

## Consumer's Attitude towards Purchasing Green Food

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### Abstract

Green marketing is a new trend which is now growing worldwide; and green food producing by green agriculture is the part of green marketing. This paper aims to analyze consumers' attitude toward green food in Bangladesh. A survey of 50 respondents was conducted in Dhaka city through a structured questionnaire. Then this study identified the factors of consumers' idea about green food, its perceived benefits, risks, consumers' willingness to buy green food etc. This paper also tries to identify how consumers evaluate this new concept of green food. The researchers want to know whether consumers of our country will buy green food or they will reject it if this type of product will be being available in our country and to what extent the price will be important in this case. The customers responded very positively towards the green marketing. Some implications and suggested actions are provided to the suppliers and producers, government, and consumers to develop the market of green food in Bangladesh.

**Keywords:** China Insurance Industry, Foreign Fund, Challenge.

### 1. Introduction

At present, the world is facing an environmental crisis which influences to change our action and living pattern to save the world. The destructive consumption process of human being is mainly responsible for environmental degradation. In order to meet the growing needs of food and save our environment from destruction the world is getting toward green food or green marketing for agricultural food system. Using too much chemical fertilizers and pesticides increases soil erosion which imbalances our environmental condition. Since the beginning of agriculture in many human societies seem to have perished as a result of overwhelming environmental problems caused by over-use and pollution of natural resources. For example, 4,000 years ago the early civilization of Mesopotamia may have collapsed because people over-irrigated their fields (making the soil excessively salty), while 1,000 years ago the Mayan civilization may have perished due to deforestation and soil erosion (McMichael, A.J.1993). So producing food by green agriculture is extremely important for the whole world as well as our country in safeguarding the planet for our future generation.

Now-a-days, green marketing is very popular in the world. Producing food by green agriculture is also one of the parts of green marketing. But it is totally a new concept in our country. In our country, local firms even multinationals do not practice green marketing. Most of the consumers of our country are also not acquainted with this term. Terms like- phosphates free, recyclable, refillable, ozone friendly, and environmentally friendly are some of the things which we consumers most often associate with green marketing. But green marketing is a much broader concept which can be applied to consumer goods, industrial goods, and even services. It will be better if a green marketing will be applied in producing agricultural food in our country.

Bangladesh is a riverine country which is very good for rapid agriculture. Our land is very much fertile, and the climate is suitable for producing various types of crops, vegetables and fruits. But now our farmers use chemical fertilizers and pesticides to a great extent which is harmful to our environment as well as human health. For example- according to The Daily Star, this year in the month of June, 14 children were dying in Dinajpur and Thakurgaon Zillas by eating pesticides mixed litchis (28 June, 2012, p. 1). Moreover, formalin is mixed with 80% of food item in our country which is a tremendous health hazard. To get rid of this situation, the best way is to produce green food or food produced by green agriculture in our country.

The success of producing green food will depend on whether consumers will accept the products or not. Uncertainties of marketing green food discourage farmers to produce green agriculture products. Consumers will be interested to buy those products if they find those cheap. In this case, our survey will help marketers to know the fact about green food whether those will get market or not and consumers will appreciate those positively or vise-versa.

### 2. Literature Review

Green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising. It is a new concept in Bangladesh. But the concept of

green marketing was first tracked in 1975 on “Ecological Marketing” which was the first workshop held by The American Marketing Association (AMA). It resulted in the publications of the first book on green marketing entitled “Ecological Marketing” (Henion and Kinner, 1976). In this book, ecological marketing was defined as: the study of the positive and negative aspects of marketing activities on pollution, energy depletion and non-energy resource depletion (Henion and Kinner, 1976).

Since then many literatures on this or similar topics emerged. Polonsky (1994) defines green marketing as: all activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchanges intended to satisfy human needs or wants, such that the satisfaction of these needs and wants occurs, with minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment.

Peattie (1995) defined green marketing as “The holistic management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying the requirements of customers and society, in a profitable and sustainable way”. He argued that green marketing should be differentiated from general social marketing.

From all of these definitions, it is seen that green marketing refers to the point of protecting environment during producing products. But the truth is to produce products will create more or less harm to the environment. For this reason, green marketing gives emphasize on the point that the production process should be less harmful to the environment rather than harmless to the environment.

