

## Exploring Relationship among Green Product Intention and its Determinants

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### ABSTRACT

*In the recent years there has been a lot of growth in consumer intention towards purchasing green products. Environmental concern has been described as a vital force for achieving sustainable development. Evidences reveal that increasing environmental concern has positively influenced the consumption pattern of green products. This has lead to the concept of sustainable consumption in the behaviour which in turn led to a greater faith in energy efficient products and appliances for environmentally sustainable consumers. The last decade has witnessed an impressive increase in Environmental concern which has had a greater effect on consumer intention for the Green products. The increase of the environmental knowledge has had a thoughtful effect on consumer behaviour, with the green product market expanding at a remarkable rate The present study shows that environment concern is evidently predicted from consumers' purchasing patterns, with consumers increasingly preferring to buy 'green products. The study tries to develop relationship among environmental knowledge, normative beliefs and perceived consumer effectiveness, and their effect on intention towards sustainable green products.*

**Keywords:** *Environmental knowledge; Normative beliefs; Perceived consumer effectiveness; Sustainable green product intention.*

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### 1.0 Introduction

The concern towards the environment is growing at a very rapid pace, consumer of today is much more agile towards the threat to the environment which in turn is affecting the healthy lifestyle of living (Hines et al., 1987; Ellen, et al, 1991; Worcester, 1993; Junaedi, 2007).

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In today's scenario, environmental knowledge has grown at a very rapid pace as far as citizens attitudinal and behavioural phenomena are concerned. The widespread and influence of the phenomenon can be seen in almost all human activities including business activities wherein one of the biggest challenges is to protect and preserve the earth's resources and the environment for the future generations without comprising the ability of the present generations to meet their own needs. Earlier studies show that consumer behaviour mainly revolved around the economic aspect of the purchase and value derived out of the purchase Thøgersen, J. (2005). Consumers during this period were viewed as rational decision makers only concerned with self-interest (Schiffman et al. 1997). Consumers during this era were called as a 'rational economic man' Schlegelmilch. (1996), later researches proved that consumer behaviour considers a wide range of factors influencing his/her buying, using and disposing of behaviour. Consumer behaviour is mostly influenced by the demand of the consumer regarding any purchase which an organisation always keeps in mind while offering a product or a service to the consumer, mostly the consumer is satisfied with the quality aspect of the product backed with some valuable services but as in the recent scenario awareness regarding the environment has increased and the consumer is very much concerned about the environmental issues.

Consumers are today committed to bring sustainable consumption in practice, sustainable consumption basically means to develop a system in which consumer is utilizing his/her needs but without disturbing the natural system and without harming the environment (Kaiser et. al., 2006). There is rapid growth in intention towards sustainable green products, which simply means consumers positive intent in buying products which are least harmful to the environment. Consumer having green intent is more concerned about purchasing products or availing services which do not at all harm the environment and also try to act in a way which has a least negative effect on harming the environment. Green consumption pattern is not only limited to purchasing an eco-friendly product but rather it is about improving all the activities which comes in between usage till disposing off the product. Green consumption is basically a series of integrated activities whose ultimate goal is to use methods and techniques by means of which an individual can resort to ways which causes very less or negligible damage to the environment and helps in making an environment which is sustainable for living. The other way of looking at green consumption is sustainable consumption which means creating an environment which is free of pollution. Sustainable consumption means making products or services which not only possess value to the consumers by having high quality which in turn helps in making the life of consumer much easier and

smoother but along with it also do not harm the environment or deplete natural resources.

It is also evident from the fact that consumers showing behaviour for sustainable consumption or purchasing green products play a very important role in protecting environment and contributing in making the environment sustainable for living. Society is very complex which mainly relies on providing a pollution free environment for living and consumer is an important member of society, so consumer has to keep environment pollution in mind before making any decision. Every time the consumer thinks of purchasing a green product he uses his power and potential to contribute in making a decision which is more ethical, sustainable and has a positive implication towards society. Individuals adopting sustainable lifestyle more tend to favour ecological consciousness and adopting complex decision making to purchase green products. Green conscious consumers are considered to be consumers with deep concern for the society and are always trying to bring a positive change in the society with their purchasing power (Webster, 1975), these consumers show a deep concern for the garbage generated by the products, the harmful gaseous and liquid waste coming out of the product manufacturing factories and polluting environment, whether the product can be recycled again or not and so on. The consumer with green intent basis purpose is not to satisfy their needs and wants, but to do something for the society as a whole by saving the environment which has long term benefit for the future generation. Further it has been found that eco-friendly consumers are the consumers who avoid products which are harmful for their health, pollute the environment while using the product, deplete natural resources, cause a threat to the society and act as a waste after usage means cannot be recycled (Schwepker and Cornwell, 1991; Bohlen et al., 1993).

