
**THE BUILDER'S PERCEPTION TOWARDS THE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE
RESIDENTIAL ECO- FRIENDLY BUILDINGS IN PCMC, PUNE - A QUALITATIVE STUDY**

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Abstract:

This research paper is an endeavour to unfold the findings of a qualitative study that consider builders insight for the eco- friendly buildings. What is the perception of the builders for the implementation of the eco- friendly concept, assessment criteria and engagement in adopting sustainable solutions for their building projects and perceived barriers in implementing green concept in construction. It also identifies their perception towards the remedial measures to uptake sustainable solutions for the residential buildings.

1. Introduction:

Residential real sector is one of the imperative sectors which contribute to the national GDP and generates job opportunities to the people. This sector is growing very fast and supported by all the corners, but still it is facing lot of challenges in recent years. Low consumer demand, demonetisation, implementation of RERA act, have sluggish the growth, current prices has created stress in this sector. Absorption rates have stagnated, delayed the process all across the major cities of India. It is a worst hit to the sector. Builders, those who can sustain and have holding capacity prefer to “wait and watch” without lowering prices. At the same time those who cannot sustain and experienced cash - crunched and unable to sell their products have option of closing down the business or borrowing money at high costs to survive. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is leading the way and initiated few steps for rejuvenate the sector. The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 10 March 2016 and by the Lok Sabha on 15 March 2016 which protects home-buyers as well as help to boosts the investments in the real estate industry. The Act came into force from 1 May 2017 with 69 of 92 sections notified. This act is more customer-centric and process adherence. The Act insists that 70% of the total amount has to be deposited in bank account through cheque payment. This will restrict unaccounted money from being pumped into this sector. A major benefit for consumers is they need to pay the prices as per the carpet area and not super built-up area. As per this act carpet area includes usable spaces like kitchen, toilets

etc. This act leads to greater transparency and reduces an approval charge which saves the construction costs. Introduction of marketing strategies like, innovative pricing schemes, such as possession-linked payment plans and financial assistance schemes from banks creates demand and immense potential in residential real estate in India.

Residential real estate is responsible for 85% of the overall demand. This growth is supported by factors such as constructive macroeconomic circumstances, rising affordability and urbanization, more availability of credit and the slow and steady change from unorganized real estate construction to organized development.

2. Reasons for the growth in Residential real estate in India

Residential real estate industry has witnessed growth in India. Following factors are responsible for this development.

- Continuous growth in population
- Many people are migrating towards urban areas for the better opportunity
- Overall income level of masses is improving due to which they can afford to buy residential property.
- Some social changes were witnessed in India like, earlier people prefer to live in joint families but as per recent trends nuclear families were raised. This leads to the greater demand for the residential property.
- Initially availability of finance is a big challenge before the buyers however financial institutions are ready to offer loans which are easily available for the buyers. Government is also promoting such help offered by the financial institutions.

3. Ecological footprints of construction sector

Construction industry is one of the major industries which contribute to the development of the Indian economy. However it creates a huge impact on the environment. Earlier the environmental awareness was negligible and this sector pursue without giving much importance to the environmental issues which creates pressure on the natural resources. In India, most of the activities in this sector were unplanned which lead to the major issues. This sector is contributing to the development, but simultaneously it consumes 30% of global raw materials and approximately 40% of energy usage. It creates Solid waste greenhouse gas emissions and other by-products which contribute about 40% in the pollution emissions(Jaime Solis-Guzman, 2015).Such kind of reason insisted this sector to think about the alternatives and highlight the need for sustainable buildings in order to preserve the future of India.

4. Eco-friendly buildings

In the blind run of the development the natural resources are at stake, they are at critical stage and the construction industry needs a complete solution to this problem. Social awareness towards the ecological damage is increasing and buyers are looking for the substitute for the conventional buildings. Conventional buildings uses energy incompetently, produces huge amounts of waste in their construction and operation; they release large amount of pollutants and greenhouse gases.

