



THE ROLE OF DIGITAL PLATFORMS IN PROMOTING THE CONSUMPTION OF SUSTAINABLE HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS WITH REFERENCE TO MUMBAI

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ABSTRACT

One of the biggest challenge that the world is facing today is global warming. Drastic climate changes, depletion of ozone layer, melting of Himalayan glaciers, etc. all take place due to global warming. Thus, it becomes very crucial to protect our environment. This can be achieved through avoiding the use of plastic & other materials which are harmful to the environment and stepping towards the use of environmentally friendly materials. A shift in consumer buying pattern towards the consumption of sustainable products would really contribute a lot in mitigating global warming & its harmful effects on human health.

Digital platforms such as e-commerce websites, YouTube Channels, Instagram, Facebook, etc. have emerged as powerful catalysts in shaping consumer behaviour, particularly in the context of sustainability. Content displayed on digital platforms play a significant role in spreading awareness towards sustainable products. The videos, advertisements, reels, blogs, etc. on digital platforms offer eco-friendly choices by focusing on renewable, biodegradable, recyclable & reusable day-to-day household products thereby influencing the consumer buying behaviour. Few examples are replacing plastic toothbrushes with bamboo toothbrushes, using bamboo spoons instead of plastic spoons, using paper and jute bags in place of plastic bags, etc. Peer reviews also contribute towards influencing the decisions of the digital platform users in switching to sustainable alternatives.

The research paper focuses on the role of digital platforms such as e-commerce websites and social media platforms in making the users socially responsible & promoting the consumption of sustainable household products.

Keywords: Global Warming, Sustainable Household Products, Influence of Digital Platforms, Eco-friendly Product Choices

INTRODUCTION:

In recent years, the urgency to address environmental concerns has increased as the harmful effects of global warming & pollution caused due to use & disposal of harmful products have begun to be seen on human health and on our mother earth. Individuals are also now becoming environmentally conscious & this reflects in their preferences towards the consumption of sustainable household products rather than purchasing plastic or non-biodegradable products.

Sustainability refers to the ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It refers to using all the available natural resources carefully without wasting them thereby ensuring that they remain available for use in the future also. Sustainability improves the quality of our lives, protects our ecosystem and preserves natural resources for future generations.

Digital platforms have significantly emerged as powerful tools in shaping consumer perceptions and choices & thereby influencing the consumer behaviour. Sustainability content displayed on social media, e-commerce websites, blogs, etc. help in spreading awareness about the eco-friendly consumption of household products which creates a significant impact on the consumer's decisions related to purchase of household

products. Many individuals are also interested in browsing for the upcoming trends in sustainable alternatives for household products which are available in the market & thus take a step forward in seeking products that align with eco-friendly values.

It is not only important to spread awareness about sustainable consumption but to ensure that the promotional content displayed on digital platforms for sustainable household products is turned into actual purchases & into a habit over a period of time.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

1. Bijja Vishwanath (2017) in their thesis titled “Impact of Environmental Awareness, Social Media and Efforts of Government on Consumer Eco-friendly Behaviour a study in Hyderabad city” examined that in spite of significant level of awareness among the consumers regarding eco-friendly products and their willingness to purchase these products, the merchants are still interested in the business practices which are carried out since long time thereby ignoring the sustainability parameter. According to the study, the eco-friendly segment still remains unattended and therefore there is no popular brand for eco-friendly consumer goods. Thus, more efforts are required to increase the production of eco-friendly consumer goods and thereafter extensive marketing strategies for their promotion.
2. Vidya S. Nair (2024) conducted research on “A Study of Consumers’ Attitude towards Eco-friendly FMCG Products with reference to Chhattisgarh”. The study revealed that effective marketing strategies should be developed for promoting eco-friendly FMCG products. Focus should also be placed on the packaging of the products by providing a comprehensive & reliable information on the product packing as to why the product is environmentally friendly. The income levels also play a vital role in the purchase decisions of the eco-friendly products as these products are expensive as compared to non-sustainable products.
3. Ambika T. in her research titled “A Study on awareness attitude and behaviour of Consumers towards Eco Friendly Products in Coimbatore City” (2018) analysed that since wide variety is not available in eco-friendly products, it acts as a barrier for the female respondents while purchasing the products. High price & limited availability are some other challenges faced while purchasing the eco-friendly products. The study found out that individuals are interested in purchasing eco-friendly products such as energy-saving lamps, recycled paper & stationery, paper or jute carry bags, eco-friendly plates & cups, natural soaps, herbal cosmetics & other personal care products depending upon the various parameters such as gender, marital status, age, level of education, nature of occupation, annual income, etc.
4. Thejaswini, H. D. in the year 2017 while conducting research on “A study of consumers attitude towards eco-friendly FMCG products with reference to Karnataka” analysed that environmentally conscious consumers feel that products which are harmful to the environment & which causes pollution shall be completely avoided. From the study it was found out that consumers are using power-saving electrical home appliances in order to reduce electricity consumption. Awareness regarding eco-label is less among the consumers. Product labels & outdoor advertisements help in generating awareness towards eco-friendly FMCG products. Eco-friendly home care & personal care products are frequently purchased by environmentally responsible consumers. The study revealed that since eco-friendly products are not widely available, the consumers have to search for that particular product in many shops & they showed their willingness to go from one shop to another to search for that eco-friendly product which shows their commitment to purchase eco-friendly product only. The consumers also highlighted that low frequency of advertisement for eco-friendly products is a main drawback for less awareness of green products among the individuals.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To study the awareness of sustainable household products among individuals
2. To examine the influence of Digital Platforms on the buying behaviour of consumers with respect to sustainable household products
3. To analyse the frequency of sustainability content being displayed on the Digital Platforms
4. To examine the willingness of the individuals to search for sustainability content on Digital Platforms

5. To identify the efforts taken by individuals in promoting the consumption of sustainable household products
6. To identify the consumption pattern of household products with regards to sustainability parameter

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY:

1. Individuals are fully aware about sustainable household products.
2. Digital Platforms positively influence buying behaviour of consumers with respect to sustainable household products.
3. Digital Platforms display the sustainability content less frequently.
4. Individuals are willing to search for sustainability content on Digital Platforms.
5. Individuals promote the consumption of sustainable household products through social media posts, word-of-mouth, etc.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

In this study, an attempt has been made to find out the role of digital platforms such as social media platforms, e-commerce websites, blogs, etc. in promoting the consumption of sustainable household products such as bamboo spoons, paper & jute bags, etc. The study focuses on individual's behaviour & attitude towards sustainable household products in terms of purchasing them, browsing for newly introduced sustainable products, recommending such products to their friends & relatives, willingness to purchase them even if they are expensive, implementing sustainable practice of reducing the wastage by reusing the products, promoting the consumption of sustainable products through social media or through word-of-mouth, etc.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

1. The sample size of 40 respondents is a limitation; the findings may differ with a higher sample size.
2. The selected geographical area of Mumbai can be a limitation as the preferences of individuals towards sustainable household products & the impact of digital platforms on consumer's buying behaviour may differ in other geographical areas.

