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GREEN CONSUMER BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS FOR TIER II CITY NASHIK: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Abstract:

The study aims at analyzing the various antecedents of Green Purchase behavior with reference to Tier II City Nashik. The paper aims at studying the extent of eco-consciousness and determinant demographic factors. The paper further studies the different aspects of green behavior viz. Conservation, Environmentally friendly behavior and Environmental Activism. The empirical study was carried out with 56 respondents being interviewed. Findings suggest that Green Consumer may be younger and more educated but mostly is a male than a female. The study reveals paradoxes of “Green behavior in Comfort Zone”, and “Conserving resources on one hand but not leaving convenience of using Plastic bags and disposable items”. A more concrete green marketing activities on the part of corporate and aggressiveness of NGO’s will speed up the environmental sustenance processes. The penetration of such critical processes in Tier II & III Cities and villages will determine the success.

Five key Words: *Green behavior, General Environmental Concern, Perceived Environmental Concern, Demographic factor, Comfort Zone.*

1. Introduction:

The consumption phenomenon in 21st Century presents a biggest paradox we face today. The human beings are striving to improve the quality of life and overall happiness, one of the aspects which are considered as the source of happiness is consuming good, consuming more. But in turn the consumption is causing degradation of the Natural environment and resources, which in turn will hamper the quality of life and overall happiness. It is impossible to avoid consumption by consumers. But this consumption can be redirected to help preserve the Environment and in turn will impact in long term the quality of life for the consumers. The United Nations report on The Environmental programs carried out in recent year’s mentions in the start of discussion that the Individual consumers are the most powerful tool in the development of sustainable consumption lifestyle. These consumers can dictate their terms to even marketers which will in turn bring the most wanted revolution in the field of Marketing i.e. Sustainable consumption based marketing. Nair & Menon (2008) remark in their research work on the basis of Study carried out in India that ‘Consumers’ were rated as the most important among the stakeholders for environmental marketing practices by 91 per cent of the respondent Corporate during their study, while 79 % of the companies declared that their customers demanded environment-friendly activities from them.

Green Marketing as defined by American Marketing Association is Marketing of the products that are presumed to be environmentally safe. The Association further attempts to add in above definition the

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other aspect as “The efforts by organizations to produce, promote, package, and reclaim products in a manner that is sensitive or responsive to ecological concerns”(Bruer 2012). This emerging field of Marketing started with a workshop held by American Marketing Association way back in 1975 (Polonsky 1994). The field has seen rises and falls in its popularity and has become stable now (Chamorro, Rubio, Miranda 2009). Esty & Winston (2009) comment in their book that when the first edition of Green to Gold was rolled out in 2006 they hoped business leaders would recognize the importance of folding environmental thinking into strategy. But they did not anticipate how big the green wave would be sweeping across society and business world would be. The authors further remark that Green wave will not subside anytime soon. Ottman (2011) author of one of the most famous books, ‘The new rules of Green Marketing’ says Green Marketing is mainstream now. The author further summarizes the case of old green products which never worked, were pricey, and had brand names never heard of. Today the sustainable products work well, sometimes even better than the brown counterparts.

2. Literature Review:

Green Behaviour:

Green Consumer is the topic of most interest as remarked by authors (Chamorro et. al. 2009). The probable reason behind this is the gut feeling of the marketers that Consumer is the most dynamic and powerful tool in Marketing which was signified after the Consumerism movement. The literature review was carried out on the basis of papers collected from Online Wiley Library, Sage Journals and other web sources. Out of 255 Research papers downloaded, about 60 research papers were found to be quiet relevant. 41 Research papers discussed the topic of green behavior. Only 8 research papers were found talking about Indian scenario. 93% Research papers are found to be based upon Empirical studies. In case of Research papers related to Indian studies only 50% were empirical study based. The review of these research papers revealed that various factors which affect green behavior. Some factors are overlapping, and many of them are interrelated still because they were separately considered in the studies, they have been mentioned.

