exchange for the premium paid. Marketers have to ensure the adoption of innovative manufacturing procedures in order to manufacture new innovative products that are green as well as cost effective. There has also been an increase in awareness amongst the consumers and in future they may stop using conventional products and focus more on green products. Therefore, most of the organizations must identify the trend of the consumer interests and move along with the perspectives and trend of the consumers. In the context of the same, it is crucial that marketers of green products ensure wide availability through proper distribution channels. The results in the study have high implication for manufacturers of consumer durables, as their consumption is highest compared with other product categories. Hence it is important for marketers to be in top of mind of consumers, when it comes to the brand recall of green consumer durables. This requires appropriate positioning through effective and impactful marketing communication.

## SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Strategies have to be carried out to address the challenges involved in image building of green products and study on marketing strategies to strengthen green practices for the manufacturers and marketers of herbal/green products, ecotourism and integration of sustainability and green marketing practices on an extensive scale has to be carried out in order to fill the research gaps for further green development.

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