Consumers are the main key factors who encourage firms to produce green products or more environmentally friendly products. Green consumer is the driving force behind the green marketing, and the target of the green marketing strategy (Peattie, 1992). Green consumer is linked with green consumption which involves consuming in an environmental friendly and sustainable way. Thus, *Green Consumer* can be defined as those who actively or voluntarily consume products that have minimal detrimental impact on the environment to satisfy their needs. (Ottman, 1993; Peattie, 2001).

Green marketing advocates the green consumption consciousness and encourages people to consume green products. The products those are manufactured through green technology and that caused no environmental hazards are considered green products. According to the Charter (1992), green product can be developed in several ways:

- Repair: repair components of a product to extend its life.
- Recondition: overhaul a product to extend its life.
- Re-manufacture: produce a new product based on an old one.
- Reuse: repeat usage of a product.
- Recycle: reprocess a product or convert it into raw material.
- Reduce: use fewer raw materials or reduce disposable waste (Prakash, 2002).

In recent years, a shift can be seen in western food industry and this shift has transformed their food industry from traditional food production process to green food production process. Green food is domestically certified and labeled to be safe from chemical contamination and whose production and processing use environmentally friendly processes with reduced use of synthetic inputs (Giovannucci, 2005). According to Giovannucci (2005), there are four environmental criteria need to be met for production of Green Food:

- The area should meet the highest grade of air standards.
- Heavy mineral residues are restricted in irrigation water and soil (tests for mercury, cadmium, arsenic, lead, chrome, etc.).
- Processing water must meet the National Drinking Water Standard.
- Chemical applications are restricted and regulated, and some of the most poisonous pesticides and herbicides are banned.

The implications of green marketing are very much important for our country. Our environment is degrading day by day by destructive activities practicing by human being. Our environment is polluting to a great extent, rivers are going to be demolished, trees are cut down, and the quantity of carbon-di-oxide is increasing in the atmosphere day by day. To save our environment and species from destruction, we need to practice green marketing. There is growing interest among the consumers all over the world regarding the protection of the environment. As resources are limited and human wants are unlimited, it is important for the marketers to utilize the resources efficiently without waste as well as to achieve the organization's objective. So green marketing is inevitable.

There are few published studies that estimate consumer willingness to purchase green food or food produced by green agriculture. Fan and Zeng (2011) investigated the factors which influence Chinese consumers to purchase green food and found six factors. Those are- Price, benefit for health, facilitate the purchase, brands' popularity, conducive to environmental protection and features of products in addition to the concept of green. The Green food

market is in the growing stage in Chinese market. But in our country it is in the emerging level. Only one or two superstores sell organic product which can be considered green marketing to some limited extent. So we did not find any kind of research in our country related to green marketing. Awan and Reza (2010) tried to find the factors which influence Swedish consumers to purchase green energy and found that the quality of the service of a firm and lower price are the main factors which influence on the consumers in making the decision. Mishra and Sharma (2010) wrote about green marketing in India in their article and stated the opportunities and challenges of green marketing. In India McDonalds has started to practice green marketing to some extent which encourages other firms to practice this as well as consumers.

### 3. Objective

Consumer's concern to food safety is increasing in our country day by day as they become more concerned about their health. Unhappily, our people do not know how to get rid of this situation. The aim of this research work is to investigate the consumer behavior towards green food and see how they take environmental and other factors into consideration when making choices on buying food products. Thus, the objectives of the study are-

- To understand the consumer behavior of purchasing green food or food produced by green agriculture.
- To identify the main factors that will influence consumers to purchase green food.
- To encourage farmers and marketers to produce green food or food produced by green agriculture.
- To recommend some action plan on the basis of findings.

### 4. Methodology

The nature of the study is basically descriptive based on quantitative information. Descriptive study requires a direct interview and massive exploration of secondary sources. Theoretical part of the article significantly used secondary sources such as review of scholarly journals and reading materials, while the quantitative findings and interpretations are depending on primary data.

#### 4.1 Sampling Design

This study focused the individuals as sampling elements, who are job holders, and therefore, can judge their satisfaction level from a product or service. The respondents were job holders and they are within the age of 20 to 45 years of Dhaka city in Bangladesh, and time was November 2012. Generally two types of method can be used as sampling technique, one is probability sampling and the other is non-probability sampling (Malhotra and Dash, 2011). We used non-probability sampling technique because we used the convenience sampling method. According to Bryman and Bell (2007) convenience sample is one that is conveniently available to the researcher with its good ease of use. This type of non-probability sampling technique has a drawback that it is not possible to generalize the results (Malhotra and Dash, 2011).