Thus, the generalisation of results may require further validation.

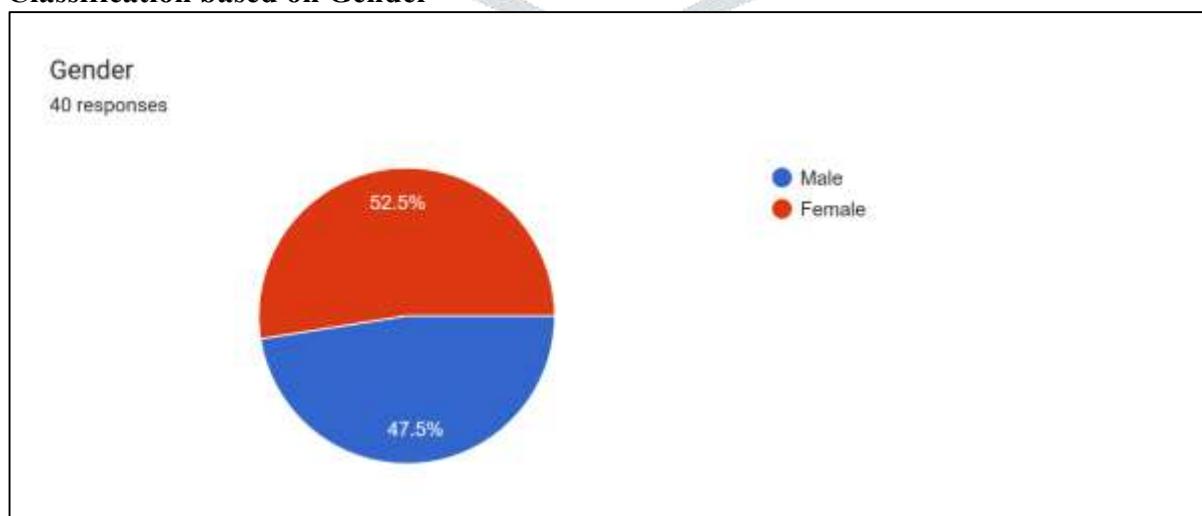
DATA COLLECTION METHOD:

A Google Form was created & circulated among the individuals to collect the primary data. Secondary data was collected from the thesis submitted by authors.

DATA INTERPRETATION:

Part A: Demographic Factors

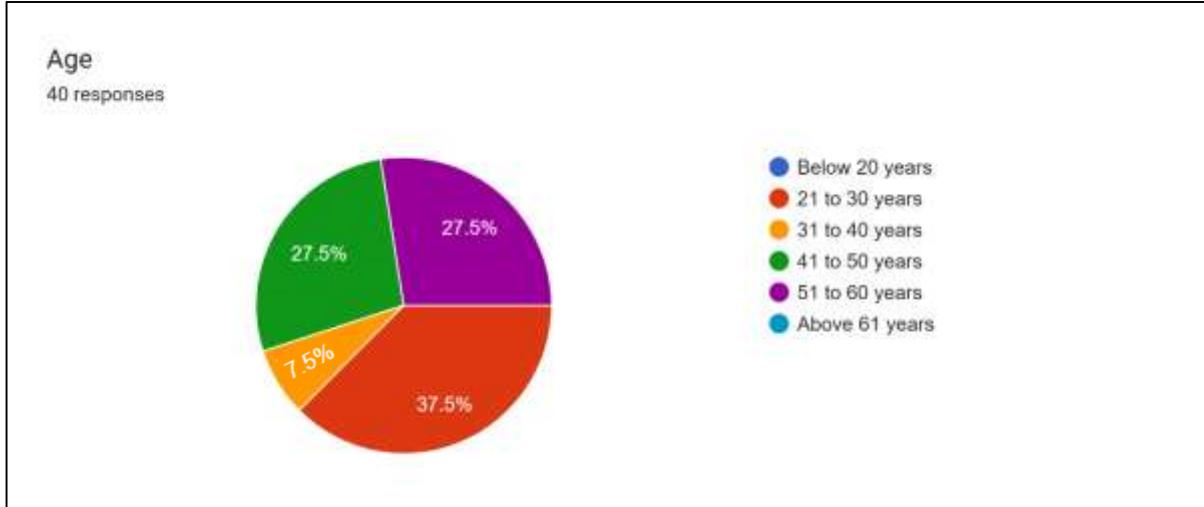
1) Classification based on Gender



Interpretation:

Out of the total 40 respondents under the study, 21 respondents are Females representing 52.50% whereas 19 respondents are Males representing 47.50% of the total population under the study.

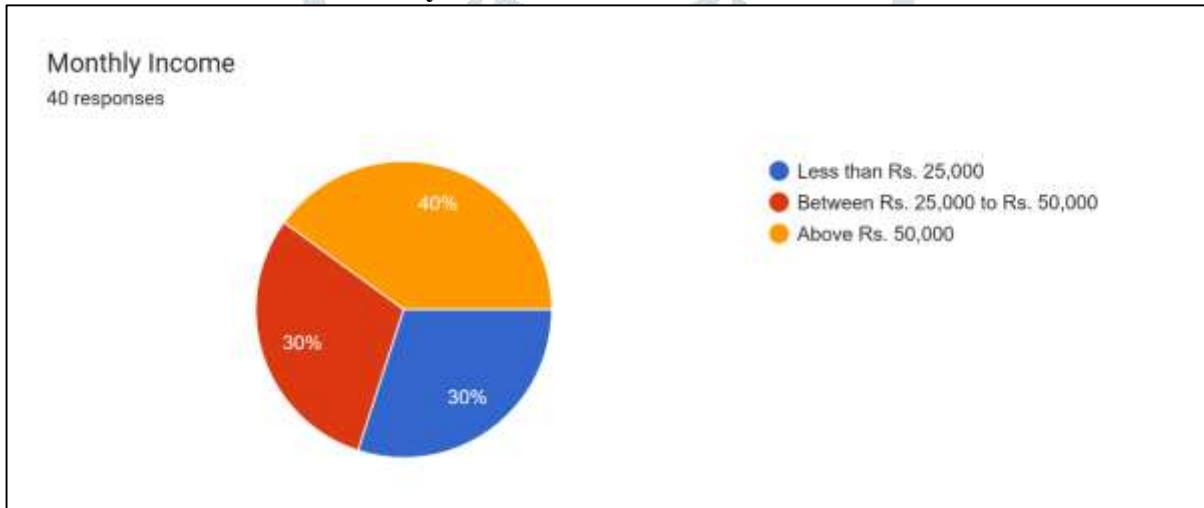
2) Classification based on Age



Interpretation:

Out of the total respondents under the study, 15 respondents belong to the age group of 21 to 30 years representing 37.5% and 3 respondents belong to the age group of 31 to 40 years representing 7.5% of the total respondents under the study. Each of the age group, 41 to 50 years and 51 to 60 years comprises of 11 respondents, accounting for 27.5% of the total population respectively.