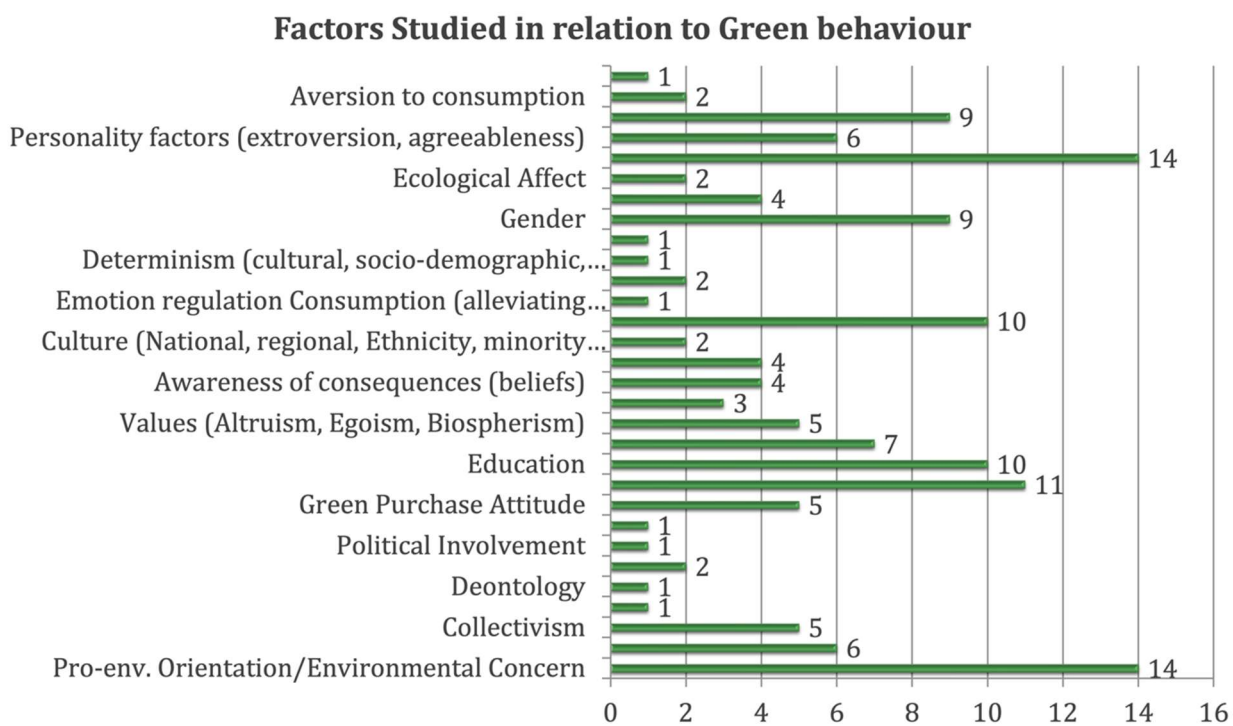
Fig 1 shows the review of demographic factors like age, education, income, gender, pro-environmental orientation/ Environmental concern, Environmental attitude, Environmental knowledge, Products nature and benefits are the factors studied in most of the papers related to green behavior. Maximum research papers study Green buying behavior and general green behavior. Some have focused on specific green behavior like recycling, green apparel purchases, green food, green building, green energy, etc. A new thought process has started which talks about family environmental consumption, instead of individual green consumption. The authors argue that green decisions very rarely depend upon one individual, but are the results of family processes (Gronhoj 2006, Easterling, Miller, & Weinberger 1995, Gronhoj & Olander 2007). Nonetheless Individual green consumption is the focus of majority of the studies throughout the world.

Concepts:

Green Consumerism is defined as purchasing and consuming products that have minimal impacts on the environment (Mainieri, et al., 1997). The term is used interchangeably with green buying behavior (Kim, 2002; Kim and Choi, 2003, 2005) such as pro-environmental purchase behaviour (Tilikidou,

2006), and green purchase behaviour (Mostafa, 2007). Mostafa (2007) defines green product as product that will not pollute the earth or deplete natural resources, and it can be recycled or conserved i.e. environmentally beneficial. Tan (2011) remarks in his paper that “eco-friendly”, “environmentally safe”, “recyclable”, “biodegradable” and “ozone friendly” are the common green advertising claims used by the companies in promoting the green products. Roberts (1996) remarks in his study that a consumer is to be considered environmentally conscious if they purchase goods and services which they believe to have a positive or a less negative impact on the environment. A more comprehensive understanding of a green consumer is given by Meffert and Kirchgeorg (In: Nagy, 2005) saying environmentally conscious consumers be defined as natural persons and legal entities who take into account ecological impacts in their purchase decisions.

