PROMOTING SCP IN SRI LANKA THROUGH FACILITATING ACCESSIBILITY TO INFORMATION

One Planet Network Consumer Information Programme for Sustainable Consumption and Production (CI-SCP)

Consumer Awareness Survey on Sustainable Consumption – 2018: Sri Lanka

Survey Report: Findings and Annexures

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The One Planet Network is the network of the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production.

Contents

1. Introduction

In line with the proposed programme for "Promoting SCP in Sri Lanka through facilitating accessibility to information"[1] under the One Planet Network[2], a consumer survey was designed and the objectives of the survey are in two (02) folds: First, to identify the awareness and education level of Sri Lankan consumers on sustainability issues, their ability and willingness to use environmental information in decision making. Second, to identify the sustainability concerns of Sri Lankan consumers towards food products (in terms of health, safety, quality and etc.).

Recognizing the role of consumers in realizing sustainability, there is clearly a growing concern on sustainable consumption all over the world, and it stresses the importance of involvement of individuals both at private and public sphere to improve the commitment for sustainability. Sustainable consumption practices first became popular particularly in developed countries during the last few decades and, now gradually becoming imbedded among the communities in developing countries as well.

Over the last two decades, a number of initiatives have been introduced in Sri Lanka predominantly to educate the business organizations on sustainability and, as a result, there is a significant improvement in managing business operations now to align with clean production practices. However, the consumer segment is still an overlooked aspect in Sri Lanka as far as its active participation in promoting sustainable consumption practices are concerned. Although a couple of amendments to laws pertaining to environment protection have been implemented recently, together with some awareness programmes on the role of consumers in realizing sustainability, there is still a long way to go if the commitment of the Sri Lankan consumer needs to be improved on that. However, there is a dearth of studies in

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[1] This project seeks to improve sustainability in the agri-food sector in Sri Lanka through improving access to information. This includes developing LCI databases for the scientific basis and reliability of information, and subsequently establishing a green product certification scheme for the dairy sector in Sri Lanka. Further, the project researches consumer interest in the country and raises awareness on sustainability issues.
http://www.scpclearinghouse.org/initiative/promoting-sustainable-consumption-and-production-scp-sri-lanka-through-facilitating

[2] The One Planet Network is network of the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, which is an outcome of the Rio+20 Conference and the implementation of which is target 12.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals. The project is funded through the One Planet Network's Trust Fund and contributes to its Consumer Information Programme.

the Sri Lankan context on the sustainability awareness among the consumers, which consequently disarrange any new initiatives or programmes aiming at educating consumers. In order to design any further awareness programmes and/or activities, the prevailing Sri Lankan context should be explored and studied carefully. This survey intended to address the above information gap. The focus of the survey was mainly on assessing the consumer attitudes towards environment protection, willingness to consider sustainability concerns at the purchase and usage stages of consumption.

The survey was designed and coordinated by an external consultant under the close supervision of the officials at NCPC|SL and in consultation with representatives of the One Planet Network's Consumer Information Programme, based at UN Environment and Consumers International.

2. Details of the consumer survey

Representing five (05) main districts of Sri Lanka, a sample of four hundred and twenty three (423) individuals was interviewed. Figure 1 below shows the geographical locations of each district that was considered for the survey.

Figure 1

Map of the five districts in survey

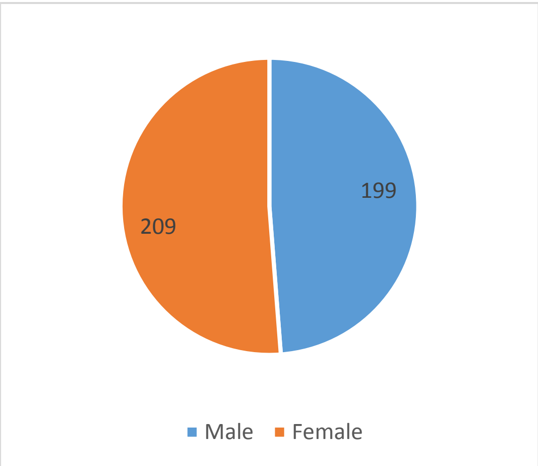
Further, a set of nine (09) enumerators who were initially trained on the data collection procedures was deployed in collecting data for the survey, and a structured questionnaire was administered during the period of 18^{th} January 2018 and 28th January 2018 (the questionnaire is attached as the Annexure 01). Based on one-to-one interviews conducted in the field, one questionnaire was completed for each individual of the sample. The sample which was initially selected randomly was later mapped with a widely used socio-economic classification (SEC) in Sri Lanka and, it was observed that the four main categories (ranked as A,B,C,D categories according the classification) are well represented in the sample selected. After removing incomplete and non-usable questionnaires at the initial screening, opinions of a total of four hundred and eight (408) respondents have been considered in the final survey and, survey findings are based the SPSS data set that comprises of responses of the above respondents. The sample profile is further described in the next section.

3. Sample profile

Considering the stratification requirements in order to get a representative sample for the survey, information such as gender, age, education level and the occupation of the respondent has also been collected and Figure 2, 3, 4 and 5 below respectively illustrates the gender composition, age composition, education levels and occupations of the individuals in the sample. Figure 6 illustrates the district wise representation of the sample.

Figure 2

Gender composition



The total of 408 individuals in the sample comprises of 209 male respondents and 199 female respondents.

Majority of respondents belongs to the age category of 36-50 that is 34.3%, which is followed by 50-65 category and 25-35 category. However, the remaining two other categories also represent in the sample.

Figure 3

Age composition

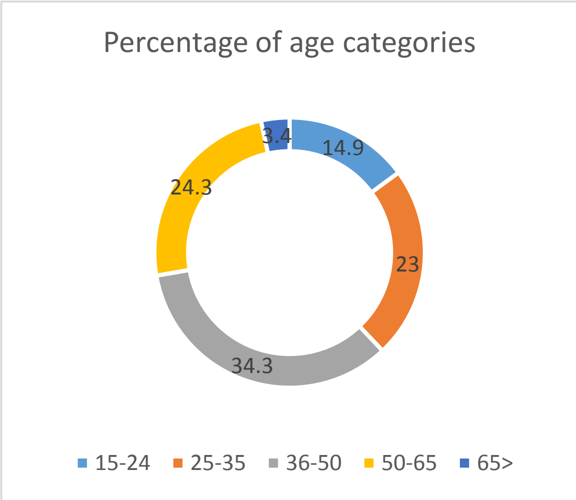
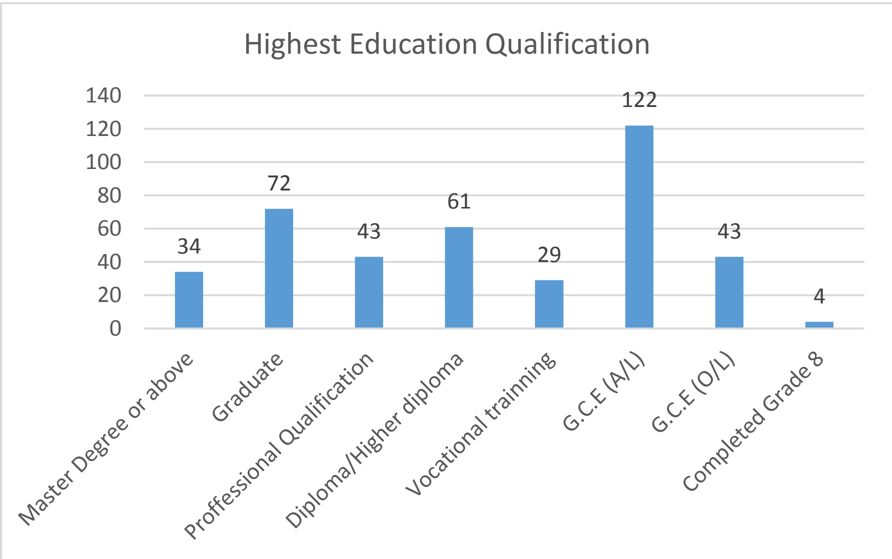


Figure 4

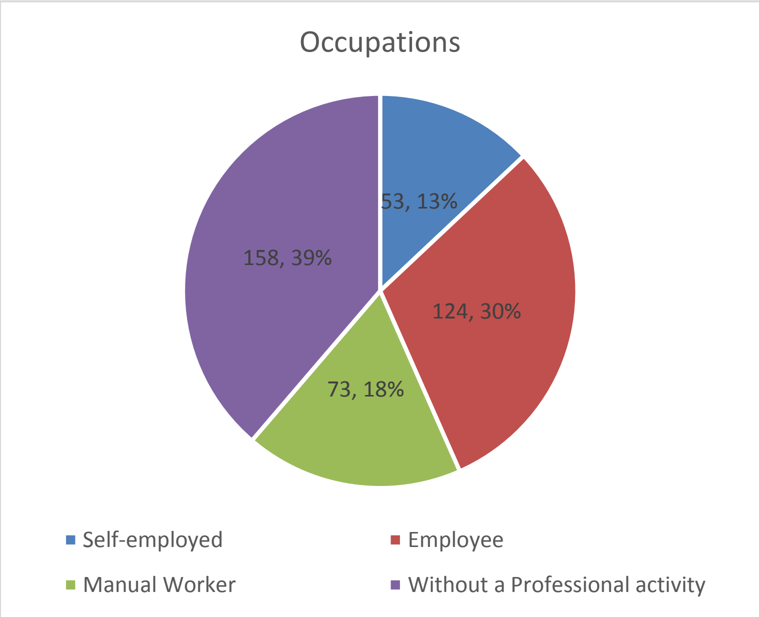
Education levels



When considered the highest education qualifications, majority of the sample belongs to the G.C.E. (A/L) category, which is followed by graduate category and Diploma/Higher Diploma category.