Consumer environmental concern mainly relates to products having low impact on environment or being more sensitive to natural causes i.e. being eco-friendly or green products. Green products are the products which possess a lesser effect on human health and environment as compared with its competing products available in the market. Consumers with sustainable green behaviour try to meet their needs along with improving the societal and environmental performance. Ecological consciousness has been growing at a very rapid pace but now also environmental sustainability is very difficult for consumers to achieve, the reason behind this is that the consumer is very much aware about the environmental sustainability but there are still factors which restrain a consumer from buying eco-friendly products, these factors range from not affordable, the product is not available in the market to frequently, the product is not reliable or low in quality as compared to its competitor products and the last is that consumer feels helpless and assumes that his/her lone purchase will not have any

positive impact on environmental issues. The green marketing concept can also be linked with holistic marketing concept where all the environmental activities are involved in making an environmentally acceptable product. Environmentally conscious consumer are the consumer who are internally very strong and have a strong belief that their individual ability to contribute towards protecting environment will have a positive impact on making the society sustainable for living. Consumers environmental consciousness can be considered as the initial base to protect environment but now due to growing awareness a rapid shift has been noticed by government taking steps to protect environment, some organisations coming forward to save environment and also organisation making products taking environment protection very seriously and making products which are sustainable to environmental needs and behaving in an eco-sustainable manner (Polonsky and Rosenberger, 2001). A commitment to environmentally conscious behaviour can help an individual to develop a feeling of belonging to nature (Clayton, 2003). Individuals with strong environmental conscious behaviour tend to show great affinity towards environmental identity, environmental identity means how much close an individual is with the nature and how far can he go to protect the environment (Clayton, 2003). Environmentally conscious consumers are sometimes also considered as ethical consumers or socially conscious consumers as they exhibit traits which are beneficial for the society, these consumers usually use their purchasing power and consumption pattern to bring about a change in the society (Moisander, 2007). Environmentally conscious consumers possess high moral values and strong commitment towards the society because of which they depict green purchasing behaviour which in turn motivate others to follow green purchasing pattern to bring a change in the society for the benefit of the future generation.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

Environmental concern and environmental protection has emerged as an important topic not only for the organisations doing business but also for the government and society (Eltayeb, et, al. 2010). There are many problems which has drawn the concern of the society towards environment protection and saving environment, these problems range from global warming, air pollution, ozone depletion and so on (Rahbar, et al., 2011). Researchers have given many causes to these pollutions but the root cause has been growing industrialisation and growing demand for products in the market. Current researches show that recent environment conditions are so worse that they possess a serious threat to consumer's health (Kalafatis, et al.,1999). Due to this recent

past has seen drastic shift in individual concern towards environment and environmental problems (McCart & Shrum, 1994).

Concern related to environmental pollution is increasing at alarming rate (Chan, 2002). In current scenario as environment concern has increased a lot among the consumers so organisations are taking environmental issues very seriously and are trying to manufacture products which help in saving the environment. Green purchase intention is a particular type of consumer behaviour which is exhibited by consumers to show their concern towards the environment. Environmental concern is a crucial factor to determine actual behaviour of consumers while making a purchasing decision. The green purchase intention is major factor while consumer purchases a product and shows his concern towards (Lee & Shin, 2010). Environmentally friendly behaviour tops the list while determining green purchase intentions of consumers (Lee & Green, R. T., 1991). Consumers who possess an environmental concern and environmental knowledge are more likely to exhibit a positive attitude, possess high normative beliefs and high levels of perceived consumer effectiveness, which ultimately propel consumers to possess strong intentions to buy green products (Mostafa, M. M., 2007). Concern for environment relates to consumers awareness towards environmental problems and efforts incorporated by consumers to solve these problems. It also includes willingness and commitment of consumers to participate in these efforts of averting environmental problems (Albayrak, Aksoy, & Caber, 2011).