Fig. 1 Factors determining Green Behaviour a review of previous Studies



Demographic Factors & Green Behaviour

In various environmental studies, authors have consistently found young, well –educated, and politically liberal adults to be more pro-environmental than their counterparts (Dunlap, Van Lerie, Mertig, Jones 2000; Jansson, Marell and Nordlund 2011; Tilkidou 2007; Hofmeister-Tóth, Kelemen, & Piskoti 2010; Autio, Heiskanen, & Heinonen, 2009). Many studies have often found gender differences in environmentally related attitudes and behavior (Zelezny et al., 2000; Brun, 2001; Rickinson, 2001; Autio and Heinonen, 2004) Gronhoj & Olander (2007) remark that there seems to be substantial research evidence giving prominence to females when assessing green consumerism. Tilkidou 2007 summarizes very well in his the various factors contributing to green behavior as follows:

Fig. 2 Previous research results of pro-environmental purchasing behaviour across demographics, attitudes and knowledge

Independent Variable	Relationship	Studies
Age	Positive	Balderjahn, 1988; Scott and Willits, 1994; Roberts, 1996
	Negative	Buttel, 1979
Education	Positive	Buttel and Flinn, 1976; Balderjahn, 1988; Arcury, 1990; Scott and Willits, 1994; Roberts, 1996, Tilikidou, 2001
Income	Positive	Webster, 1975; Balderjahn, 1988; Arcury, 1990; Scott and Willits, 1994; Tilikidou, 2001
Gender	Women	Webster, 1975; Roberts, 1996
	Men	Arcury, 1990; Scott and Willits, 1994
Attitude	Positive	Crosby et al., 1981; Antil, 1984; Balderjahn, 1988; Scott and Willits, 1994; Schlegelmilch et al., 1996; Roberts, 1996; Minton and Rose, 1997
Knowledge	Unrelated	Maloney and Ward, 1973; Pickett et al., 1993; Laroche et al., 1996; Tilikidou, 2001
	Positive	Antil, 1984; Arcury, 1990

(Source Tilikidou 2007)

Eco-conscious Attitude & Behaviour

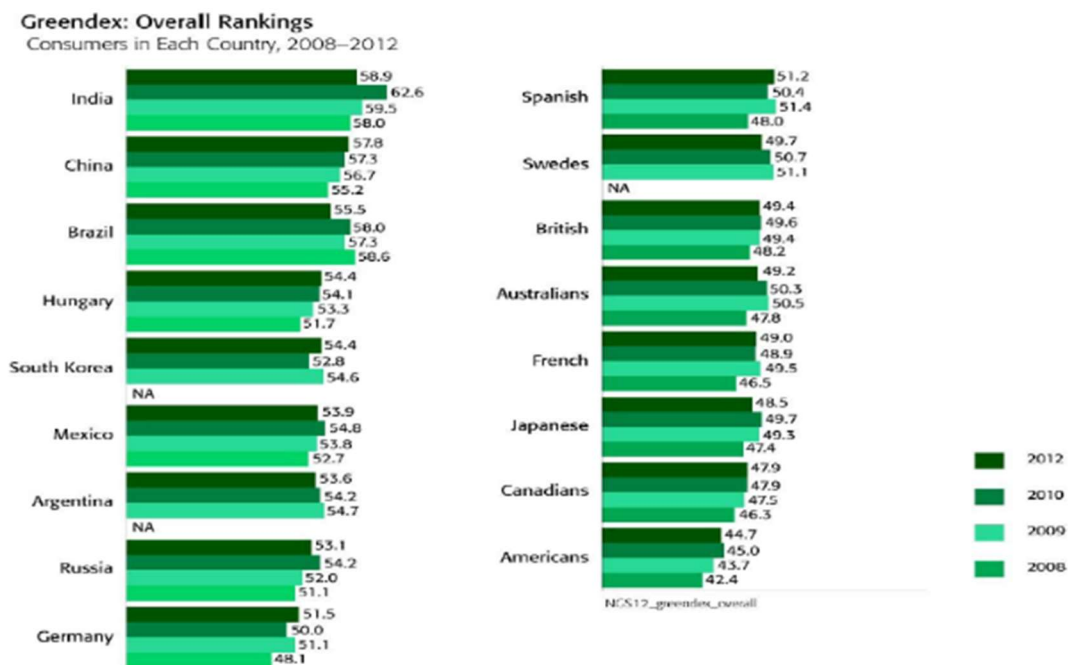
Attitudes correspond to mental processes or states, which account for consistency of an individual's framework favourable – unfavourable and cross-situational responses towards an object. Fundamental definitions of attitude emphasize its motivating capacity (Davies, Foxall, Pallister 2002). Various models have been studied and empirically tested to explore the relationship between attitude and behavior. Amongst the various behavioral theories, The Theory of Reasoned Action, The Theory of Planned behavior and Schwartz Model of Altruistic Behaviour the later can be considered most relevant as concluded by authors for the exploration in the field of environmentalism (Davies, Foxall, Pallister 2002). Read (1928) remarked in his early works that final test of an attitude is “How do Persons behave?” Various discrepancies have been noted while seeing attitude translate into behavior. Authors have cautioned time and again that General attitude cannot be correlated with Specific behavior; it has to be Specific attitude and Specific behavior (Fisher 1993; Laroche, Toffoli, Kim, &