We choose to do a single cross sectional study (Malhotra, Dash, 2011). After that, we selected sample size of 50 people, and applied convenient sampling method. While in selecting respondents we emphasized on consumers' knowledge, awareness and experience in relation to purchase of agricultural products.

Considering the nature of the study, data were collected through a structured questionnaire using 5-point Likert scale where (strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, and strongly agree=5) to collect information about consumers' attitudes toward green food or food produced by green agriculture. But two questions we have used dichotomous question. A dichotomous question has only two response alternatives: yes or no, and so on (Malhotra, Dash, 2011). The questionnaire was designed in two parts. In part-I, to identify respondents' specific demographic criteria and in part-II- it includes 20 questions for evaluating their attitudes toward green food. The structured questionnaire consisted of fixed alternative questions. Respondents were given a number of alternative responses to choose from. After collecting the raw data, the next step was to input the data and analyze the findings. To analyze the data we used frequency distribution.

### 5. Analysis and Findings

The demographic profiles of respondents are both males (50%) and females (50%). As this is the single cross sectional study all of the respondents are in the age group of 20 to 45 Years, and all of them are job holders.

Green marketing is a new concept in our country. So it is important to know the level of peoples' awareness about green marketing. We found that 80% people heard the term of green marketing and 20% did not hear the term of green marketing. Besides, 100% people said that they are aware of the term of environment friendly product.

Consumers' ideas about green food indicate that consumers may have some perception about green food that will encourage or discourage them to purchase green food or food produced by green agriculture. Here, 16% respondents strongly agreed and 66% respondents agreed with that to produce environment friendly product is similar to the term of green marketing. On the other hand, 12% respondents were neutral, and 6% respondents were disagreeing with this statement.

However, 66% respondents strongly agree and 34% respondents agree that they are not satisfied with chemical mixed agricultural products. So people want to bring change in the process of present agricultural food production. In this case, green marketing can bring change in the production process of our agricultural products, and the majority of the respondents agreed with that change.

It is very important to know those factors which are considered by consumers before purchasing agricultural products. In this research, 46% respondents strongly agreed and 54% respondents agreed that they consider the health and nutrition value of agricultural food. Before purchasing agricultural products, 14% respondents strongly agree, 50% respondents agree that they consider the product is environment friendly and 36% respondents are neutral about it. An interesting thing is 12% people strongly agree, 72% people agree that they also consider the factor of purchasing conveniences of agricultural food and 16% people are neutral.

Perceived benefits mean customers would like to reduce uncertainty and try to obtain the accurate and good quality product. So when consumers think that they will get some perceived benefits from green food then they will be influenced to purchase those. 50% respondents strongly agree and 50% respondents agree that green foods are good for health. 68% respondents strongly agree and 32% respondents agree that those are good for the environment. In case of preventing diseases and increase immunity, 32% people strongly agree, 54% people agree with this statement and 14% are neutral with it. 24% respondents strongly agree and 48% respondents agree that those are good to taste, and 28% respondents are neutral with it.

Consumers' willingness to buy green food is depending on the perceived risk associated with the purchasing function. Some researchers (Grewal et al., 1994; Rice, 1997) assert that perceived risk varies person to person and the perception of risk is considered differently by each customer. About 16% people strongly agree and 58% people agree that green food will be expensive. On the other hand, 14% people disagree that green food will be expensive and 12% are neutral. Green food can be harmful for health-18% people strongly disagree and 38% people disagree with this.

About 44% respondents strongly agree and 46% respondents agree that they are interested to buy green food if these will be available in Bangladesh. Only 10% of respondents are neutral with this statement and none disagree to buy green food if these will be available in Bangladesh.

Deal evaluation refers to the extent to which the users judge products on various criteria (Moschis and Moore, 1979). Before purchasing, consumers try to understand the offer made by the marketer is good compared to product quality and monetary value. The result shows that 22% respondents strongly agree and 70% people agree that green food will be popular in our country. 8% people are neutral with it. 56% respondents strongly agree and 44% people agree that they think that green marketing will give us better products. Green marketing will be an excellent idea for our country-40% people strongly agree and 50% people agree with this statement. Only 10% people are neutral with it.