Figure 5

Occupations

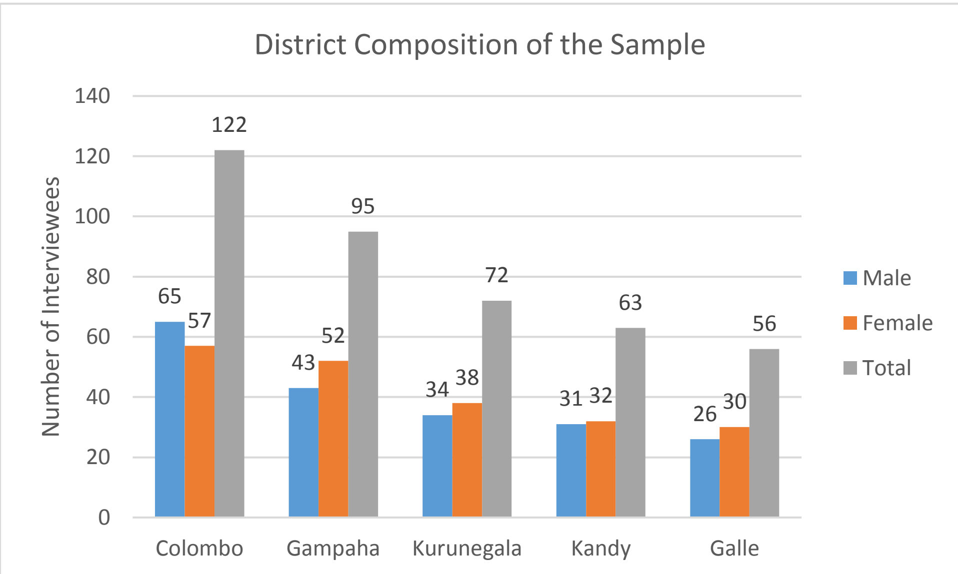


Housewives and full-time students come under the category of 'Without a professional activity' that accounts for 39% and that is followed by 'Employee category' 30%.

In order to determine the SEC category of respondents, education level and average income of occupations were used as information on individual's actual income was not collected.

Figure 6

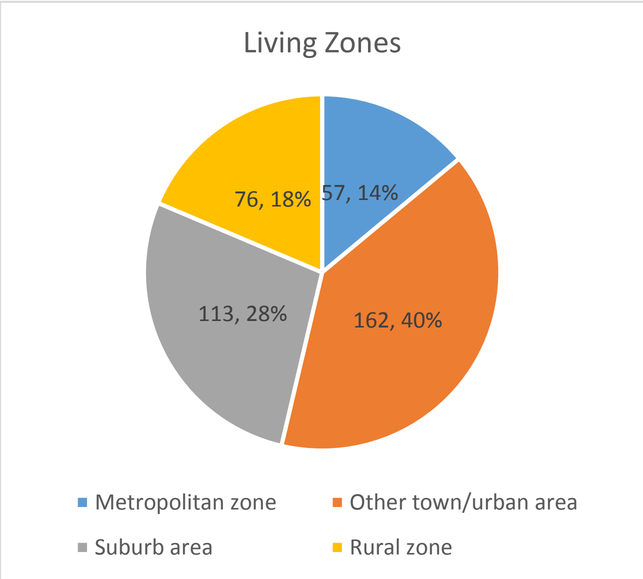
District Composition



Colombo is the commercial hub of Sri Lanka and other four (04) cities are also now known for improved living conditions and upgraded lifestyles of consumers. However, the Figure 7 below demonstrates the distribution of the sample when considering the sub-regions with a district. This was assessed using a question in the questionnaire (Q27).

Figure 7

Living Area Composition



Accordingly, 40% of the sample perceives that they live in urban areas and another 28% in suburb areas. However, only 18% represents rural zones which is the largest section in terms of the land area covered in Sri Lanka. Like in any other developing country, facilities for upgraded commercial activities are available and sophisticated life styles are clearly evident mainly in Metropolitan and Urban areas.

4. Main Findings of the Survey

- The term 'green'/ 'sustainable'/ 'environmentally friendly' product is known by the majority (selected 60% of people) of Sri Lankans, whereas the term 'green'/ 'sustainable' consumption is familiar to a relatively small number of people (only 40% of people).
- In general, Sri Lankan consumers possess favourable opinions towards environment protection, and they acknowledge the role of individuals in protecting the environment.
- Particularly, 99% of people realizes that consumption creates impacts on environment and for 98% of people, protecting the environment is personally important.
- Sri Lankans comprehend that purchasing responsibly is an individual responsibility (91% of people) and selecting 'green'/ 'environmentally friendly' products instead of normal products is a responsibility of consumers also (79% of people).
- However, they (majourity) do not agree (52% of people) with the opinion that buying 'green'/ 'sustainable' products would fulfil the individual responsibility to protect environment.
- They also possess mixed feelings whether individual environmental responsibility is over by purchasing green products (52%) or not (48%).
- Notably, 94% of people asserts that consumers are responsible for careful use and disposal of products.
- According to the opinion of the people, Sri Lankans now tend to buy more green products (Mean value 2.87)[3] than before.

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[3] a Likert scale was used after removing the neutral point in the answer and the scale was as follows; Strongly agree 4, Agree 3, Not agree 2 and Strongly not agree 1

- Sri Lankans recognize minimize resource wastage (94%) and using energy efficient products (90.2%) as main constituents of 'green consumption'.
- Relatively a significant number (48% of people) knows little about the environmental impacts of the products that they buy and consume, and 35% of people know about the significantly important impacts of the product only.
- 'Price of the product' is the main determinant of the purchase decision (Mean value 3.78) of the Sri Lankan consumers and that is followed by 'product quality' (Mean value 3.56).
- When compared across product categories, Sri Lankan consumers consider the environmental impacts of electronic products (Mean value 3.05) and food products (Mean value 2.87) as important.
- Media news/programs (Mean 3.32) and family members (3.20) serve as the most influential environmental information providers. However, friends (3.03) and social media (3.02) as information sources are also emerging in Sri Lanka.
- A large majority of consumers purchase products by themselves for themselves (62%) and they buy predominantly by physically visiting outlets (95% people).
- A higher proportion of consumers (32.1% of people)tend to buy 'green'/ 'sustainable' products when those products are available in the market and if the prices of the products are reasonable. However, another considerable size of the market (37.5% of people) consist of consumers who do not know what they buy are green products or not.
- Only 1 of 5 is ready to buy green products even at a higher price and a considerable number (42% of people) is not sure of that while another 34% of consumers are not ready to buy green at a higher price.
- Safety and health aspect of 'green' product, better quality and low maintenance cost are the three main factors encouraging green purchases.
- Majority of the consumers (57% of people) are not sure of the idea that going green needs sacrifices.

- Lack of information (Mean 3.21) and high prices of green products (2.95) are the main factors that discourage consumers buying ‘green’/ ‘sustainable’ products.
- A majority of the people (54.2%) would consider change for green if business organizations emphasized more on their green credentials.
- On average, 3 of 10 individuals are familiar with the term ‘ecolabel’ and for a slim majority (55.6%), ecolabel does not play an important role in making purchase decisions.
- ‘Certification from an authorized government/third party institution’ (Mean 3.84), ‘Details about the ingredients/materials’ (3.81) and ‘Energy rating of the product’ (3.31) are the key environmental information requirements that consumers would look for in ecolabels.
- A large majority of Sri Lankan consumers (around 70%) tend to trust producer’s self-claims on their ‘green performance’.
- As suggestions to government on sustainability agenda, working on enhancing the consumer awareness on ‘green’/ ‘sustainable’ consumption (84% of respondents), and providing financial incentives to promote ‘sustainable’ production and consumption (76.5% of respondents) have been rated at the top.

5. Details of the findings

Key findings are described under seven (07) different sub-headings as follows.

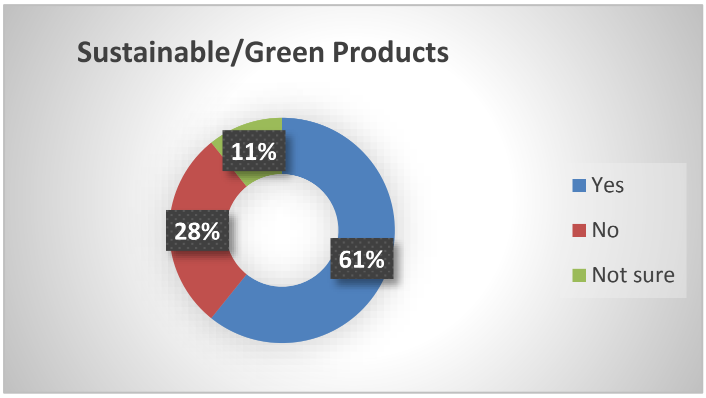
5.1 Consumer awareness on sustainable consumption

5.1.1 Awareness about the term(s)

Findings from the survey show that 61% of the people are familiar with the term 'sustainable'/ 'green' products and only 40% have heard the term 'sustainable'/ 'green' consumption. Figure 8 and 9 illustrates the survey findings.