Due to increased awareness of consumers about environmental issues today, green marketers today integrates health and wellbeing of both consumer and the environment via ensuring every phase from product design to distribution of products each and every phase is carried out in an eco-friendly manner (Ramayah, Lee, & Mohamad, 2010). Studies have shown that environmental concerns backed by green purchase intention have shown strong influence on moulding the actual purchasing behaviour of consumers to buy eco-friendly products.) Environmental concern is turning out to be a thread which is binding all the individuals to come together stay connected and imbibe values and behaviour which help in using ways and means of green practices and lays the foundation of sustainable environment for living. Environmental concern is a determining factor which determines the consumer behaviour while purchasing a green product. This clearly indicates that an individual behaviour is governed by the values he/she possess (Dunlap et al, 2000 & Sinha et al 2001). Thus many researchers studying environmental concern have laid a lot of emphasis on consumer's values, beliefs and morals. It is considered that consumers own personal values are considered a major factor while his/her decision making regarding an eco-friendly purchase. Consumers with pro-environmental value and belief system is more likely to have tendency to

purchase green product or more likely to follow sustainable way of livelihood. Studies suggest there holds a positive relationship among awareness regarding green products and developing a positive attitude in purchasing a green product (Cawley, J., 2004). Most of the individuals who are aware of green products and also aware of harmful effect which general products cause on the environment generally tend to develop a positive attitude towards the green products and ultimately end up buying the product in order to contribute in saving the environment. Value is a psychological behaviour which acts as thrust in guiding and goal setting when it comes to taking a decision regarding green purchase (Schwartz, 1994). Value is such a strong factor that it often derives consumers with general behaviour towards green product to be converted to regular green product users (Grunert and Juhl, 1995).

Researchers suggest that consumers with a belief that their purchase is going to have a significant affect in conserving environment are more likely to purchase an eco-friendly product (Biel, A., & Thøgersen, J., 2007.). Consumers with high degree of environmental awareness are more often found to purchase products with recyclable value. Studies also show that there exist a strong relevance for preference of green products over general products, the relevance associated with green products is mainly because of the concern of their good health, good health of their family and lastly protecting environment for betterment of society (Sidique et al, 2010). Another variable which is also as important as knowledge is individuals normative belief towards the change which he/she can bring towards saving environment through his actions (Tan, 2011). The self-belief is a factor trade of perceived consumer effectiveness and it generally tends to describe the belief than an individual possess in protecting the environment and saving the nature from harmful pollutants by his actions (Chen and Chang, 2012). The self-belief generally tends to understand the perceived consumer effectiveness which his/her behaviour can bring towards the society, if the change has a positive impact on the society and the society acknowledges his/ her contribution then the self-belief of consumer gets more empowered and he/she gets motivated in implementing his belief into actions by purchasing green products. Health consciousness is another factor which is considered while consumers purchasing decision. Health consciousness generally refers to how much importance an individual pays to his/her personal health and how much concerned he/she is about his/her health due to his/her daily activities (Baker et al, 2008). Studies show that individuals trying to live a healthier lifestyle tend to take their daily consumption pattern very seriously. Health conscious consumers are very much aware of environmental pollution and the causes of environmental pollution, so to live a healthy health the consumer develops a positive

intention towards environmental friendly products in order to create an environment sustainable for living (Kim & Choi, 2005).