Muller 1996; Davies, Foxall, Pallister 2002). Laroche, Toffoli, Kim, & Muller 1996 remark that when predicting social behavior, collectivists pay more attention to norms than to attitudes, whereas individualists pay more attention to attitudes than to norms. Roberts (1996) suggests that in order to motivate behavioral changes, consumers must perceive that their behavior has an impact on the environment or will be effective in fighting environmental degradation which can be further assimilated with experiences.

Indian Scenario:

In a comparative study of India, Greece and UK author remarks that the Indian and the Greek samples have displayed either similar or more involved environmentally friendly behavior than the UK sample also they undertake more environmentally friendly activities when compared with low involved respondents (Bhate 2011). Greendex survey carried out by National Geographic and Globe Scan to track the green behavior 17 countries across the world shows that Indians top green behavior for all the 4 surveys carried out in last five years (Greendex 2012).

Fig.3 Greendex



(Source: Greendex Survey 2012)

The literature review shows however that most of the researches in Environmentalism have been carried out in developed countries, very few i.e. 8 in India were found, out of which only 4 are empirical studies. One of the exhaustive studies carried by Jain & Kaur (2006) has highlighted the picture of green attitude and behavior of consumers from Delhi. This background sets the importance of empirical study been represented through this paper highlighting green behavior of consumers from Tier City Nashik.

3. About the Study:

The study in this area will give further direction to the subject of Green or Sustainable Marketing phenomenon. The paper aims at studying following aspects:

1. The level of eco-consciousness among Consumers, and determinant demographic factors.
2. The extent of green behavior in different categories viz. Conservation, Eco-friendly Purchasing and Environmental Activism.
3. The link between General Environmental Attitude and Personal Environmental Attitude (Perceived Customer effectiveness) with Green Behaviour.

The paper proposes to test:

- 1.a Green behavior is same across various age groups
- 1.b Green behavior is same for both genders
- 1.c Green behavior is same across various literacy levels
- 1.d General Environmental Concern and Perceived personal Environmental Concern are similarly correlated with green behaviour
- 1.e Green behavior is uniform across different aspects like Conservation, Pollution avoidance, Environmental friendly purchase, and Environmental Activism.
- 1.f Perceived customer effectiveness is similarly associated with all green behavior.

4. Methodology:

The study was carried out in Nashik city on the basis of a questionnaire developed by Jain & Kaur (2006). The Authors included various environmental issues and developments mentioned by Zimmer et.al (1994). The questionnaire was drawn from the two empirically tested sets of scales '30-item Environmentally Conscious Consumer Behaviour' (ECCB) scale developed by Roberts (1996) and a 45-item Total Environmentally Friendly Behaviour scale developed by Allen and Ferrand (1999). The Authors carried out pilot test and then adjusted the scales to suit Indian context. Since the only relevant scales found in this area relating Indian scenario were from the study of Jain & Kaur (2006). The researcher has included it for the purpose of studying aims and propositions testing in Nashik. The instrument contains a combination of close-ended (for demographic information) and open-ended questions (for environmental attitude and behavior). The scales included have been sufficiently tested for reliability and validity and the shortage of time and resources did not allow carrying it out again for the particular study. The scale items worded in reverse manner to avoid errors have been maintained in same manner for the study repeated in Nashik. A set of 100 questionnaires were administered with the help of convenience sampling method for the respondents above 15 years of age. 62 questionnaires were received back but only 56 were complete and found useful. The socio demographic profile of Respondents is as follows:

5. Findings & Results:

Fig.4 Sample Socio-Demographic Profile

Socio-demographic Characteristics		Percentage
Gender	Male	78 %
	Female	21 %
Age	15 - 24 yrs.	20 %
	25-35 yrs.	13 %