Figure 8

'Sustainable'/ 'Green' products



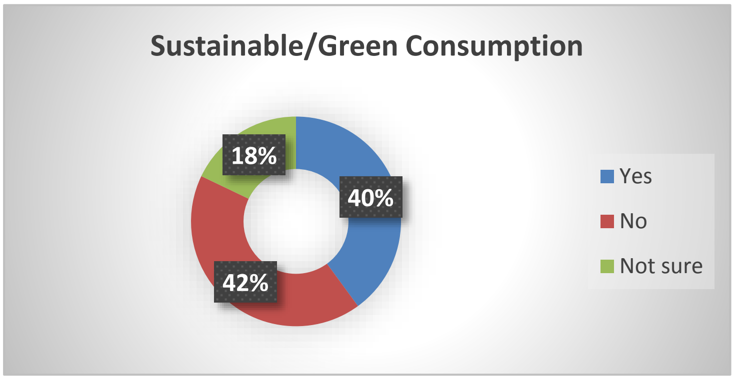
Q. A. Have you heard the term 'sustainable products/ green products' before?
Source: Survey results, All respondents

Initially, when asked individually whether they have heard the term 'sustainable'/ 'green' products, a higher percentage of interviewees (61%) have responded for 'Yes'. The total percentage reported for both 'No' and 'Not sure' is 39%.

Those who belonging to the age category of 36-50 was the majority (48%) in the 'Yes' category and, 96% of people who have studied 'environmental education' as a subject was familiar with the term 'green product'. However, around 42% of G.C.E. (A/L) qualified individuals are not familiar with the term.

Figure 9

‘Sustainable’/ ‘Green’ consumption



Notably, a lower percentage (40%) is reported for the answer ‘Yes’ and around 60% of respondents either not sure or have not heard the term. ‘sustainable consumption’/ ‘green consumption’.

QB. Have you heard the term ‘sustainable consumption/ green consumption’ before?
Source: Survey results, All respondents

Again, individuals belonging to the 36-50 age category (36%) comprise mainly in the ‘Yes’ category, which is followed by people from the age category of 50-65 (24%). The response of either ‘No’ or ‘Not sure’ has been reported from a total of 245 individuals of which the male percentage is 44% and the remaining 56 percentage comprises of females.

5.1.2 Opinion on impacts of consumption on the environment

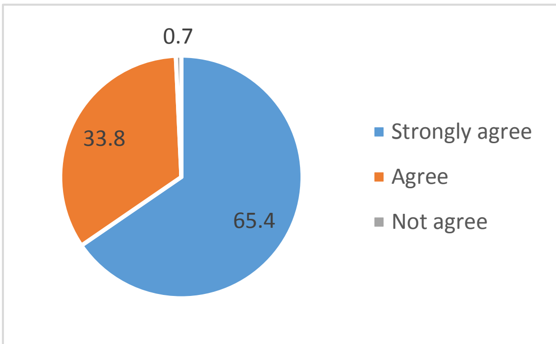
Table 1 and Figure 10 summarises the responses.

Table 1

Impacts of consumption on environment

Response	Total Responses	%
Strongly Agree	267	65.4
Agree	138	33.8
Not Agree	03	0.7

Figure 10



Q1.2 I believe that my consumption activities (i.e. purchase and use of food, clothing, housing and etc.) have an impact on the environment
Source: Survey results, All respondents

Irrespective of the geographical areas covered in the survey, 65.4% of respondents strongly agree that individual/personal consumption create environmental impacts while another 33.8% of respondents have basically agreed on that. This shows a significantly higher level of consumer understanding about the possible impacts of their consumption activities on environment as together both responses accounts for 99%. There were no responses reported for 'strongly disagree' and only a negligible percentage (0.7%) is reported for 'Not agree'.

5.1.3 Opinion on individual responsibility to protect the environment

When asked whether they think individual persons are responsible to protect the environment, a significantly high proportion (93%) of Sri Lankan consumers either generally agree (55.4%) or strongly agree (38%) that they hold an individual responsibility also to protect environment in general. Table 2 and Figure 11 shows the responses.

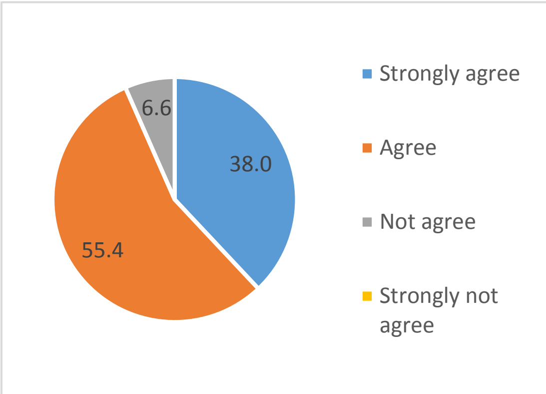
Table 2

Individual responsibility to protect environment

Response	Total Responses	%
Strongly Agree	**155**	**38.0**
Agree	**226**	**55.4**
Not Agree	**27**	**6.6**
Strongly not agree	**00**	**0.0**

Q1.1 I think as an individual person I am responsible to protect the environment
Source: Survey results, All respondents

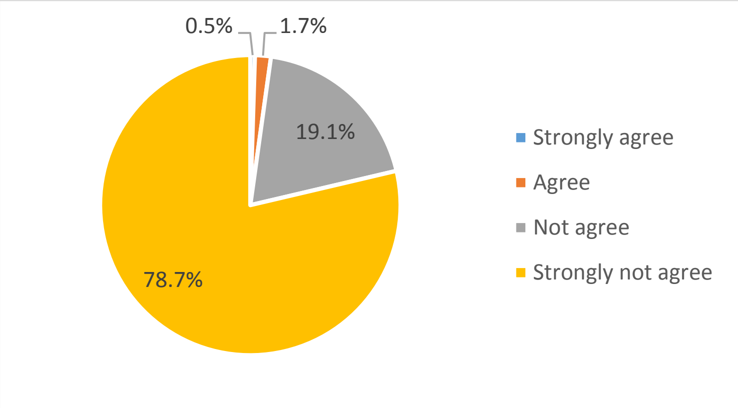
Figure 11



When asked negatively, 79% of Sri Lankan consumers strongly disagreed that protecting the environment is not important to them personally. Figure 12 illustrates the summery responses.

Figure 11

Importance of protecting the environment



For a well majority of people (98%), protecting the environment is personally important.

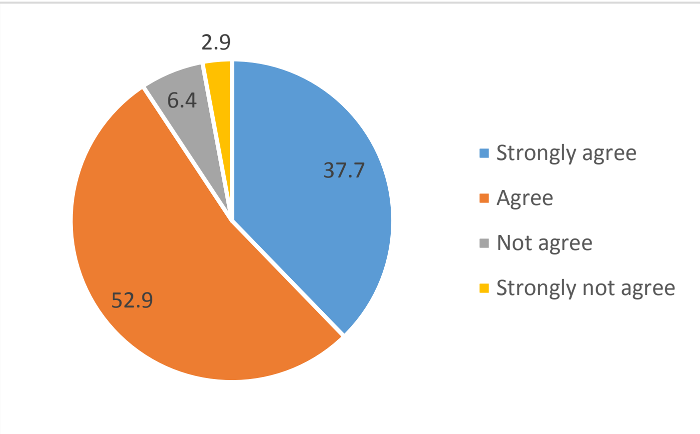
Q1.4 Protecting the environment is **Not** important to me personally
Source: Survey results, All respondents

5.1.4 Opinion on purchasing products and responsibility to protect the environment

General opinion on individual consumer responsibility to protect the environment and perceived possibility to fulfil it through their purchasing behaviour was examined at three levels using three questions.

Figure 12

Product purchase and individual environmental responsibility



Initially, when they were asked whether they think that purchase of some products could be more harmful than others, 38% consumers strongly agreed and another 53% generally agreed. However, a total of around 10% either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

Q 1.4 Individuals should be careful when purchasing products, because purchase of certain products possibly have more harmful impacts on the environment
Source: Survey results, All respondents

Further, consumer opinion on 'green'/ 'sustainable' product purchase and its ability to fulfil individual responsibility was assessed in Q1.6 and Q1.7 of the questionnaire. Table 3 summarizes the survey findings.

Table 3

Purchase of 'green'/ 'sustainable' product and individual environmental responsibility

Statement	Strongly Agree %	Agree%	Not agree%	SNA%
I believe that considering sustainable/green products instead of selecting usual products is a responsibility of the consumers also	**6.1**	**73.0**	**19.1**	**1.7**
I believe that I can fulfil my responsibility towards protecting the environment by purchasing products which are known as sustainable/green products	**9.1**	**38.2**	**52.0**	**0.7**

Source: Survey results, All respondents

As shown in the Table 3 above, 79% of Sri Lankan consumers believe that individuals also hold the responsibility to select environmentally friendly produ.3. -+
cts instead of usual products. However, 1 of 5 individuals (i.e. around 20%) do not agree with that in general.

Further, the majority (around 53%) of Sri Lankans disagreed that individual responsibility towards protecting the environment can be fulfilled by purchasing 'green'/ 'sustainable' product, while the remaining percentage generally agreed on that.

5.1.5 Opinion on usage and disposal stage and individual responsibility to protect the environment

This was assessed using Q1.8 and Q1.9 of the questionnaire summery values are presented in Table 4.

Accordingly, it shows that people possess a divided opinion that individual responsibility is not over (around 46%) after purchasing a 'green' or 'sustainable' products instead of normal products, and remaining 54% of people think the way opposite.