Normative beliefs are also a variable which influences consumers purchase decision making process towards green products. Like personal belief normative beliefs are also very important, social norms include the influence of family, peer group and society on an individual while making a purchasing decision. Family act as a emotional support to every individual so consumers decision is highly influenced by what his family thinks, studies show if a consumers family possess positive concern towards green purchase then the chances of buying green increases (Padel and Foster, 2005). Researches also reveal that society and peer group have a significant impact on the purchasing decision of consumer behaviour, a consumer living in a society which is well aware of threats to environment and are trying to save environment for making sustainable for living are more willing to purchase eco-friendly products. Green purchase intention is another factor which is essential when it comes to study environmentally conscious consumer behaviour. Study show that even if consumer has environmental knowledge as well as positive attitude towards the product but then it is much more important to have a positive intention towards green product then only consumer will initiate the purchasing decision (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Environmentally conscious consumer always behaves in a way in which their lifestyle choices are such that they always minimize the impact on environment and help in creating a sustainable environment for the society (Hounsham, 2006). Individuals committed towards green products are the individuals who believe in a healthy relationship among consumers and ecological system, these consumers want to create a cleaner and greener environment for the future generation. Many studies have been conducted to find the characteristics of environmentally conscious consumers and the traits associated with eco-friendly consumers have been classified as, showing concern for the life on earth and future generation, desirous to develop sustainable alternatives to protect nature, giving a lot of emphasis on quality of life and ready to contribute to save nature by volunteering. Green purchasing behaviour or environmental friendly actions are not generally carried to improve our own lifestyle but they possess a strong ethical and emotional values attached with it. Consumers showing environmental friendly actions are generally individuals who think of developing whole society and saving environment for not only their benefit but for the benefit of generations (Kaufman et al, 2012). Consumers with green attributes are more concerned about the environment and are willing to seek information regarding the nature and behave in such a manner which is saving the environment to the maximum extent. The bond between the individual and environment and commitment shown by individual in saving environment denotes to individual

personality towards environment and the identity which an individual wants to establish with respect to the environment. Ecologically conscious consumers are much committed towards saving the environment and acting in a manner to protect the environment, these individuals are considered as consumers with green identity (Blake, 1999).

Sustainable consumption is a decision making concept which takes into account consumer's social responsibility to protect the environment in addition to satisfying their needs and wants (Vermeir and Verbeke, 2008). Sustainable consumption also considered as the consumption pattern that supports the ability of current and future generation to meet their needs and wants without harming and causing damage to the environment (Birtwistle and Moore, 2007). Studies show that while evaluating environmental and social aspect, environmental aspect is always ranked higher than social aspect while studying consumer buying behaviour. Also studies show that environmental aspect is rated higher than human rights when it comes to decision making while purchasing green products (Wheale and Hinton, 2007). Green buyers always believe that they can make a difference through their product choices, which is the main reason green buyers always tend to buy products which are energy efficient. While considering energy consumption and green house gas effects, vehicles and transport industry comes to play a significant role in increasing the green house gases to the environment. It has been found through researches that consumer of today is well aware of causes of green house and is concerned towards the emission of gases from vehicles which is polluting the environment. The consumer's high concern leads him/her to purchase cars at higher price than the usual ones which are termed as green cars as they emit less carbon into the atmosphere (Bang et al, 2000).

Studies have also shown that the uncertainty that consumer had regarding a green purchase has been removed through increase in consumer knowledge and awareness regarding eco-friendly products, which has led to increase in the confidence level of the consumer regarding green products and has developed a positive intention regarding purchasing green products (Anderson et al., 2010). Many studies have been conducted on consumers regarding their aspirations behind buying green, no clear answer have been found instead there are many variables found behind the green purchasing decision of the consumers. Some of the factors which derive consumers towards green purchasing range from, consumer pay a lot of attention towards the society in which he/she is living and the lifestyle is similarly developed. So consumer societal lifestyle helps him/her in developing green purchasing behaviour. The other factor which motivates the consumer towards green purchasing is the green value attached to the product, not only the general value but the value towards environment ignites the green consciousness of consumer regarding the product. Consumers depicting



green conscious behaviour make the green decisions as a part of their lifestyle and daily routine. These consumers choose a less carbon producing vehicle while travelling, they use electrical appliances which termed as green and save energy, they always tend to buy organic food, use products with recyclable value and so on. These consumers incorporate the changes in their behaviour so as to impact the environment in positive way and make the environment sustainable for living for them as well as for the future generations. These consumers act as inspiration for the rest of consumers of the society to follow green purchasing patterns (Banerjee et al, 1995).