The findings of the research show that Idea about green food has a higher mean score of 4.19 than that of average mean score of 3.94. This indicates that consumers have a good idea about green food or food produced by green agriculture. At present, consumers are not satisfied with the chemical mixed agricultural food, and most of them believe that green marketing can bring change in the production process of our agricultural products. All the factors of consumers' idea of green food have got high mean values which indicate that green food can create better impact on our market.

The second one, considered factors to buy the agricultural product have got the mean of 3.96. It is very important for us to know that which factors are given priority by consumers to purchase agricultural products. In this case, all of the consumers consider that the food is good for health or not. But the agricultural food which we are offering now is not very much healthy. Then consumers consider the purchase conveniences. At present, consumers also consider the factors to what extend the product is environmentally friendly. The price of agricultural products is also considered by the consumers. But among these four factors consumers give the most value to the nutritional value of food.

Factor three is perceived benefits has the highest mean score 4.46 than that of average mean score 3.94. All of the variables in that factor rated the higher mean value. It means consumers think that the perceived benefits of green food have lots of. Consumers think that green food is very much healthy and this aspect they consider to purchase

agricultural food. This contributes to higher mean. Consumers think this food is good for the environment, prevent diseases and increase immunity and good to taste. This shows consumers have a positive attitude to green food.

The fourth factor is perceived risk has the lowest mean score 2.35 than the overall mean score 3.94. All of the variables in that factor rated the lower mean value. It means consumers think that the perceived risks of green food have not so much. This also shows that consumers have a positive attitude to green food. Consumers think that green food may be expensive to some extent. They think that this food is not harmful for health at all.

The fifth factor is consumers' willingness to buy green food which is very much important. Here, the mean is 4.34 which is higher than the overall mean score 3.94. This indicates that consumers are very much interested to buy green food if these will be available in Bangladesh.

The final factor is deal evaluation has the higher mean score of 4.33 than that of average mean score 3.94. This implied that they were satisfied with the deal evaluation of purchasing green food. Consumers think that green food will be popular and an excellent idea for our country. Consumers also think that green marketing will give us better products.

## 6. Recommendations

After the analysis of survey result, here we can conclude that the majority of Bangladeshi consumers supports green food or food produced by the process of green agriculture. Moreover, our survey results show that consumers are willing to pay extra for the green food if this will be good for health. So we should move forward to develop the market of green food in our country. In this case, suppliers and farmers of agricultural food, our government, and consumers can create better impact. Here, we are giving some suggestions to suppliers and farmers of agricultural food, our government and consumers develop green food or food produced by green agriculture in our country.

### Suppliers and Farmers of Agriculture Food

- ✓ Suppliers and farmers are the main agents who can increase the speed to develop the market of green food in Bangladesh.
- ✓ Super shops like- Agora, Mina bazaar, Nandan can start the trend to sell green food in our country.
- ✓ These super shops can make dealing with farmers that farmers will be paid in advance for producing green food by using natural fertilizers and without using chemical pesticides.
- ✓ These super shops can pay a little bit pricier to farmers to encourage them to produce green food.
- ✓ Super shops can also use the selling of green food as competitive advantages which will be benefited from them.
- ✓ If super shops start this trend, then consumers will be encouraged to buy green food and based on our survey results, we can claim that consumers will not mind to pay extra for green food.
- ✓ If suppliers start to buy food produced by green agriculture then farmers will produce more green food to make more profit.

Thus the market of green food can be developed in our country which will be beneficial to our consumers as well as suppliers and producers.

### Government

- Can encourage farmers and suppliers to produce food by using green agriculture method.
- Can subsidize farmers to produce green food.
- Can encourage consumers to buy green food.
- Can show educative drama in TV channels which will encourage farmers to produce green food as well as encourage consumers to consume green food.

Thus the government can remove the formalin mixed food problem form our country to a great extent.

### Consumers

- Can create pressure to the suppliers and producers to start selling green food.
- Can show interest by suggesting the super shops to sell green food.
- Can pressurize the government to convince the farmers to produce food by using green agriculture method.