Education	Above 35 yrs.	41 %
	Secondary	12.5 %
	Undergraduate	14.29 %
	Graduate	53.57 %
	Post Graduate	17.85 %
	Doctorate	1.78 %
Occupation	Farmer	3.57 %
	Govt employed	14.28 %
	House Wife	7.14 %
	Employed with Private Organization	25 %
	Professionals	19.64 %
	Retired	5.35 %
	Self – Employed	14.28 %
	Students	8.92 %
	Unemployed	3.57 %

It is observed that 80 % of the respondents are above age 24 yrs., majority (78 %) being males, well-educated (73 % at least a graduate), 50 % being self-employed or employed with private organization. The scores were computed for the various Dimensions of Environmental attitude and behavior. The behavior was noted on the fact of whether they do it and also on the basis of frequency with which it happens. The values of Cronbach Alpha for reliability scores have been mentioned from the study carried out by Jain & Kaur (2006). The results have been represented in the table below:

Fig. 5: Scores of Dimension for Green Behaviour

Dimension	Reliability (Jain & Kaur 2006)	Mean Score (Researcher)
General Environmental Concern		2.99
Perceived Relationship between Economic Growth and Environment	0.6113	3.51
People's Concern for Environment	0.7107	3.11
Genuineness of Environmental Concern	0.5595	3.18
Perceived Role of Various Contributors to Environmental Problems	0.6408	2.1
Perceived Effectiveness of Environmental Actions	0.7158	3.54
Perceived Personal Environmental Awareness and Concern		2.96
Perceived Personal Environmental Awareness	0.4884	3.79

Perceived Influence of Green Promotion and Willingness to Buy Green Products	0.7605	2.46
Perceived Effectiveness of Personal Environmental Action –	-	2.46
Incidence of Personally Engaging in Eco-friendly Behaviour		3.19
Information Seeking Behaviour	0.7673	3.08
Conservation Behaviour	0.5639	3.16
Pollution Avoidance Behaviour		4.16
Environmental Activism (a)	0.5971	2.93
Frequency of Personally Engaging in Environmentally Friendly Behaviour		3.17
Conservation Behaviour	0.5639	3.58
Pollution Avoidance Behaviour		3.36
Environmental Activism	0.5971	2.36
Overall Score		3.18

Under the dimension of General Environmental Concern the respondents show a lower mean score as compared to the perceived environmental awareness which may be interpreted as everyone feels I am doing a lot but others are not doing their role.

The respondents agree that the Environmental issues are genuine and it is not a hype or sales gimmick. However, they feel the contributors (Government & Politicians) are not playing their role sufficiently with score recorded as lowest i.e. 2.1.

The respondents agree that they are on an average aware of environmental issues but are doubtful about their knowledge in relation to environmental laws. The green promotion is not perceived to influence the respondents also they are not confident about the results or importance of their own environmental action.

All aspects of green behavior are not practiced with same intensity as observed from the scores of Green behavior. The scores are highest under the head of Pollution avoidance behavior but the frequency measured does not reflect it. The green behavior is conspicuously low on the aspect of Environmental Activism.

The frequency of engaging in electricity saving activities is the highest with mean score of 4.46. But deeper insight into the behavior reveals the paradox of higher usage of Plastic and disposable items. In environmental friendly purchase behavior the score for buying of energy efficient household appliances is the highest. The observation reveals that the respondents engage in green behavior more for High – involvement products than the Low- involvement products.

The incidence and frequency of environmental activism is very low but, the frequency of donating money for environmental activities and attending meetings or programs of environmental organizations is the lowest.

The researcher further attempted to co-relate the demographic factors with the overall green behavior:

Fig. 6 Co-relation between Demographic Factors & Green Behaviour

Factors	Green behavior					
	R value	t-value	p-value (1 & 2 tailed)		α value fixed	Proposition
Age	0.1345	0.9974	0.16151	0.32302	< 0.05	Accepted
Gender	0.005465	3.2093*	0.00112	0.00224	< 0.05	Rejected
Education	0.21225	1.62537	0.05495	0.10991	< 0.05	Accepted

6. 1. Age shows a mild positive co-relation with Green behavior, but t and p values show it is statistically very insignificant hence the proposition is accepted that Green behavior is same across various age groups.