Table 4

Post-purchase stages and individual environmental responsibility

Statement	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Not agree%	SNA%
I think consumers' responsibility on protecting the environment is over when purchasing green products instead of purchasing a normal product	**9.8**	**42.6**	**34.3**	**13.2**
I further think that individuals should be careful when using and disposing products, because the environmental impact of the product could be significant at the usage and disposal stages also	**27.5**	**67.1**	**3.4**	**1.8**

Source: Survey results, All respondents

However, when asked individuals' responsibility at the usage and disposal stages of product consumption 67% generally agreed that consumers should be careful about products' impacts on environment and another 27% strongly agreed on that. A small percentage (around 5%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

5.1.6 Opinion on Sri Lankan consumers and their concerns towards environment

General opinion about the Sri Lankan consumers and their concerns towards environment was measured using Q1.5, Q1.10, Q1.11 and Q1.12 and a Likert scale was used after removing the neutral point in the answer. This was done purposely to create an opportunity for respondents to be precise on their answers because, Sri Lankans usually tend the select middle point answers in general. Mean value for each statement is calculated and shown in the Table 5 below.

When examining the mean values, Sri Lankans think in general that consumers are still not adequately conscious (2.23) about environmental impacts of products when purchasing them. Further, they do not agree (1.97) with the view that Sri Lankan consumers are careful about reducing the environmental impacts of products that they purchased when people use and dispose them.

Table 5

Post-purchase stages and individual environmental responsibility

Statement	Mean Value
I think that Sri Lankan consumers are willing and motivated to take actions on environmental issues	2.33
In general, Sri Lankan consumers are now more conscious about environmental impacts of products when purchasing them	2.23
I think that Sri Lankan consumers now purchase more 'green'/ 'sustainable' products than before	2.87
Sri Lankan consumers are careful about reducing the environmental impacts of products that they purchased when they use and dispose them	1.97

Key: Strongly agree.................. 4
Agree ……................................ 3
Not agree 2
Strongly not agree…................ 1

Source: Survey results, All respondents

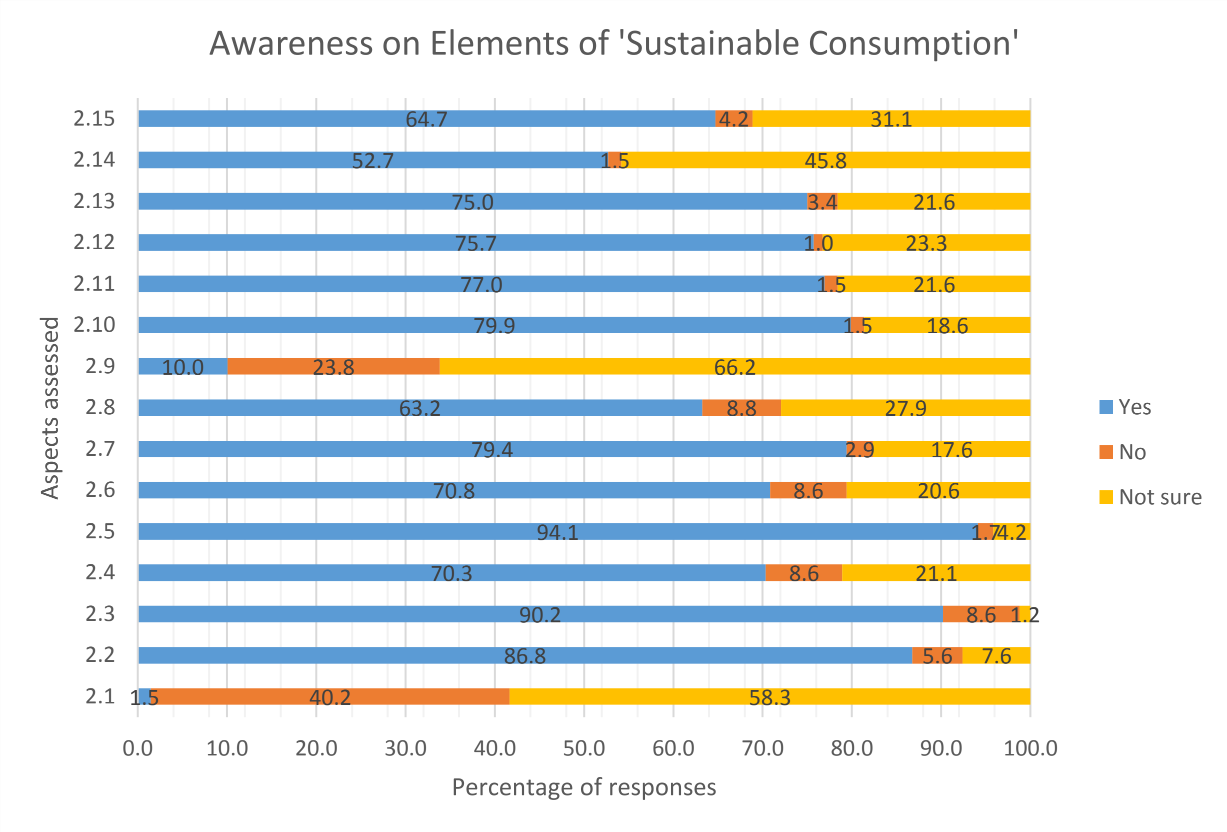
However, the mean value 2.87 indicates that they hold (agree) the opinion that Sri Lankan consumers now tend to purchase more 'green'/ 'sustainable' products than before. And also, a mild positivity (2.33 – as 2.5 could be technically considered as the point of separation) towards the opinion that Sri Lankan consumers are willing and motivated to take actions on environmental issues. However, this could be due to the common characteristics of the members selected to the sample of the survey.

5.1.7 The Meaning of 'Sustainable Consumption' to Sri Lankans

With the purpose of assessing what constitutes in sustainable consumption according the peoples' prevailing level of awareness, certain selected aspects of sustainable consumption concept were listed and respondents were asked to select one answer out of 'Yes', 'No' and 'Not sure' that represents their opinion. (See the Q2 of the questionnaire). This question was asked from the interviewees before describing them the any formal definition or description about the concept of 'geen'/ 'sustainable' consumption. Figure 13 illustrates the percentages of each answer for ach constitutes.

Figure 13

Consumer awareness on different constituents of 'sustainable consumption'



Q2. From 2.1 to 2.15
Source: Survey results, All respondents

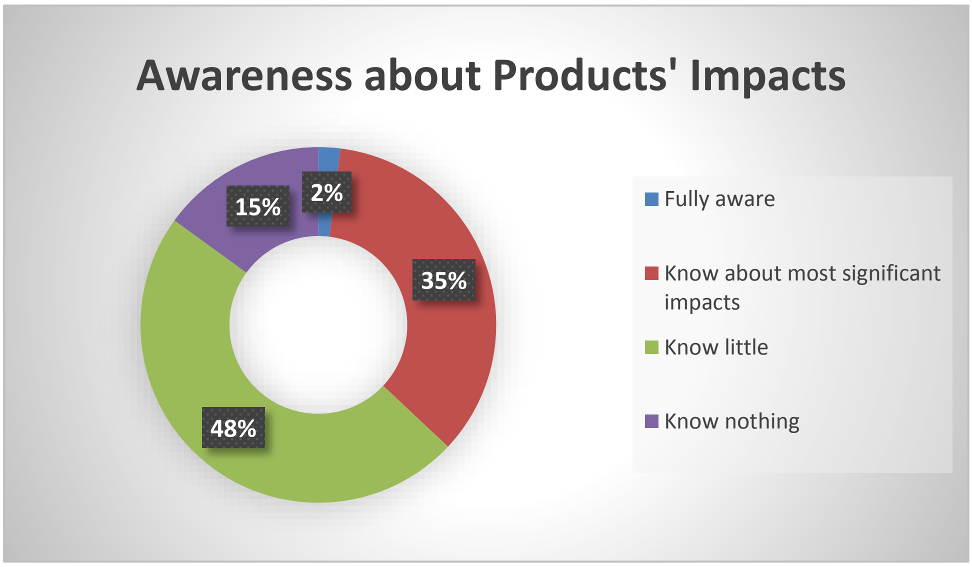
According to the percentage values shown in Figure 13, minimize resource wastage, buy energy efficient products and buy 'green' products have been rated 'Yes' by majority of the people. While many of the other constitutes of the concept listed in the question, except for 2.1 and 2.9, have been identified as parts of 'sustainable consumption', 'purposely reducing the consumption' element (2.14) has reported 'No' at a percentage of 46. Buying from local manufactures and restricting to fulfil only the basic human needs have been received 66% 'No' and 58% 'No', respectively.

5.1.8 Awareness about the products' impact on environment

When asked to what extent individuals are aware of the environmental impacts of the products that they purchase and use, only a 35% have selected that they know about the possible significant impacts of the products and nearly a half (48%) of the people has stated that they know a little about the impacts. Notably, there is 2% of peoples that they are certain on the environmental impacts of the products that they buy and use. Figure 14 illustrates the findings.

Figure 13

Consumer awareness on products impacts on environment



Q3. In general, how much do you know about the environmental impact of the products you buy/ use?
Source: Survey results, All respondents

5.1.8.a Socio-demographic considerations

Out of the respondents those who had claimed that they know about most significant impacts of products on environment, majority was the male respondents (62%). And, 28% of total females had stated that they know little about the environmental impacts while the male percentage for that category was 20%. Further, 76% of people who had studied a subject on environmental education had claimed that they know about most significant impacts while all who had claimed that they are fully aware about product impacts have had environment education. When comparing the education level, living area and consumer awareness on products' impacts it was revealed that majority of educated people (graduate and above) know about products' environmental impacts, and comparatively higher percentage of people living in metropolitan and urban areas had stated that they know about most significant impacts of products on environment.