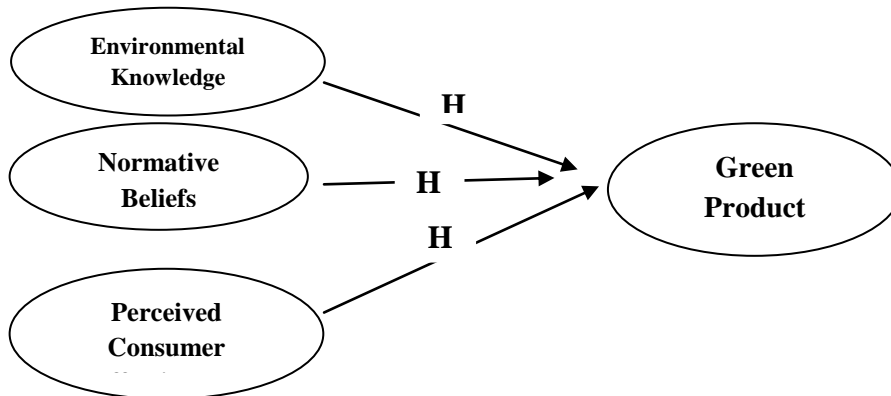
Researchers are predicting a huge growth the organisations producing green products or using eco-friendly ways to carry out their activities. The studies show that as consumers is facing environmental problems in recent times very often which has led to a drastic change in the behaviour if the consumer regarding the environment, today the consumer is more concerned about environment and is committed to protect environment. All this has developed a huge amount of inclination to buy green products which act as an opportunity for organisations to produce green products (Bakre et al, 1977). Consumers who are well educated are more concerned towards environment due to their high level of awareness regarding causes of environment degradation. These consumers possess high level of commitment to act in a manner to preserve the environment, these are the consumers who voluntarily take part in events organised by government or some NGOs to protect environment (Chen and Chang, 2012). The consumer also tends to buy green product over general products to show their consistency in self-image and self-efficacy towards green products, in order to conserve environment and make the conditions sustainable for living (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1997). All this has led consumers to live in an integrated manner with environment to live a healthier lifestyle. Studies have also termed environmentally conscious consumer behaviour as socially conscious behaviour because individuals tend to associate responsibility towards buying eco-friendly products (Dunlap & Vanliere, 1980). Based on literature and above discussion following conceptual model (Figure 1) and hypothesis were developed.

The following hypotheses has been developed for the research work:

H1: *Environmental Knowledge possess a significant relationship with Intention towards sustainable green products.*

H2: *Normative Beliefs possess a significant relationship with Intention towards sustainable green products.*

H3: *Perceived Consumer Effectiveness possess a significant relationship with Intention towards sustainable green products.*

**Figure 1: Theoretical Framework**

*Source: Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980)*

### 3.0 Methodology

The research was done by circulating closed ended questionnaire to a population of 820 respondents of which 740 were found valid. The questionnaires were mostly circulated among the students of university doing P.G and PhD. The research was conducted by circulating structured questionnaire among consumers from states of J&K, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana. The questionnaire formulated consisted of a structured questionnaire having two sections. Section I of the questionnaire dealt with demographic profile of the respondents. Section II of questionnaire was further divided into three parts, part 1 comprised of questionnaire related to effect of environmental knowledge on intention towards sustainable green products, part 2 was related to effect of normative beliefs on intention towards sustainable green products and third and the last part studied the effect of perceived consumer effectiveness on intention towards sustainable green products. The demographic profile of respondents shows that 502 were male and 238 were females. It was further studied that most of the students were belonging to family from middle income group (46.7%). The items used in the questionnaire were administered to five point likert scale. The technique used for collecting questionnaire comprised of both convenient as well as simple random sampling technique. The scales used in the questionnaire were adapted from Fraj and Martinez (2007), Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) and Ajzen (1991) with certain changes that suited the current research. The data was analysed by using SPSS software.

#### 4.0 Data Analysis and Results

The data collected through questionnaire were first administered to Cronbach alpha test to see reliability and validity of scales used in the research (Table 1). The results from cronbach alpha test calculated were .826 for sustainable green product intention, .786 for environmental knowledge, .725 for normative beliefs and .713 for perceived consumer effectiveness, predicting the data used in the research to be reliable and valid.