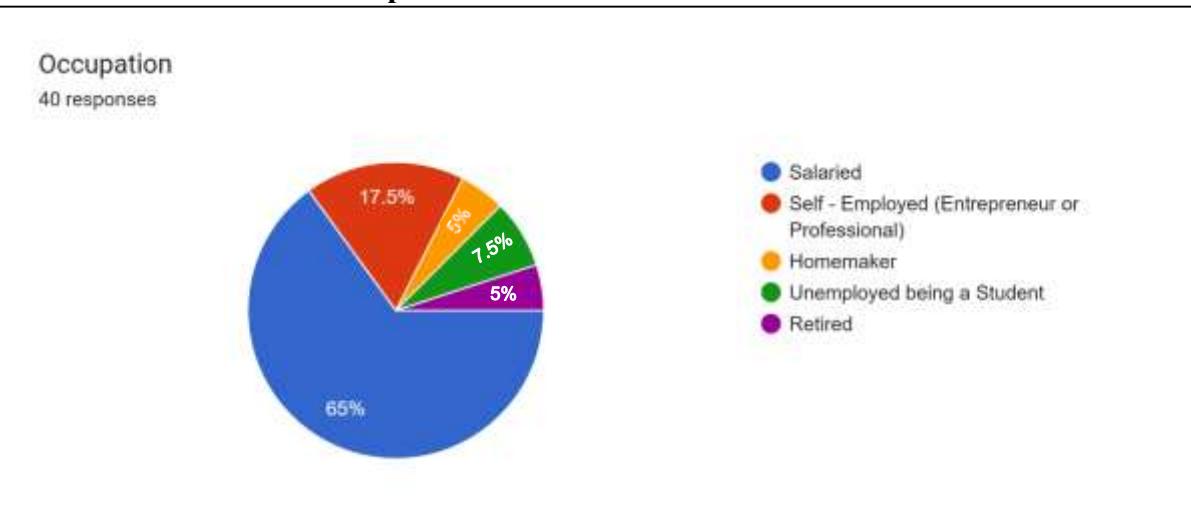
3) Classification based on Monthly Income



Interpretation:

The study reveals that a major portion accounting to 40% of the total respondents have a monthly income above Rs. 50,000. Respondents earning monthly income less than Rs. 25,000 and monthly income between Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 50,000 are equal in numbers i.e. 12 respondents each.

4) Classification based on Occupation

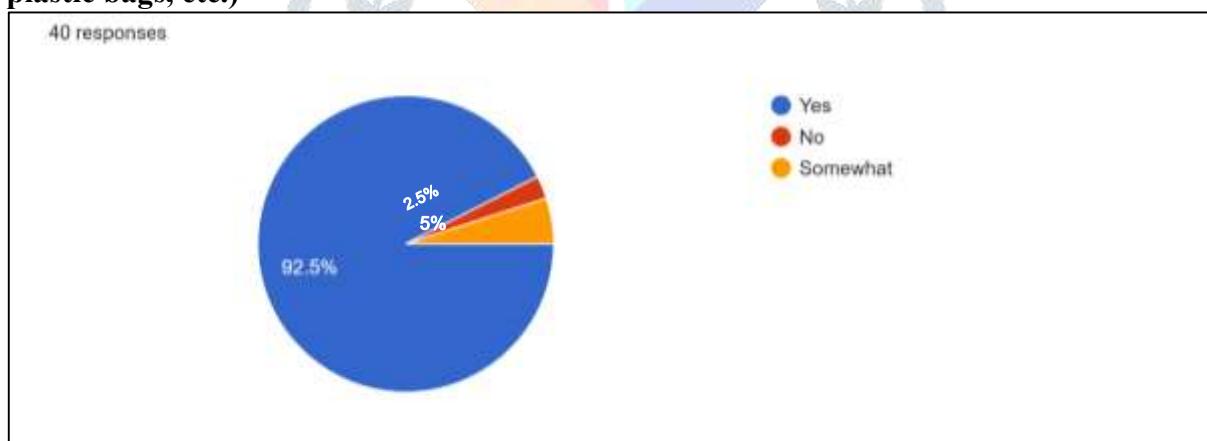


Interpretation:

Large number of respondents are salaried corresponding to 65% of the total population under the study. A considerable portion amounting to 17.5% respondents is occupied by self-employed, either being an entrepreneur or professional. A small portion amounting to 7.5% is occupied by unemployed individuals who belong to the category of students. Only 5% respondents are homemakers. Retired individuals are also very few representing 5% of the total population under the study.

Part B: Research Topic Specific

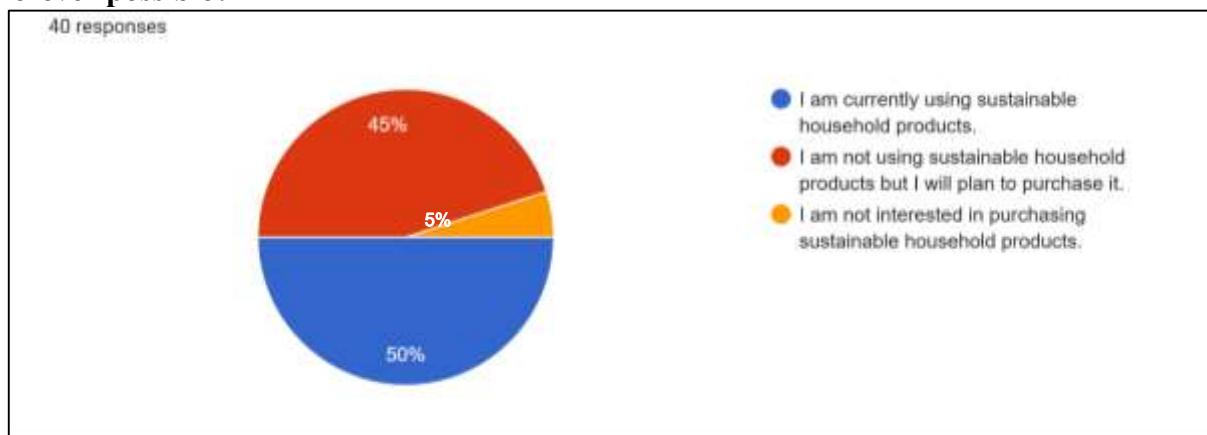
Q.1 Are you aware about sustainable alternatives which are available for household products? (E.g. Bamboo spoons instead of plastic spoons, paper and jute bags in place of plastic bags, etc.)