5.2 Factors considering at the purchase stage

For a set of four factors (given in the Table 6 below) listed in the Q4, respondents were asked to rate the importance of each factor separately, when buying a product. According to the calculated mean values shown in the Table 6, price of the products scored the highest value (3.78). Thus, it represents the most significant factor for Sri Lankan people in general when buying a product. Then, the quality of the product and brand name of the product have also been received higher mean values (i.e. 3.56 and 3.33 respectively). However, product's impact on the environment has scored the least mean value (2.37) and accordingly it remains as the least important factor compared to other three at the point of purchase.

Table 6

Factors considering at the purchase stage

Factor	Mean Value
The product's impact on the environment	2.37
The price of the product	3.78
The quality of the product	3.56
The brand name of the product	3.33

Key: Very important.................. 4
Somewhat important …….......... 3
Rather not important................... 2
Not at all important ….................. 1

Source: Survey results, All respondents

5.2.a Socio-demographic considerations

Except for a slight variation in the mean values, the priority reported for each of the above factors remained same for all five districts considered in the survey. However, significantly higher mean values (2.81, 2.73 and 2.67) are reported for the product's impacts on the environment respectively from the Middle manager category, Self-employed professional category and Office clerk category. Further, those who have had environmental education also consider the product's impact on environment as the least important factor (Mean 2.62) at the stage of purchasing whereas price, quality and brand name remain at the top.

5.3 Importance of environmental impacts across product categories

With the purpose of studying whether consumers consider the significance of environmental impacts of products across different industries differently, five (05) selected products categories were tested. (See Q5 of the questionnaire). Mean values calculated for each product category based on the responses are shown in the Table 7.

According to the mean values, people consider the environmental impacts of the electronic products (3.05) and food (2.87) products as important. However, in the construction industry, the importance of environmental impacts prevails at a lower level (2.44) in Sri Lanka. Further, a significantly low value is reported for both clothing products category (1.98) and toys product category (1.96).

Table 6

Importance of product impacts across different industries

Product category	Mean Value
Food	2.87
Clothing	1.98
Electronics	3.05
Toys	1.96
Construction	2.44

Key: Very important.................. 4
Somewhat important …….......... 3
Rather not important................... 2
Not at all important …................. 1

Source: Survey results, All respondents

5.3.a Socio-demographic considerations

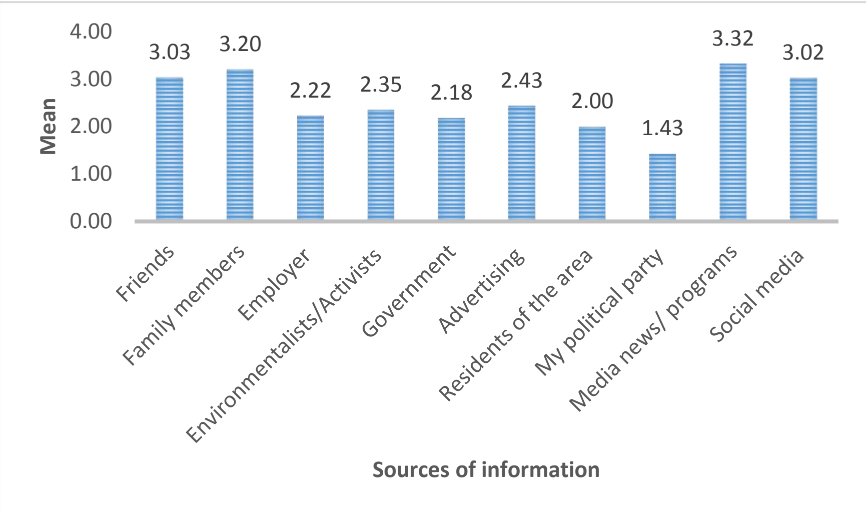
Mean values of the electronics product category varied slightly from district to district as follows: Kandy 3.41, Colombo 3.34, Gampaha 3.03, Galle 3.02 and Kurunegala 2.98. On average, males (Mean 2.98) have rated the impacts of food category as important higher than females (2.64). However, a higher mean value (combined average mean value 3.08) is reported for the construction category from the people living in metropolitan zones and urban areas.

5.4 Sources of environmental information

When asked how much influential each information source listed in the question is as far as its ability to comprehend respondents with the environmental information and issues are concerned, people have responded in the following manner. Findings are illustrated in the Figure 14.

Figure 14

Sources of environmental information



Key: Very important..... 4
Somewhat important...... 3
Rather not important...... 2
Not at all important 1

Source: Survey results, All respondents

Accordingly, Media news and programme (3.32) is the main source of environmental information which is closely followed by the family members (3.2) as an information source in Sri Lanka. Friends (3.03) and social media (3.02) are also influential sources of information. Among a few other less influential information sources, the political party that they vote for is rated as least influential source of information.

5.4.a Socio-demographic considerations

Across the age categories the mean value of media news and programmes was slightly varied. However, that was reported as the most important source of environmental information for all the respondents in different age categories. However, friends and social media (Mean values respectively 3.57, 3.32) have become the second and third most important information sources for respondents in the age category of 25-35, whereas family members raked at the fourth place (Mean 2.81) for them. Housewives and the manual workers were the most likely to select family as the main information source.

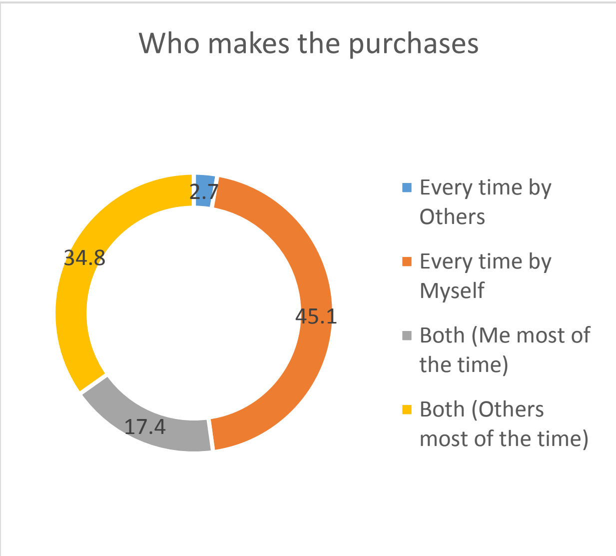
5.5 Purchase behaviour of Sri Lankan consumers

5.5.1 General Purchase Behaviour

Together with the readiness to purchase green products, the general purchasing patterns were also considered in the survey. This section starts with the survey findings for 'who makes the purchase' (Q7) and 'method of purchasing' (Q9), and then presents survey findings on readiness to buy 'green'/ 'sustainable' products.

Figure 15

Who makes the purchases?



The percentage values depicted in the Figure 15 shows that 45% of people purchases for themselves and another 17.4% of people adopts the option of both (but me most of the time). Around 35% of people stated that they belong to the category that adopt 'both but by others mostly' and there is 2.7% of people to whom purchase are done by others only.

Q7. When considering your purchases, which of the following statement is more applicable to you
Source: Survey results, All respondents

Table 7 depicts the percentage values calculated for each method of purchasing used by Sri Lankan consumers.

Table 7

Mode of purchase

	Percentage
Only physically visiting outlets	**54.17**
Only through online	**0.00**
Both but mostly physical visits	**41.42**
Both but mostly through online	**0.98**
Other methods	**3.43**

Q7. Which of the followings applicable to you mostly when you buying products
Source: Survey results, All respondents

Accordingly, nearly 95% of peoples buy products through visiting outlets physically while 54% buy products only through visiting outlets. Nearly 1% of people have stated that they buy through online. When inquired some other methods such as buying from travelling vendors and ordering through telephone and getting products delivered to the door step could also be noted as other purchasing methods.

5.5.2 Green Purchase Behaviour

One of the main areas that lacks the information in the Sri Lankan context was the degree of readiness to buy green products among the consumers. With the aim of generating information regarding this area a total of four questions was asked from the respondents. Each question focuses on different levels of green purchase behaviour. Figure 16, 17, 18 and 19 depicts the survey findings.

As shown in Figure 16, 37.5% of respondents have stated that they do not know what they usually buy are green or other products. Another 32.1% responded that they buy products considered as 'green'/ 'sustainable' products when those are available and if the process of those products are reasonable. Compared to other countries in the South Asian region, this percentage is relatively a higher value. More importantly, it is revealed in the survey that around 9% of people are ready to buy green products even at a relatively high price. 1 of 5 (21%) stated that they buy green products rarely. Another, 1.5% of peoples never wanted to buy green products.