6. 2. Gender shows weak co-relation but t value calculated with 2 sample t test for means reveals a statistically significant relationship further confirmed with p values, hence proposition is rejected hence Green behavior differs with the Gender. Specifically it is revealed that Males are greener in behavior than females which have been observed just opposite in case of majority of gender based studies as discussed in the Literature Review.

6. 3. Education shows again a weak positive relationship with Green behavior. The one tailed p value is slightly higher than the α value but still proposition is accepted that Green behavior is same across all literacy levels.

Fig. 7 Co-relation between General and Perceived Personal Environmental Concern & Green Behaviour

Relationship Studied	R value	t-value	p-value		α value fixed	Proposition
			1 tailed	2 tailed		
General Env. Concern & Perceived Personal Env. concern	-0.2658	-2.026	0.02835	0.04771	<0.05	Rejected
General Env. Concern & Green Behaviour	-0.02903	-0.2134	0.4159	0.83181	< 0.05	Accepted
Perceived Personal Env. Concern & Green Behaviour	0.5659	5.0434	0.00000274	0.00000549	<0.05 <0.01	Rejected

7. 1. General Environmental Concern shows strong negative co-relation with Perceived Personal Environmental Concern, the t and p values reveal that proposition is partially rejected. The Specific attitude represented by Perceived Personal Concern is not totally represented by General Environmental Concern.

7. 2. General Environmental Concern shows very weak negative relationship with Green behavior, the t and p value reveal that proposition is accepted. Thus General Environmental Concern does not translate into Green behavior.

7. 3. Perceived Personal Concern is strongly positively related with Green behavior. The t and p value reveal that even at confidence level of 0.01, the proposition is rejected. Thus Perceived Personal Concern and not General Environmental Concern is the true predictor of Green behavior.

The Chi square test of Association was conducted for the independent variables being Perceived Effectiveness of Environmental Action and dependent variables were selected according to importance of the aspect of green behavior. Thus Scale measuring frequency of switching off fans and lights, saving electricity, stopping usage of environmentally harmful products, and participation in Environmental activities. This covers Conservation behaviour, Environmental friendly purchase behavior, and Environmental Activism.

Fig. 8 Chi- Square Test for Association between General and Perceived Personal Environmental Concern & Green Behaviour

Association tested	Chi square value	P value (two tailed)	α value fixed	Association
Perceived Customer Effectiveness & Saving Electricity	8.572	0.0034	<0.05	Accepted & is Strong
Perceived Customer Effectiveness & Giving up usage of Env- harmful Products	0.405	0.5244	< 0.05	Rejected
Preceived Customer Effectiveness a & Partcipation in Environmnetal Activities	0.002	0.9633	<0.05 <0.01	Rejected

8.1 Perceived Customer Effectiveness is strongly associated only with one of the aspects of conservation behavior. This shows that not all aspects of green behavior are practiced with same intensity. The Environmental activism is conspicuously on a lower mark as compared to other aspects.

6. Conclusions:

The data analysis reveals some similarities whereas many differences of findings when compared with earlier studies. The Age is weakly related with green behavior, same is true with education. The Males are seen to win over their other counterpart in terms of green behavior. The respondents accept that

the Environmental problem is genuine and not just a hype or sales gimmick. The precaution on the part of marketers to ethically use Green marketing can avoid a case similar to that of junk mails. The Contributors like government and politicians are perceived to play very minimal role by the respondents. It can be further observed that respondents are not much influenced by the advertisements which promote green behavior. From the scale items measuring green behavior it can be observed that respondents are practicing "Green behavior in Comfort Zone". The higher scores are seen for electricity saving behaviours but at the same time respondents are using frequently Plastic bags and disposable items. The observation reaffirms some of the previous studies which mention Respondents are green when it gives them some immediate benefit or is convenient to them. It is like doing austerity of not eating because one is poor. Such behaviours raise the question whether sustainable consumption is only for developing countries in a compulsive manner because of lack of resources and not for developed countries that can enjoy all resources. It can also be interpreted from the incidences and frequencies of Environmental activism that respondents are good at individual's task but cannot orient themselves easily for collective tasks. The Environmental issues and their gravity demand the speeding up of efforts not only at individual but also the community levels.

7. Limitations:

The study suffers from many limitations such as less sample size, and non-random sampling method used. The study with large samples may help draw more effective conclusions. A more detailed study on Psychographic rather than demographic factors would give better understanding which is also remarked by many experts.

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