Interpretation:

Out of the total 40 respondents of the study, 37 respondents are aware about sustainable alternatives which are available for household products. 2 respondents are such that they are aware about sustainable alternatives for household products only to some extent while only 1 respondent do not have any idea about sustainable alternatives for household products.

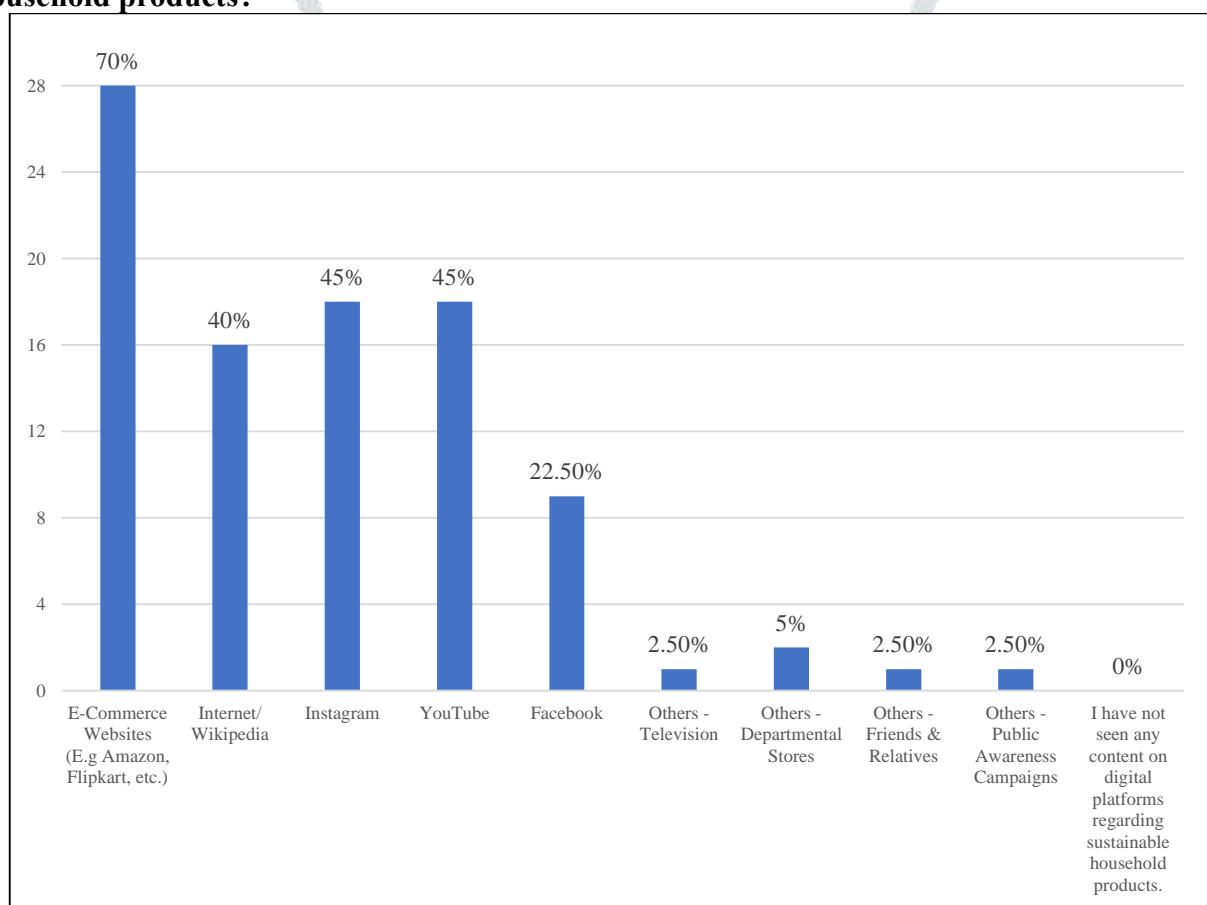
Q.2 Are you currently using or planning to purchase sustainable household products wherever possible?



Interpretation:

Half of the population under the study is already using sustainable household products. 45% of the population i.e. 18 respondents are not using sustainable household products but are planning to purchase them in near future. 2 respondents are not interested in purchasing sustainable household products.

Q.3 From which of the following digital platforms do you come to know about sustainable household products?



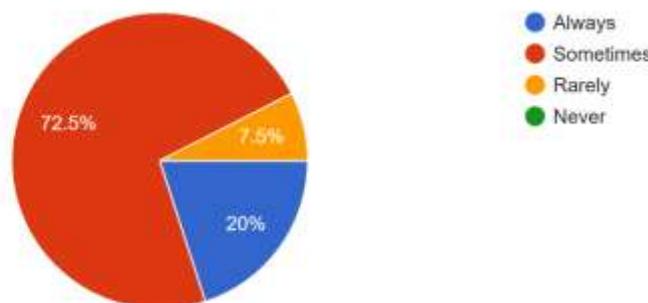
Interpretation:

The study reveals that 70% of the respondents under the study are highly active on e-commerce websites such as Amazon, Flipkart, etc. and these websites help them in getting acquainted with various sustainable household products available in the market. Instagram, YouTube and Internet/Wikipedia also contribute greatly in spreading awareness about sustainable household products. Facebook is somewhat effective in promoting sustainability content. Television, Departmental Stores, Public Awareness Campaigns and word of mouth by friends & relatives play a negligible role in circulating the information regarding availability of sustainable household products in the market. None of the respondents are such that they haven't seen any content on digital platforms regarding sustainable household products.

Q.4 If you come to know about any sustainable product through any digital platform do you get influenced & motivated to purchase it?

If you come to know about any sustainable product through any digital platform do you get influenced & motivated to purchase it?