## Conclusion

In our research, we find that many consumers are aware of environmental issues and they feel their concern about the environment. According to Pickett B., J (2008) consumer would like to buy those products which are environmentally friendly. Consumers need awareness about the clear benefits of the products and from our research

we can see that our consumers understand the benefits of green food very well. Our consumers perceived that green food will be more expensive than traditional food. But they are willing to buy this food if this will be available in Bangladesh. In our country, agriculture is the major sector which provides maximum crops for our population. If we can produce our food by using green agriculture then it will be beneficial for us. Now-a-days, our country faces a great problem which is selling formalin and chemical mixed food. If the market of green food can be developed here then this problem can be reduced to a great extent. Our people can get rid of many diseases. So our government and suppliers like-super shops should focus on this idea. Thus the market of green food can be developed in our country.

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Table 1. Sample Profile

Consumer's Demographic Variables		% of respondents
Age	20 to 45 Years	100%
Occupation	All are job holders people	100%
Gender	Male	50%
	Female	50%
Income level (Monthly)	Below 25000 BDT	28%
	26000 to 35000 BDT	40%
	36000 to 45000 BDT	26%
	Above 45000 BDT	6%

Table 2. Consumers' Awareness of Green Marketing

Factors influence consumers to purchase green food		% of responses in dichotomous questions	
		Yes	No
1	I heard the term of green marketing	80%	20%
2	I aware of the term of environment friendly product	100%	0%

Table 3. Consumer' S Idea About Green Food/Food Produced From Green Agriculture

Factors influence consumers to purchase green food		% of responses in 5-point Likert scale					Mean
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
3	I agree with that to produce environment friendly product is similar to the term of green marketing	16%	66%	12%	6%	0%	3.92
4	I think if we produce our agricultural products more environmentally friendly then it is called green marketing or food produced from green agriculture	28%	48%	20%	4%	0%	4.00
5	I am not satisfied with chemical mixed agricultural products which are offered now	66%	34%	0%	0%	0%	4.66
6	I believe that green marketing can bring change in the production process of our agricultural products	32%	52%	16%	0%	0%	4.16

Table 4. Considered Factors to Buy Agricultural Product

Factors influence consumers to purchase green food		% of responses in 5-point Likert scale					Mean
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
7	I consider health and nutrition value of agricultural food	46%	54%	0%	0%	0%	4.46
8	I consider that the product is environmentally friendly	14%	50%	36%	0%	0%	3.78
9	I consider the price of agricultural product	4%	68%	22%	0%	6%	3.64
10	I consider purchasing conveniences of agricultural food	12%	72%	16%	0%	0%	3.96

Table 5. Consumer's Perceived benefits

Factors influence consumers to purchase green food		% of responses in 5-point Likert scale					Mean
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
11	Those are good for health	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	5.00
12	Those are good for the environment	68%	32%	0%	0%	0%	4.68
13	Those prevent diseases and increase immunity	32%	54%	14%	0%	0%	4.18
14	Those are good to taste	24%	48%	28%	0%	0%	3.96

Table 6. Consumer's Perceived Risk

Factors influence consumers to purchase green food		% of responses in 5-point Likert scale					Mean
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
15	I think that green food will be expensive	16%	58%	12%	14%	0%	3.76
16	I think that green food can be harmful for health	0%	0%	0%	38%	18%	0.94

Table 7. Consumers' Willingness to Buy Green Food

Factors influence consumers to purchase green food		% of responses in 5-point Likert scale					Mean
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
17	I am interested to buy green food if these will be available in Bangladesh	44%	46%	10%	0%	0%	4.34



Table 8. Consumer's Deal Evaluation

Factors influence consumers to purchase green food		% of responses in 5-point Likert scale					Mean
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
18	I think that green food will be popular in our country	22%	70%	8%	0%	0%	4.14
19	If you think that green marketing will give us better products	56%	44%	0%	0%	0%	4.56
20	I think that green marketing will be an excellent idea for our country	40%	50%	10%	0%	0%	4.30

Table 9. Overall Mean of the Six Factors

Factors	Overall mean value
Idea about green food	4.19
Considered factors to buy agricultural product	3.96
Perceived benefits	4.46
Perceived risk	2.35
Willingness to buy green food	4.34
Deal evaluation	4.33
<b>Average Mean Value</b>	<b>3.94</b>

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