Figure 16

Purchase of green products

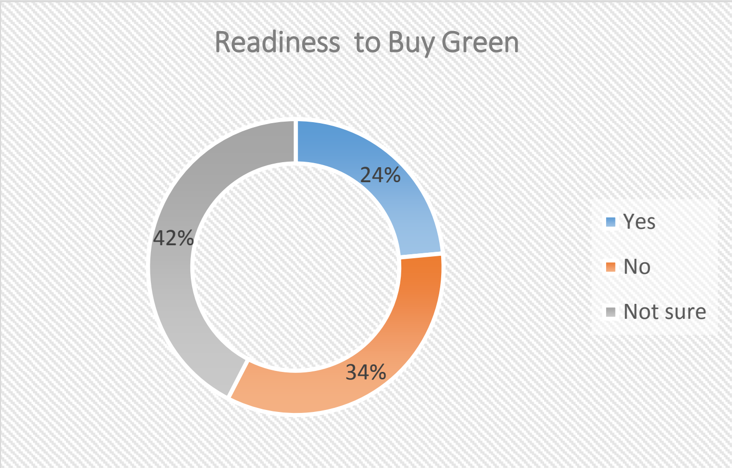
Q7. When considering purchasing "green"/"sustainable" products, which of the following statement is more applicable to you
Source: Survey results, All respondents

5.5.2.a Socio-demographic considerations

The category of respondents who had stated that they buy green products when those products are available and even if the price is high was mainly comprised of females (24 respondents) living in metropolitan and urban areas. Majority of Colombo (48 respondents) and Gampaha (30 respondents) districts' respondents had stated that they buy green products when those products are available and if the prices are reasonable. 52 respondents from the 35-50 age category and 46 respondents from the 50-65 age category were the most likely to select the answer that they actually don't know what they buy is green products or other products.

Figure 17

Readiness to buy 'green'/ 'sustainable' products



When asked straight, 24% of people have stated that they are ready to buy green products even if the product price is relatively a little high (Q10) and Figure 17 summarizes the findings. While 42% is 'Not sure', 34% stated 'No'.

Q10. I am ready to buy "green"/ "environmental friendly"/ "sustainable" products even if they cost a little bit more
Source: Survey results, All respondents

5.5.2.b Socio-demographic considerations

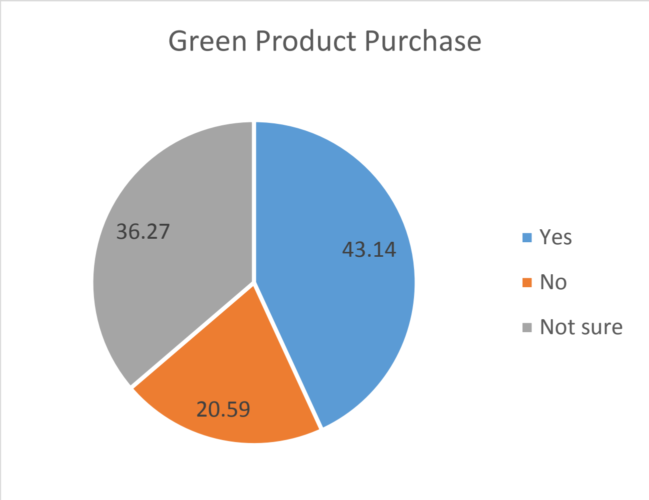
Out of the 24% of respondents who had answered for the Yes, the majority was females (57 respondents). 32 respondents from the age category of 35-50, 31 respondents from the age category of 50-65 and 26 respondents from the age category of 25-35 had stated that they are ready to buy green products even if the price of those products are a little high.

However, when they were asked whether they could remember any incident during the recent past (last one year) that they have actually purchase any type of 'green'/ 'sustainable' product (Q11) answers were as follows. Figure 18 depicts the results.

Accordingly, 43% of responded have stated that they remembered any type of environmentally friendly product purchased during the recent past and around 21% people have stated 'No'. However, another 36% is 'Not sure' about their situation.

Figure 18

Purchase of 'green'/ 'sustainable' products during the recent past

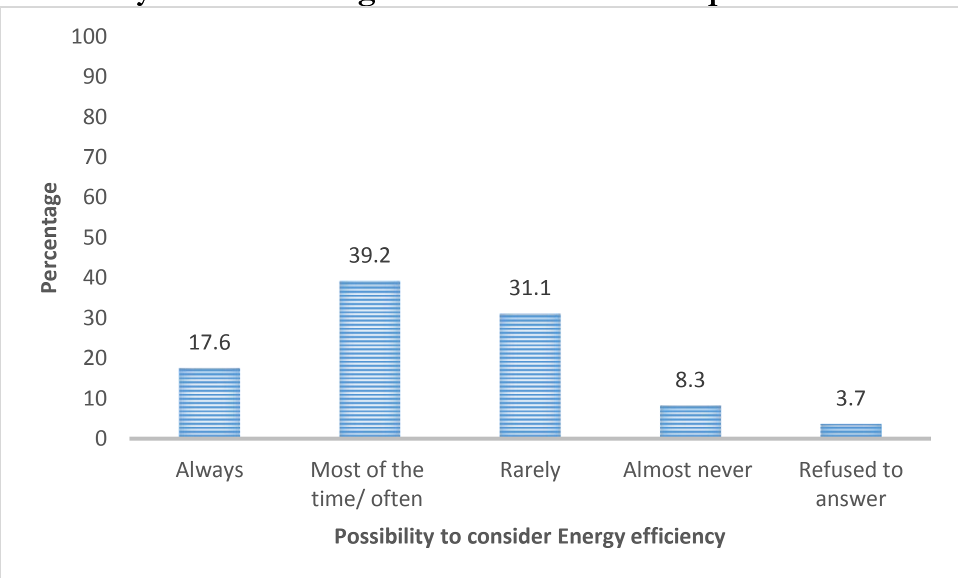


Q11. Have you purchased any "green"/ "environmental friendly"/ "sustainable" product during the period of last one year?
Source: Survey results, All respondents

Figure 19 illustrates the summery of responses received when they were asked whether they would consider energy efficiency as a determinant factor in their future purchases.

Figure 19

Possibility to consider a green concern in future purchases



Q13. When buying products that use electricity (like TVs, bulbs or refrigerators) or fuel (cars, machinery), do you take into account how energy efficient they are?
Source: Survey results, All respondents

Percentage values shown in the Figure 19 reveals that 39.2% would most of the time consider 'energy efficiency' as a factor and another 17.6% would always consider it as a factor in their future purchases. Together, these two categories account for 57% of the consumers. However, around 31% would rarely consider energy efficiency of the product.

5.5.2.c Socio-demographic considerations

Respondents from both gender seems (Females 50.8% and Males 49.1%) equally hold the opinion that they would mostly consider energy efficiency in their future purchases. Further, respondents who had completed higher education were the categories that had mainly selected the answers 'always' or 'most of the time'. In terms of the occupational groups, respondents from 'Middle manager category', 'Office clerks', 'Other employees', 'Housewives' and 'Students' had selected the answers 'always' or 'most of the time'.

5.5.3 Factors determining green product purchase

In order to identify the most influential factors that encourage Sri Lankan consumers to select 'green'/ 'sustainable' products, Q14 was included in the questionnaire. This was a ranking question where respondents were asked to select only the first three influential factors out of a list of factors given in the question. Table 8 below summarizes that how many times each factor has been rated as number 1, 2 and 3.

Values show that consumers have rated 'safety and health aspect of green products' as number 1 in one hundred forty six times, and as number 2 in one hundred eighty two times. Better quality (86 times as number 1 and 156 times as number 2), Low maintenance cost (26 times as number 1 and 103 times as number 2, and 168 times as number 3). However, benefit for the environment (34 times as number 1 and 92 times as number 2, and 144 times as number 3) is also considered as a factor encouraging 'green'/ 'sustainable' product purchase decisions.

Table 8

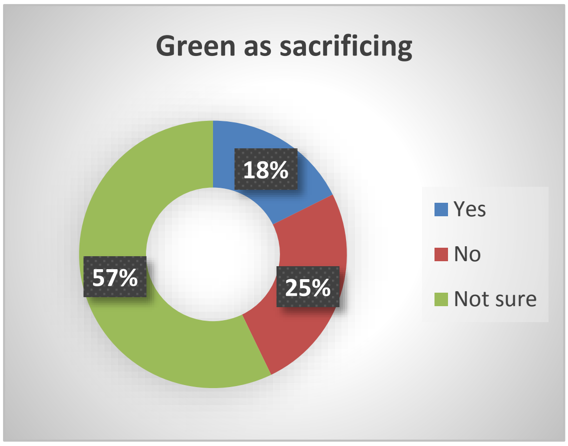
Factors determining green product purchase

Factor	Number of times		
	1st	2nd	3rd
Low initial cost	31	57	72
Better quality	86	156	54
Brand	21	86	145
Advertisement	-	-	23
I am a green consumer	3	18	14
Benefit for environment	34	92	144
Food safety and health	146	182	73
Celebrity endorsement	-	-	3
Price-off promotion	4	64	32
Low maintenance cost	26	103	168

Q14. Select the top most three (03) reasons applicable to you when you consider purchasing any "green"/ "environmental friendly"/ "sustainable" product
Source: Survey results, All respondents