40 responses



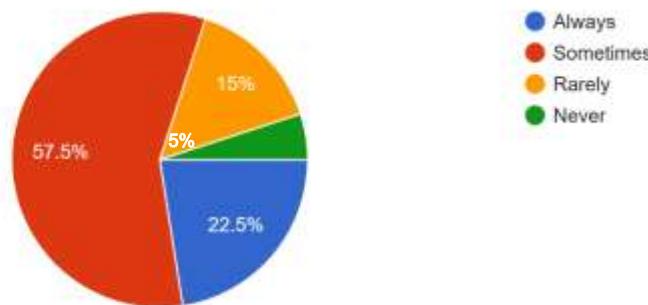
Interpretation:

72.5 % of the respondents who were surveyed are such that when they get information about any sustainable product through digital platform they get influenced & are sometimes willing to purchase it. Only 20% of the population under the study is such that they get highly influenced by the content displayed on digital platforms regarding sustainable products and always get motivated to purchase that product. 7.5 % of the total respondents very rarely purchase the sustainable products that they see on digital platforms.

Q.5 Do you actively search for sustainable or eco-friendly household products on internet or social media?

Do you actively search for sustainable or eco-friendly household products on internet or social media?

40 responses



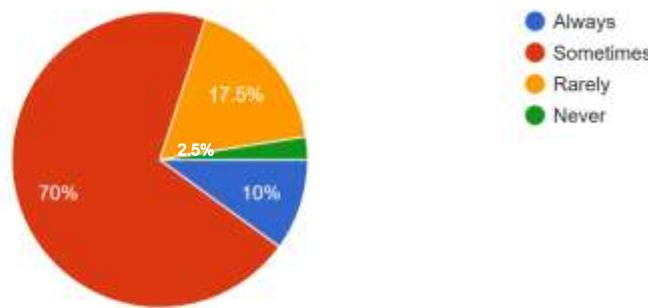
Interpretation:

Majority of the population under the study sometimes search for sustainable or eco-friendly household products on digital platforms which shows their average level of interest towards sustainable products. 22.5 % of the respondents under the study always search for sustainable household products on digital platforms which shows their positive attitude towards getting aware about the sustainable products available in the market. A small segment covering 15 % of the respondents are rarely engaged in searching eco-friendly products while 5 % respondents do not have any interest in searching sustainable products.

Q.6 How often do you come across advertisements or promotions related to sustainable household products on digital platforms?

How often do you come across advertisements or promotions related to sustainable household products on digital platforms?

40 responses



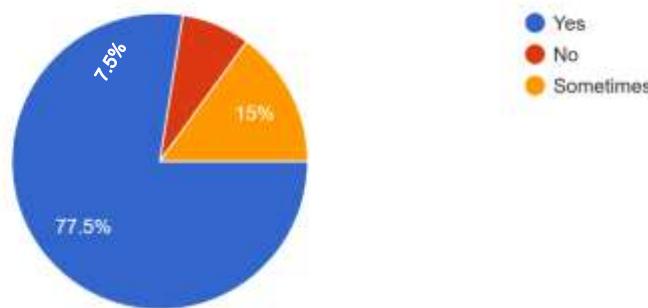
Interpretation:

Many times, advertisements & promotions on digital platforms are displayed based on our previous search history and the preferences which we give towards watching a particular content on that digital platform. 70 % of the respondents are sometimes exposed to advertisements or promotions related to sustainable household products on digital platforms while 17.5 % of the respondents are rarely exposed to such promotional content on digital platforms. Only 10 % of the respondents always come across advertisements promoting sustainable household products on digital platforms indicating their frequent searches related to sustainability content. 2.5% of the respondents have never come across advertisements or promotions related to sustainable household products on digital platforms.

Q.7 Do you recommend sustainable household products to your friends and relatives?

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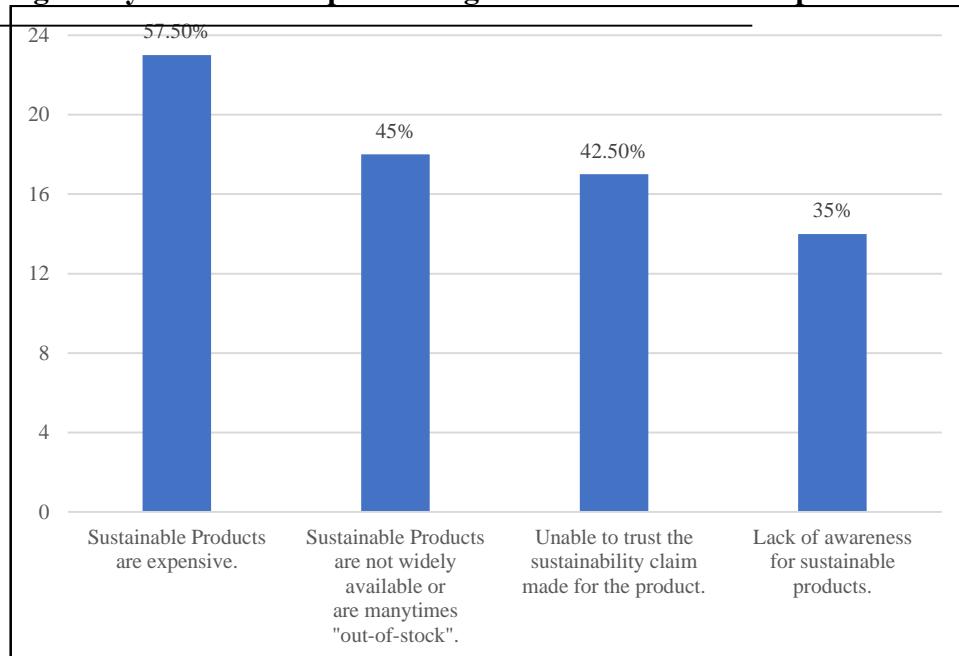
40 responses



Interpretation:

31 out of the total 40 respondents actively recommend sustainable household products to their friends and relatives which shows that a significant portion of the population under the study is willing to promote such environment friendly products. A small segment accounting to 15 % of the total population under the survey recommend sustainable household products to their friends and relatives only sometimes depending upon the product category & other circumstances. 7.5 % of the total respondents do not recommend sustainable household products to their friends and relatives.

