

Communicating Green Products to Consumers in India to promote Sustainable Consumption and Production

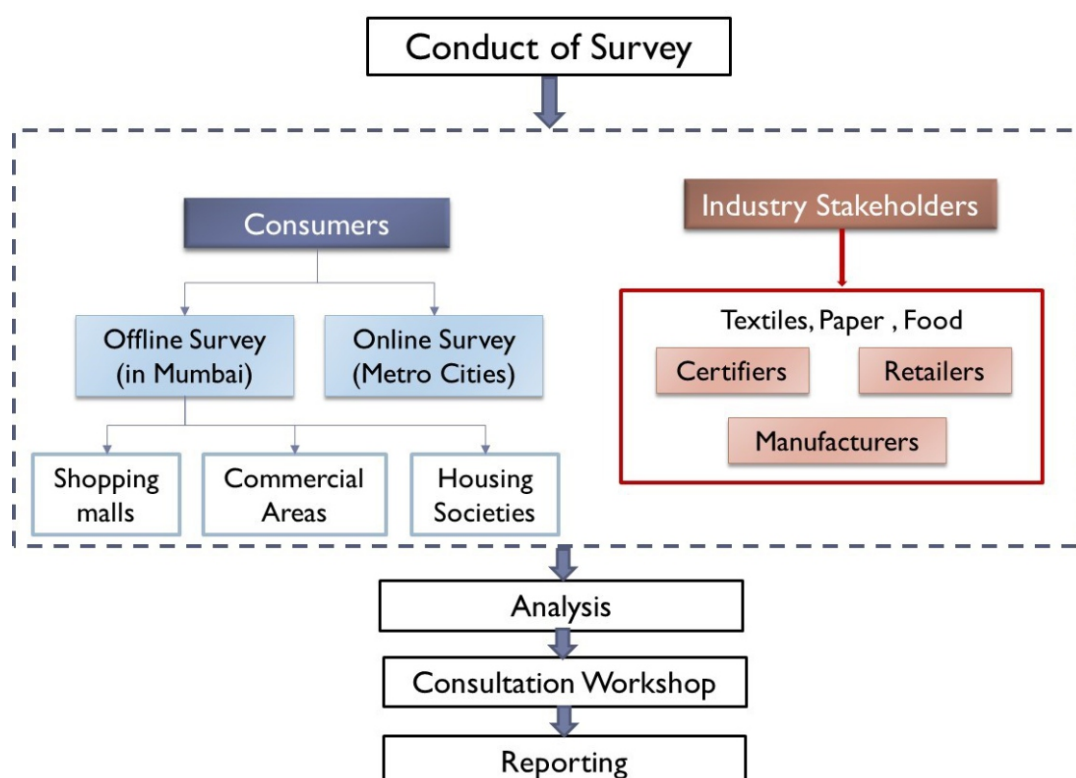
A Study about Consumer Perceptions of Green Products in India

About the Survey

In order to understand the perception of urban Indian consumer on green products, a market based study was carried out by the GPNI with support from IGPN and Japan Fund for Global Environment. The key objective of this perception survey was to understand:

- **What is greenness to an Indian consumer?**
- **What criteria on greenness is the Indian consumer looking for?**
- **What are the barriers perceived by the consumers that deter them from buying green?**
- **Do Indian consumers trust various claims made by product manufacturers? If yes, then up to what extent?**

In the next part of the study, interviews with retailers, manufacturers and certifiers were conducted to understand their approach on communicating green products in the market and the challenges they face in promoting green products. This study aims at fulfilling one of the main objectives of understanding the communication gap between the consumers and the producers.



Glimpse of Outcomes from the Consumer Survey

2000+
Consumers

16 Industry Stakeholders

2
Certifying Bodies

8
Manufacturers

6
Retailers

78%
responses collected at
the point of purchase.

68%
of respondents were young,
falling in the 21-40 age group.

HEALTH was found to be a
driver for purchasing green
products in the 40+ age group.

90% of respondents were
aware of the term **GREEN** or
ECO FRIENDLY product.

Less **Availability** and higher
Cost acts as barrier that deters **43%**
of the respondents from buying greener
products.

Concern for the **ENVIRONMENT**
was the motivating factor for buying
greener products amongst **60%** of
the consumers.

Stakeholder Responses

54% of the industry
respondents agreed to the
point that consumers
understand **Eco-labels**
to some extent.

The argument that green
products have higher retail
cost than other counterparts
was affirmed by **79%** of
the industry respondents.

DESIGN is the most
influential factor resulting in
purchase of green products
according to **46%** of the
industry respondents.

Recommendations drawn from the study

Awareness Raising on Green Products

From the outcomes of this study, it is very clear that the awareness on green products is limited amongst the Indian consumers. Even if the consumers are aware of the term 'green product', the terminologies used to signify these products are may be vaguely understood by the consumers. There is, therefore, a need for raising awareness on green products and their attributes.

Mechanism to Restrict Green Washing Claims

While the green products market may be growing, consumers are growing weary of unsubstantiated green claims and are becoming more educated regarding environmental impacts of products. Businesses need to make sure they are achieving significant environmental impact reduction and are communicating it accurately and effectively to gain the consumer trust. The other stakeholders including the Government need to act so as to minimize green washing and thus improving the consumer trust on green products.

Communicating the shades of green

The certification bodies play an important role in promoting their eco-labels to the consumers as well as the industry and make them aware about the attributes of greenness of products. Moreover, if the eco-labels are promoted by industry associations, consumer forums, etc. it will give consumers the confidence to buy green products. For example: Most of the Indian consumers are familiar with the BEE star rating for electrical appliances and hence look for more energy efficient appliances.

Increased Availability, Accessibility and Affordability of Green Products

One of the most important barriers perceived by Indian consumers that deter them from buying green products is the lesser availability and visibility of green products in Indian markets. In order to address this issue, continuous efforts by the industry and the government institutions are required for the promotion and marketing of green products. For example: If green alternatives are displayed along with their counterparts, the consumer might look at it as an opportunity to opt for green products instead of the conventional product.

Need for Regulatory Policy on Green Products in India

Countries in the Asia-Pacific region like Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Korea and Japan, amongst others, have embarked on national laws, regulations and policies related to green products and their procurement. In India, on the other hand, has given very less emphasis on the promotion of green products. Greening of Public Procurement could play a significant role in terms of overall positive impact on the green products market and thus further in the availability of green products in the Indian market.



About Green Purchasing Network India (GPNI)

Green Purchasing Network India (GPNI) is an evolving network of professionals interested and active in the general area of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) with emphasis on Green Purchasing and Public Procurement (GPP). GPNI is the Indian node of the International Green Purchasing Network (IGPN). IGPN (www.igpn.org) is an organization which promotes Green Purchasing around the globe by coordinating those who take the initiative in implementing Green Purchasing towards SCP. The network consists of international organizations, businesses, governmental organizations, local authorities and NGOs. IGPN has national nodes in Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, China, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Singapore, Philippines, Indonesia and India.

Log on to www.gpnindia.org to access the full version of this report.

For any communication on this project write to Romil Bajaj on romil.bajaj@gpnindia.org