Figure 20

'Green' as sacrificing

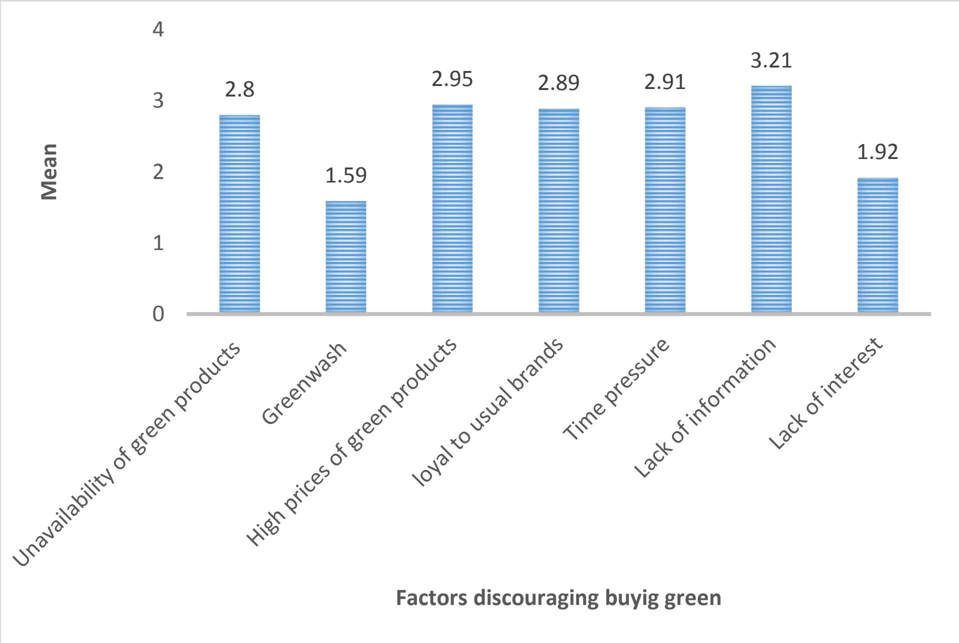


When consumers were asked whether they consider buying green as something refering to sacrificing, a well majority (57%) was not sure about that and 25% stated 'Yes'. However, another 18% holds the view that green refers to scarifying. Figure 20 shows the values.

Q15. Do you think that you have to sacrifice something (such as high price, low functionality or similar) most often to be green?
Source: Survey results, All respondents

Figure 21

Factors discouraging buying 'green'



Key:

Every time..... 4

Very often….3

Rarely………2

Never……….1

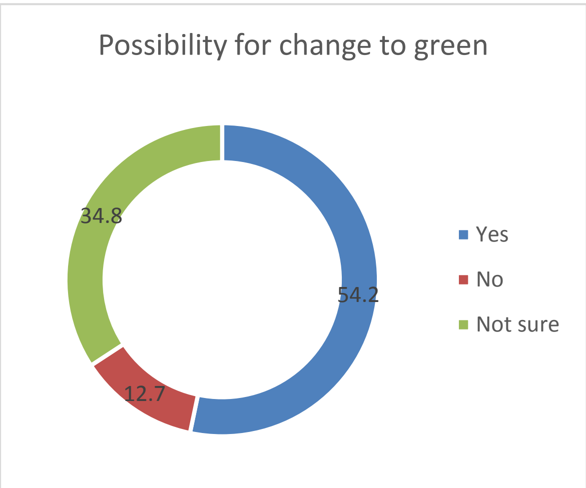
16. To what extent do the following factors discourage you from buying "green"/ "sustainable" products?

Source: Survey results, All respondents

Figure 21 above indicates that 'lack of information' (highest mean value, 3.21) about 'green'/ 'sustainable' products has been the key factor that prevent consumers from buying green products. Factors such as 'high prices of green products' and 'time pressure' (that have scored 2.95 and 2.95 mean values, respectively) are also key determinants, which are closely followed by 'loyalty towards existing brands' (2.89) and 'unavailability of green products' (2.8). However, lack of interest and green wash have scored low mean values.

Figure 22

Possibility for change to green



Percentage values shown in Figure 22 reveals that majority of the people (54.2%) would consider change for green if business organizations emphasized more on their green credentials.

Q17. Would you consider changing your purchasing habits if a company emphasized their green credentials in their advertising/ or in packaging?
Source: Survey results, All respondents

5.6 Ecolabels

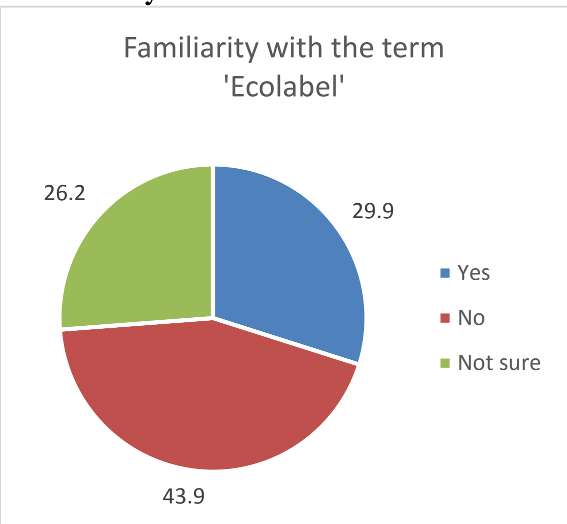
5.6.1 Awareness on 'Ecolabels'

Consumer awareness on ecolabels was assessed using Q18 and Q19 of the questionnaire. Figure 23 and Figure 24 depicts the results.

As shown in Figure 23, around 44% of people have not heard of the term 'ecolabels' and another 26% was 'not sure'. Only a percentage around 30% is familiar with the term before explaining them the meaning.

Figure 23

Familiarity with the term 'Ecolabel'



Q18. Have you heard of ecolables?
Source: Survey results, All respondents

5.6.1.a Socio-demographic considerations

Respondents from Kandy district reported the highest percentage (34.9%) for the familiarity with term 'Ecolable' which was closely followed by Colombo and Gampaha districts (32.9% and 30.5% respectively. The term 'Ecolable' seems familiar to the respondents in the age categories of 25-35 (36.2%) and 36-50 (34.3%) than the respondents among the other age categories. In terms of occupation categories, self-employed category (49.1) is familiar with the term 'Ecolable' and a significantly low level of familiarity was reported for the Manual worker category (52.1).

Table 9 below further illustrates the summery values for different demographic factors.

Table 9

Familiarity with the term 'Ecolabel' – by Segment

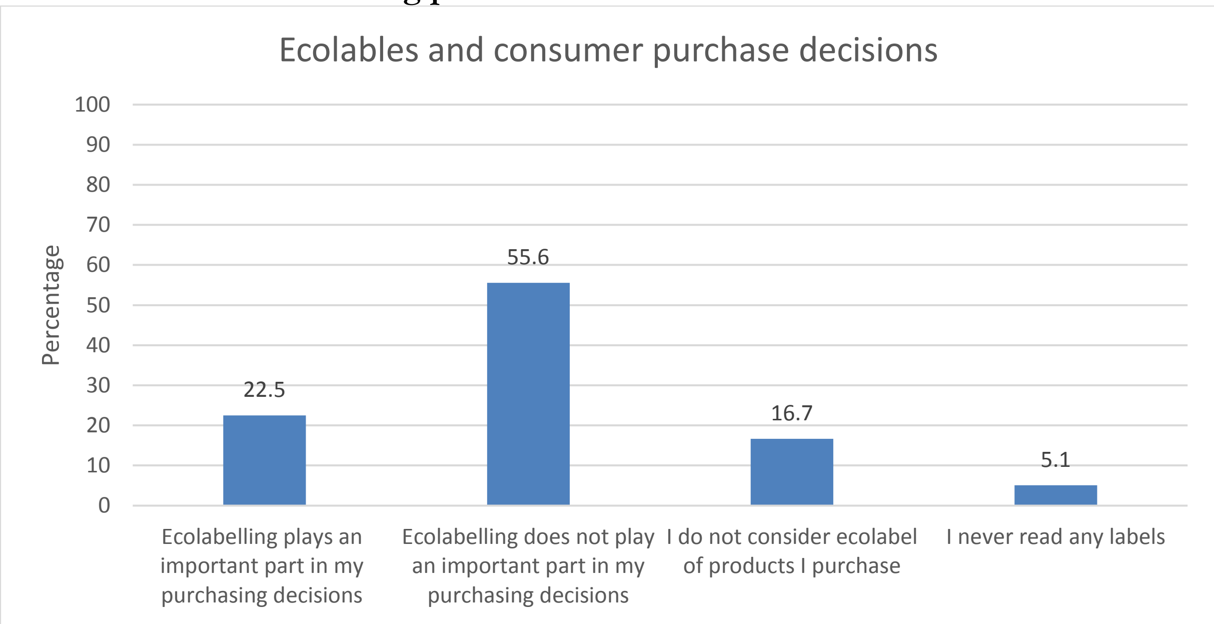
	Total N	Have you heard of 'ecolables'?		
		Yes %	No%	Not sure%
District				
Colombo	122	32.9	51.6	15.5
Gampaha	95	30.5	51.6	17.8
Kurunegala	72	25	31.9	43.1
Kandy	63	34.9	39.7	25.4
Galle	56	28.6	33.9	37.5
Gender				
Male	209	34.4	44.9	20.6
Female	199	25.1	42.7	32.2
Occupation				
Self-employed	53	49.1	39.6	11.3
Employee	124	25.8	45.2	29
Manual worker	73	21.9	52.1	26
Without a professional activity	158	30.4	40.5	29.1
Age				
15-24	61	18	52.4	29.6
25-35	94	36.2	29.8	34
36-50	140	34.3	48.6	17.1
50-65	99	26.3	45.5	28.2
65>	14	21.4	42.9	35.7
Environmental education				
Yes	114	57	15.8	27.2
No	232	12.5	68.9	18.6
Not sure	62	45.2	1.6	53.2

5.6.2 Use of 'Ecolabels' in making purchase decisions

According to the percentage values shown in the Figure 24, ecolabels does not play an important part in making purchase decisions for the majority (55.6%) of Sri Lankan consumers. However, there is still around 23% of people, whose purchase decisions are shaped by some sort of ecolabels.