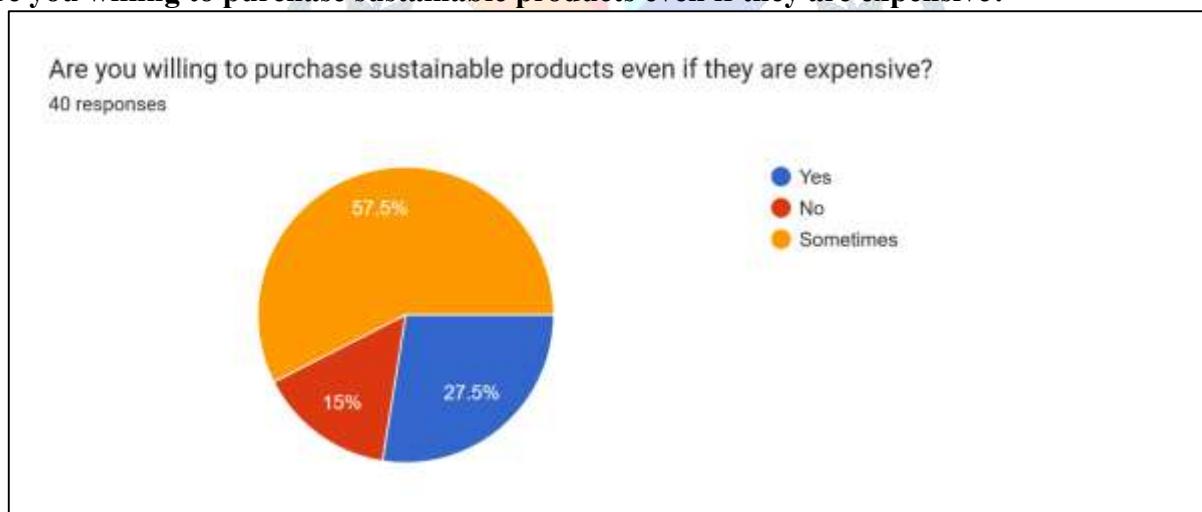
Q.8 What challenges do you face while purchasing sustainable household products?



Interpretation:

The most cited challenge faced by the respondents under the study is the high cost which has to be incurred while purchasing sustainable household products. Limited availability of sustainable household products and trust issues with respect to sustainability claim made for the product are also some of the major challenges faced by 17 to 18 respondents under the study. 14 respondents are not fully aware about sustainable products & thus lack of awareness for sustainable products acts as a challenge for these respondents.

Q.9 Are you willing to purchase sustainable products even if they are expensive?



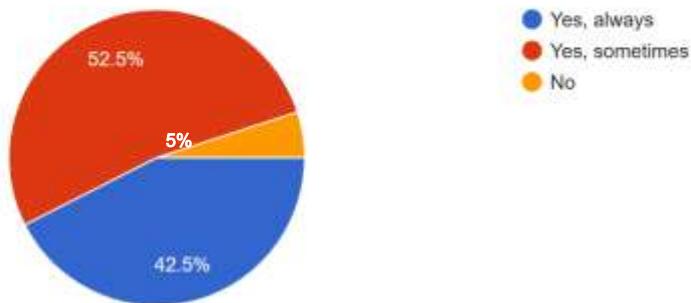
Interpretation:

Cost is not the barrier for 27.5 % of the respondents and hence these respondents are willing to purchase sustainable products even if they are expensive. Majority of the population under the study is sometimes willing to purchase expensive sustainable products depending upon the product category & other circumstances. Product cost acts as a major concern for 15 % of the respondents and hence these respondents are not willing to purchase sustainable products if they are expensive.

Q.10 Are you willing to keep yourself updated regarding the newly introduced or upcoming trends with respect to sustainable household products by browsing on digital platforms?

Are you willing to keep yourself updated regarding the newly introduced or upcoming trends with respect to sustainable household products by browsing on digital platforms?

40 responses



Interpretation:

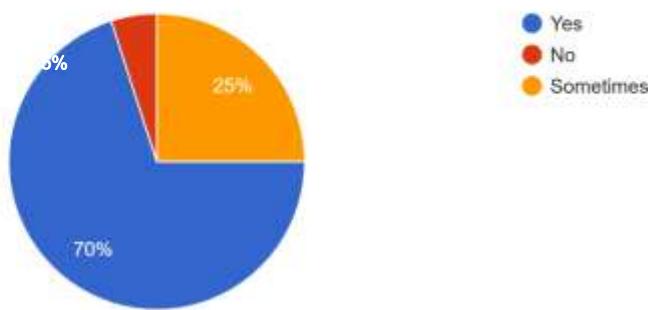
42.5 % of the respondents under the study are consistently engaged in browsing for sustainable household products on digital platforms and thereby keeping themselves up-to-date with sustainability trends. More than half of the population under the study are occasionally willing to use digital platforms to keep themselves updated regarding the upcoming trends with regards to sustainability in the household products. 5 % of the respondents are not interested in using digital platforms for staying informed about the newly introduced & upcoming trends with respect to sustainable household products.

Q.11 Sometimes digital platforms promote reducing waste by reusing the products.

If you come across such advertisement or content on digital platforms, do you try to implement it wherever possible?

Sometimes digital platforms promote reducing waste by reusing the products. If you come across such advertisement or content on digital platforms do you try to implement it wherever possible?

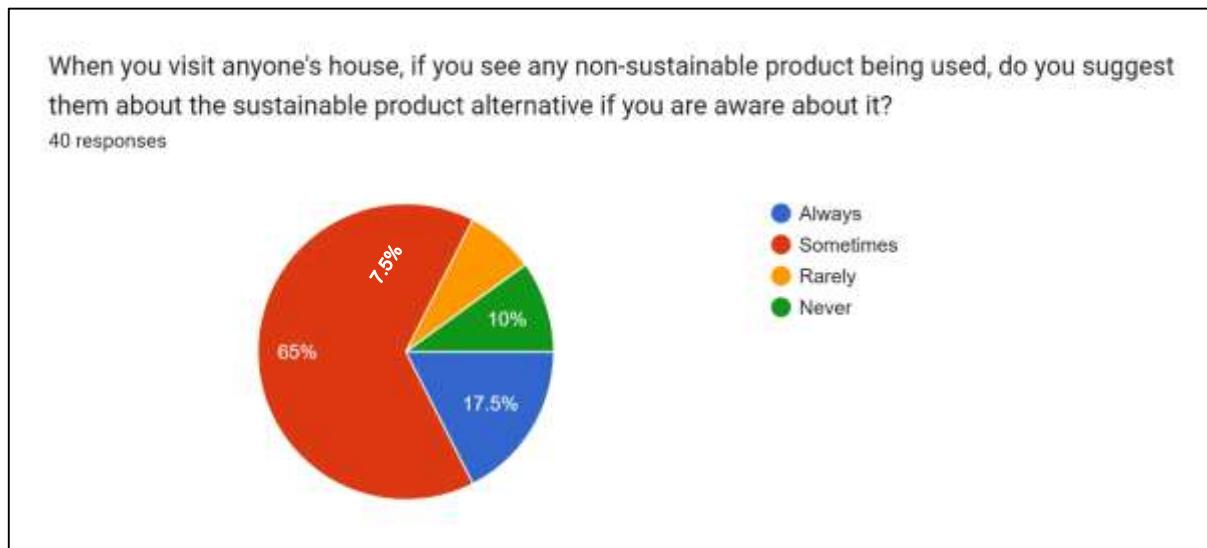
40 responses



Interpretation:

Almost 3/4th of the respondents under the study implement the reuse ideas promoted on digital platforms whenever they come across such content. 1/4th of the respondents surveyed occasionally try to reduce waste by reusing the products. Only a small fraction of the respondents accounting to 5 % do not attempt to implement the 'reuse' ideas displayed on the digital platforms to reduce the waste generation.