**Table 1: Values of Cronbach's Alpha Test**

Type of variable	Variables	Cronbach's alpha value
Dependent Variable	Sustainable Green product intention	.826
Independent Variable	Environmental knowledge	.786
Independent Variable	Normative beliefs	.725
Independent Variable	perceived consumer effectiveness	.713

The study was further administered to study correlation among variables (Table 2). The correlation value between Environmental Knowledge and Sustainable green intention came out to be .704, similarly the correlation value between normative beliefs and Sustainable green intention came out to be .518 and the correlation between perceived consumer effectiveness and Sustainable green intention was calculated to be .427. The values calculated show that there possess a positive correlation between independent and dependent variables.

**Table 2: Correlation Matrix**

Variable	Sustainable Green product intention
Environmental knowledge	.704 (**)
Normative beliefs	.518(**)
perceived consumer effectiveness	.427(**)

(\*\*- Significance at 0.01 level (2 – tailed); N=740)

The regression analysis was conducted on the variables to analyse the effect of independent variables on dependent variables (Table 3). The results accepted the entire three hypotheses formulated. The results of regression analysis also show that independent variables (environmental knowledge, normative beliefs and perceived consumer effectiveness) possess a positive and significant effect while predicting the

dependent variable (sustainable green product intention). The adjusted  $R^2$  value comes calculated through regression analysis came out to be .608 which shows that 60.8% of consumer's intention towards sustainable green products is explained by environmental knowledge, normative beliefs and perceived consumer effectiveness.

**Table 3: Result of Regression Analysis**

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.803 <sup>a</sup>	.612	.608	1.762
a. Predictors: (Constant), EK, NB,PCE				

**Table 4: Regression Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.708	.564		3.102	.000
	EK	.713	.087	.564	8.764	.000
	NB	.345	.049	.458	6.873	.000
	PCE	.426	.057	.489	5.678	.000

Based on the analysis, following regression has been formulated to see the effect of environmental knowledge, normative beliefs and perceived consumer effectiveness on sustainable green product intention.

$$\text{GPI} = 1.708 + .713 (\text{EK}) + .345 (\text{NB}) + .426 (\text{PCE})$$

Where: GPI=Green Product Intention

EK =Environmental Knowledge

NB=Normative Beliefs

PCE =Perceived Consumer Effectiveness

## 5.0 Implications and Conclusions

The result of the study broadens the horizon regarding intention towards green products. The primary aim of the study was to develop a relationship among the variables contributing towards developing a sustainable green product intention. The study reveals that they possess a positive and significant relationship among environmental knowledge, normative beliefs and perceived consumer effectiveness while predicting intention towards purchasing green products. The study also shows that

consumer having knowledge related to environmental activities possess a greater concern towards the environment resulting in developing a green purchase intention. The other variables which include normative beliefs and perceived consumer effectiveness also tend to show positive relation while purchasing a green product. The study also throws light on consumers concern towards environment. The research reveals that consumer often tend to acquire knowledge related to green products before formulating an intention towards actually purchasing the products. The findings of the study also suggest that consumers perceived ability in protecting the environment and making the environment conducive for living helps in making a decision towards green products usage. The Study also predict that there possess a strong and positive relationship among persons value and intention towards green products. The study also shows that education and age were the main factors among consumers preferring sustainable green purchasing intention. The results of the study predict that younger consumers are more concerned towards environment and are more willing to purchase products with green attributes. Study also predicts that consumers with higher level of education are more aware of the environmental issues and hence are more concerned about environment and so are more willing to act in a manner which is beneficial for environmental protection.

## **6.0 Limitations and Future Scope**

The study is only a portion of the whole population so there is scope for considering a larger set of target customers for closer results. The study has considered only few variables while considering sustainable consumer intention towards green products but there are many more variables which can be considered while calculating green purchasing intention. The current study has focussed on young and educated customer regarding green purchase intention which has left scope for researchers to consider other options like advertisement, segmentation, targeting and so on regarding intention towards sustainable green products. Evidences reveal that increasing environmental concern has positively influenced the consumption pattern of products which creates future scope for researchers to find variables which are important in understanding the behaviour related to green purchase intention. As a result business have been realizing that their production and consumption has a direct impact on the environment which has widened the scope for an urgent need towards concern for the natural environment, subsequently initiating sustainable green practices by involving consumers and enhancing their awareness for creating a favourable intention towards green products.

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