Figure 24

Use of 'Ecolabels' in making purchase decisions



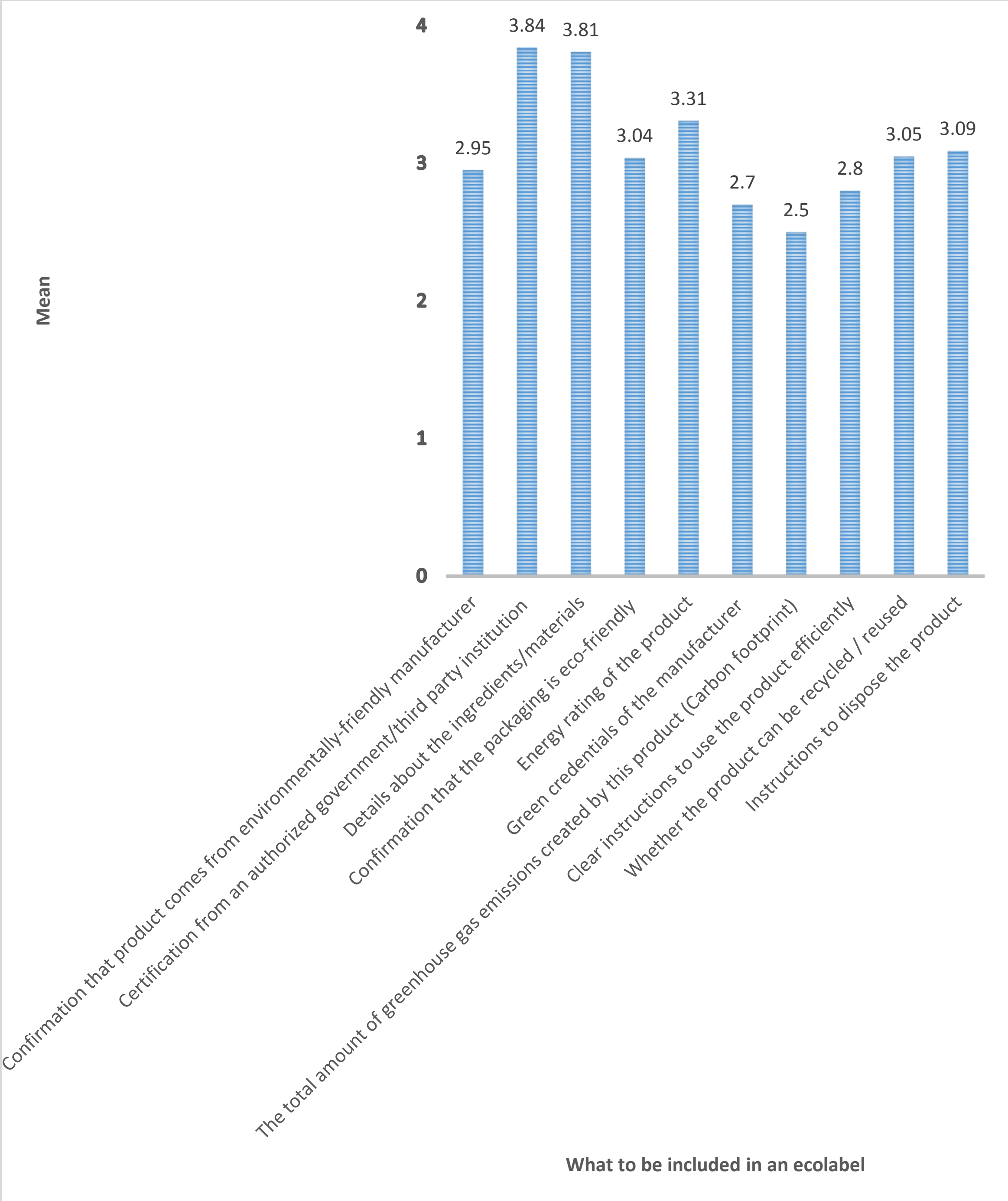
Q19. Some products have an ecolabel which certifies that they are environmentally-friendly. Which statement characterizes you the best?
Source: Survey results, All respondents

5.6.3 Consumers' green information requirements

With the purpose of identifying most sought information in ecolabels, Q20 was included into the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to select an answer from a Likert scale for each type of environmental information that was listed in the question. From the responses, a mean value was calculated later for each information requirement, which is depicted in the Figure 25 below.

Figure 25

Consumers' green information requirements



Key:
Very important 4
Somewhat important 3
Rather not important 2
Not at all important 1

Q20. From the items in the list below how important each environmental information is for you in an ecolabel?
Source: Survey results, All respondents

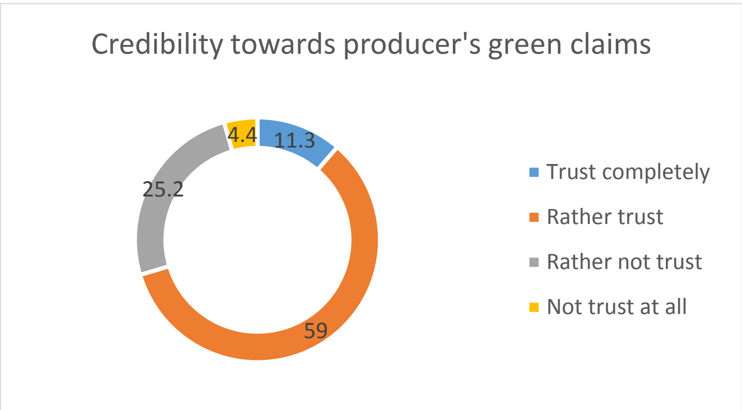
Out of the ten type of information, the highest mean value (3.84) is reported for 'Certification from an authorized government/third party institution' which is very closely followed by 'Details about the ingredients/materials' that has a mean value of 3.81. 'Energy rating of the product' (3.31) is also an important piece of information for the people. Notably, 'total emission of greenhouse gas' has scored the lowest mean value. The mean value 2.5 indicates that consumers would possibly consider that piece of information also in an ecolabel. Other types of environmental information are also reported mean values proximate to 3.

5.6.4 Consumer trust towards producer's green claims

When people were asked to reveal whether they trust producer's self-claims about their environmental performance (Q21), responses depicted in the Figure 26 below were received.

Figure 26

Credibility towards producer's green claims



Q21. How much do you trust producers' claims about the environmental performance of their own products?
Source: Survey results, All respondents

A total of 70% of people either completely trust or generally trust the producer's green claims when they are made by themselves. However, 1 of 4 (around 25%) rather do not trust self-claims where as another 4.4 do not trust self-claims at all.

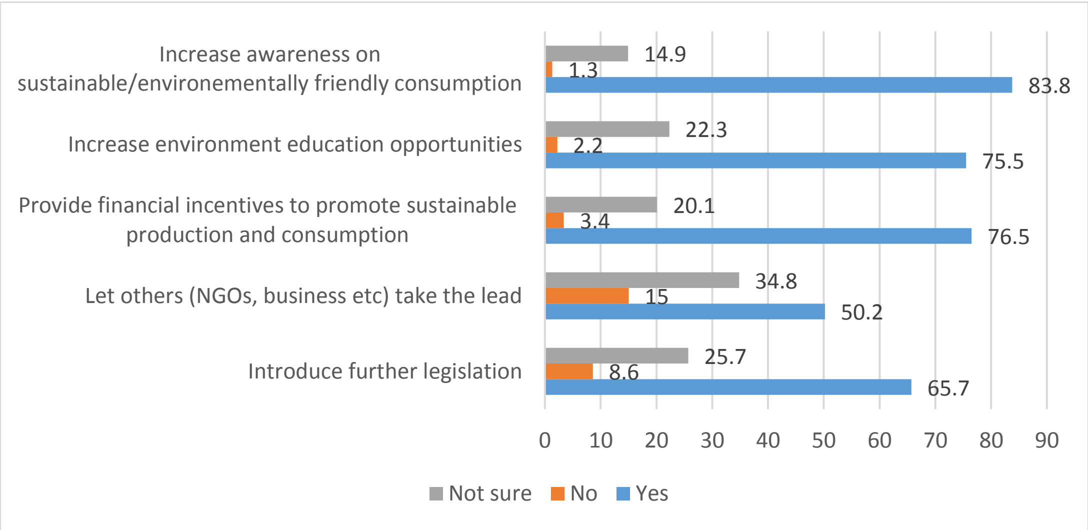
5.7 Suggestions for green

In order to identify the consumers' general opinion on the role of government to act on environment protection and on climate change issues, Q22 was asked from the respondents. There were five suggestion included in the question. The reported responses are summarized in the Figure 27 below.

Accordingly, the role of government to engage in increasing consumer awareness on 'sustainable'/ 'environmentally friendly' consumption has scored the highest percentage (83.8%). Thus, it reveals that people understand this as a main role of the government.

Figure 27

Suggestions to promote 'green'



Q22. Which of the following measures do you think the government should take to act on environment protection and on climate change issue?
Source: Survey results, All respondents

Respectively, 'provide financial incentives to promote sustainable production and consumption' and 'increase environment education opportunities' have scored 'Yes' 76.5% and 75.5%. Strengthen the role of government to introduce further legislation (65.7%) is also another main suggestion. However, according to the findings only 50.2% of people want the government let others (such as NGOs and business organizations) take the lead.