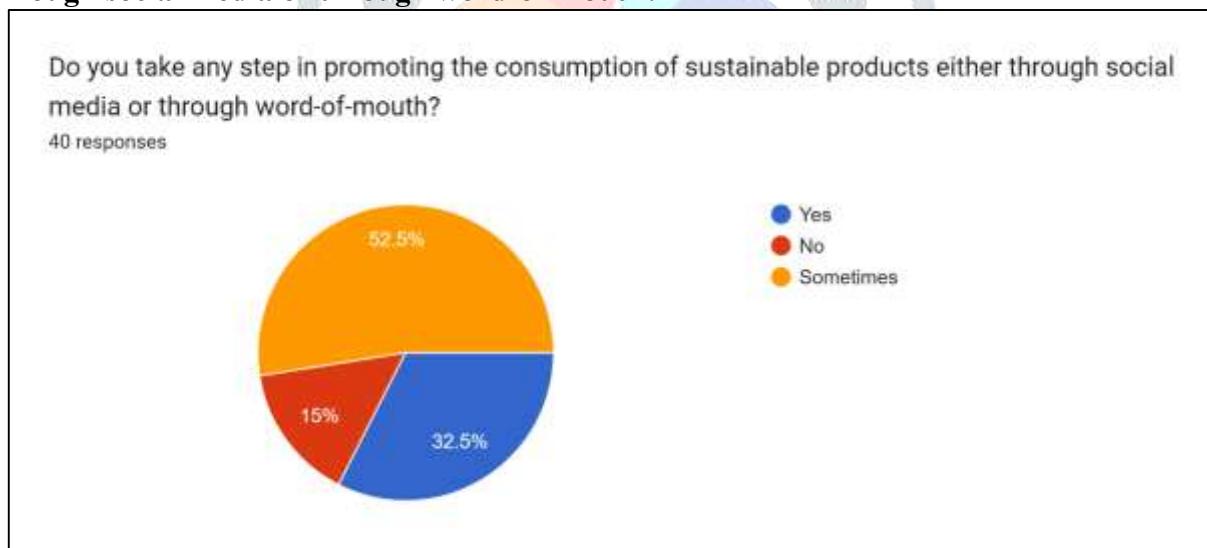
Q.12 When you visit anyone's house, if you see any non-sustainable product being used, do you suggest them about the sustainable product alternative if you are aware about it?



Interpretation:

Only 7 out of the total 40 respondents are always willing to suggest sustainable alternatives to their known-ones. A large number of respondents accounting to 26 out of the total 40 respondents sometimes suggest sustainable practices when they visit anyone's house while 3 out of the total 40 respondents rarely give suggestions related to use of sustainable household products to others. 10% of the respondents are such that they do not get involved in giving suggestions for eco-friendly consumption to others.

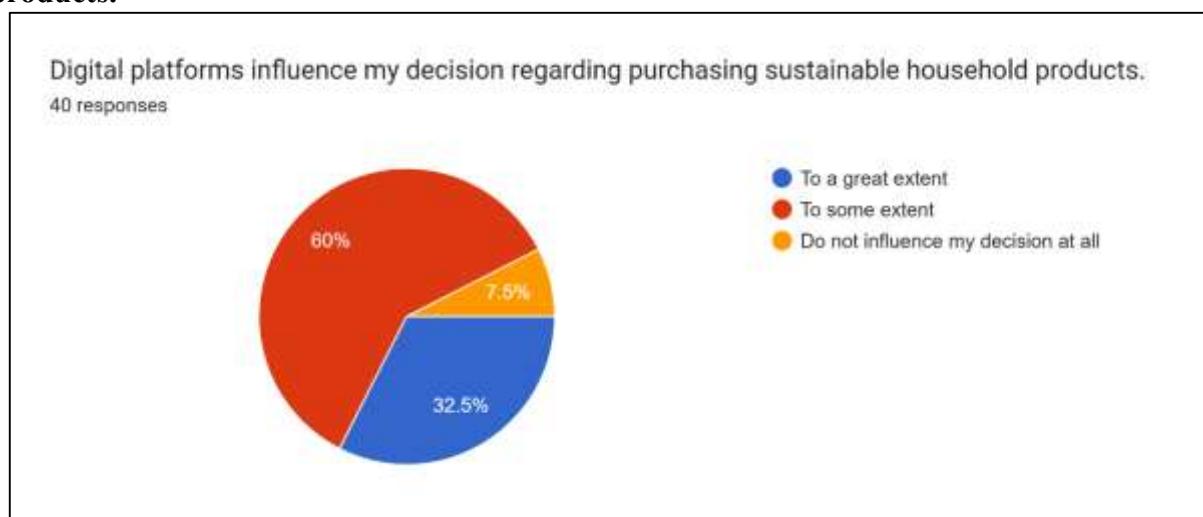
Q.13 Do you take any step in promoting the consumption of sustainable products either through social media or through word-of-mouth?



Interpretation:

32.5% of the respondents are highly motivated towards spreading the awareness of sustainable household products & hence are actively involved in promoting the consumption of sustainable products through social media or through word-of-mouth. A significant number of respondents accounting to 52.5% of the respondents promote the consumption of sustainable household products by either posting on social media or by giving suggestions to others regarding the use of sustainable products. 15% of the respondents are not environmentally conscious & therefore do not take any efforts either through digital platforms or by mouth publicity for promoting the consumption of sustainable household products.

Q.14 Digital platforms influence my decision regarding purchasing sustainable household products.



Interpretation:

Digital platforms greatly influence the decisions of 32.5% of the respondents regarding purchasing sustainable household products. 60% respondents are somewhat influenced by the sustainability content displayed on the digital platforms while 7.5% of the respondents say that digital platforms do not influence their decision regarding purchasing sustainable household products.

FINDINGS:

1. Approximately equal distribution can be seen among male & female respondents under the study.
2. Major part of the study corresponds to the age group of 21 to 30 years.
3. Significant number of respondents belong to a relatively high-income bracket thereby earning a monthly income above Rs. 50,000.
4. Major number of respondents under the study belong to the category of Salaried Individuals.
5. Almost entire population under the study is aware about sustainable alternatives which are available for household products.
6. Sustainable household products are already used by 50% of the respondents covered under the study while 45% of them are not using sustainable household products currently but are planning to purchase them.
7. E-commerce websites such as Amazon, Flipkart, etc. play a very prominent role in spreading awareness about sustainable household products. All the respondents have been exposed to content related to sustainable household products through digital platforms.
8. 1/5th of the population under the study is such that once they come to know about any sustainable product through digital platforms they get highly influenced and they always show their willingness to purchase that product.
9. 57.5 % of the respondents under the study have moderate level of interest in searching for sustainable products on digital platforms while only 22.5 % of the respondents are extremely conscious towards environment and hence are always engaged in searching eco-friendly products on digital platforms.
10. Out of the total 40 respondents, 28 respondents sometimes come across advertisements or promotions related to sustainable household products on digital platforms indicating that such promotional content is common among majority of the population under the study.
11. 3/4th of the population under the study shows a strong positive attitude towards recommending sustainable household products to their friends and relatives.
12. The biggest challenge faced by more than half of the population under the study is the high cost which is involved while purchasing sustainable household products.
13. The product cost does not create any impact on 11 out of the total 40 respondents and hence these respondents are willing to purchase sustainable products even if they are expensive.
14. A significant portion accounting to 42.5 % of the respondents under the study show a strong interest in staying informed about trends in sustainable household products by using digital platforms.
15. 70 % of the population under the study have a strong positive attitude towards digital content which promotes sustainability practices, especially 'waste reduction through reuse'.

16. 17.5 % of the population under the study are always willing to promote sustainability in household products by suggesting the available sustainable alternatives to their known-ones thereby taking a step forward in promoting sustainable consumption of household products.
17. From the study it has been observed that 13 respondents out of the total 40 are very conscious about the environment and hence they are involved in promoting the consumption of sustainable household products through social media or by giving suggestions to others regarding using sustainable alternatives.
18. 13 respondents out of the total 40 respondents are highly influenced by the sustainability content that they watch on digital platforms and this has a significant impact on their purchase decisions regarding sustainable household products.

CONCLUSION:

The study highlights the growing importance of sustainable product consumption & implementation of sustainable practices in our day-to-day life. It also emphasises on the impact of digital platforms in promoting the consumption of sustainable household products. The respondents under the study are significantly active on digital platforms & are environmentally conscious. Many of the respondents are young salaried individuals.

A significant level of awareness can be seen towards the sustainable alternatives available in the market and major population under the study is already using or is planning to use sustainable household products in the near future. Cost of the sustainable products is a barrier for nearly half of the population under the study. Environmentally conscious consumers purchase the sustainable household products as well as recommend such products to their friends & relatives.

The content shown on digital platforms regarding reducing wastage by reusing the products forces the environmentally conscious individuals in implementing these practices. Thus, digital platforms not only help in generating awareness regarding sustainability but also act as a catalyst in positively changing the behaviour of the individuals towards implementing sustainability practices in their daily life.

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(Vishwanath, Impact of environmental awareness social media and efforts of government on consumer eco friendly behavior a study in Hyderabad city, 2017)

(Vidya, A Study of Consumer's Attitude Towards Eco Friendly FMCG Products With Reference To Chhattisgarh, 2024)

(T, A Study on awareness attitude and behaviour of Consumers towards Eco Friendly Products in Coimbatore City, 2018)

(Thejaswini, A study of consumers attitude towards eco friendly FMCG products with reference to Karnataka, 2017)

APPENDIX - QUESTIONNAIRE:

Part A: Demographic Factors

Q.1 Gender

- a) Male
- b) Female

Q.2 Age

- a) Below 20 years
- b) 21 to 30 years
- c) 31 to 40 years
- d) 41 to 50 years
- e) 51 to 60 years
- f) Above 61 years

Q.3 Monthly Income

- a) Less than Rs. 25,000
- b) Between Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 50,000
- c) Above Rs. 50,000

Q.4 Occupation

- a) Salaried
- b) Self-Employed (Entrepreneur or Professional)

- c) Homemaker
- d) Unemployed being a student
- e) Retired

Part B: Research Topic Specific

Q.1 Are you aware about sustainable alternatives which are available for household products? (E.g. Bamboo spoons instead of plastic spoons, paper and jute bags in place of plastic bags, etc.)

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Somewhat

Q.2 Are you currently using or planning to purchase sustainable household products wherever possible?

- a) I am currently using sustainable household products.
- b) I am not using sustainable household products but I will plan to purchase it.
- c) I am not interested in purchasing sustainable household products.

Q.3 From which of the following digital platforms do you come to know about sustainable household products?

- a) E-Commerce Websites (E.g Amazon, Flipkart, etc.)
- b) Internet/Wikipedia
- c) Instagram
- d) YouTube
- e) Facebook
- f) I have not seen any content on digital platforms regarding sustainable household products.
- g) Other: _____

Q.4 If you come to know about any sustainable product through any digital platform do you get influenced & motivated to purchase it?

- a) Always
- b) Sometimes
- c) Rarely
- d) Never

Q.5 Do you actively search for sustainable or eco-friendly household products on internet or social media?

- a) Always
- b) Sometimes
- c) Rarely
- d) Never

Q.6 How often do you come across advertisements or promotions related to sustainable household products on digital platforms?

- a) Always
- b) Sometimes
- c) Rarely
- d) Never

Q.7 Do you recommend sustainable household products to your friends and relatives?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Sometimes

Q.8 What challenges do you face while purchasing sustainable household products?

- a) Sustainable Products are expensive.
- b) Sustainable Products are not widely available or are many times "out-of-stock".
- c) Unable to trust the sustainability claim made for the product.
- d) Lack of awareness for sustainable products.
- e) Other: _____

Q.9 Are you willing to purchase sustainable products even if they are expensive?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Sometimes



Q.10 Are you willing to keep yourself updated regarding the newly introduced or upcoming trends with respect to sustainable household products by browsing on digital platforms?

- a) Yes, always
- b) Yes, sometimes
- c) No

Q.11 Sometimes digital platforms promote reducing waste by reusing the products.

If you come across such advertisement or content on digital platforms, do you try to implement it wherever possible?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Sometimes

Q.12 When you visit anyone's house, if you see any non-sustainable product being used, do you suggest them about the sustainable product alternative if you are aware about it?

- a) Always
- b) Sometimes
- c) Rarely
- d) Never

Q.13 Do you take any step in promoting the consumption of sustainable products either through social media or through word-of-mouth?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Sometimes

Q.14 Digital platforms influence my decision regarding purchasing sustainable household products.

- a) To a great extent
- b) To some extent
- c) Do not influence my decision at all