In the opinion of(Shen L.-Y., 2005) construction industry is one of the major contributors to the environmental pollution. This industry has a direct or indirect effect on the environment(Levin, 1997). Pollution sources from the construction process include harmful gasses, noise, dust, robust and liquid waste(Chen Z., 2000).

The building industry had a high environmental impact on ecosystems, natural resources, and public impact(Li X., 2010).

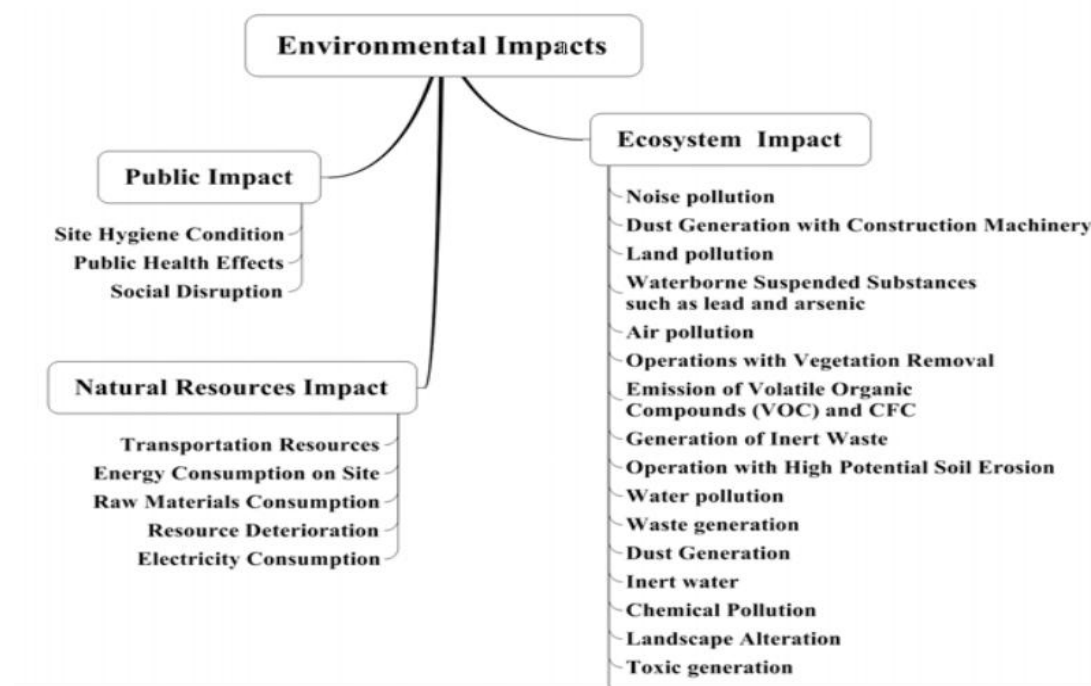


Figure 1. Environmental impacts across construction process.

Source: S. Zolfagharian, M. Nourbakhsh, J. Irizarry, A. Ressang, and M. Gheisari

Eco-friendly buildings are emerged as a concrete solution to the above mentioned problems. According to the Office of the (John L. Howard, 2009). Eco-friendly building is,

(a) Increasing the efficiency of buildings with innovative practices and site selection, use minimum energy, water, and materials, and

(b) Reducing the burden on human health and the environment, through better sitting, design, construction, operation, maintenance, and removal—the complete building life cycle.

In contrast to conventional buildings, eco-friendly buildings uses land and energy resourcefully, preserve water and other resources, improve indoor and outdoor air quality, and increase the use of recycled and renewable materials. This concept promotes the energy efficiency and reduces the building impacts of human health and the environment. This process includes proper selection of site, designing of the buildings, construction, operation, maintenance, and removal of waste during the construction process and rest of the building life. Going Green in Building constructions provides many Environmental, Economical as well as Social benefits.

5. Eco-friendly building Rating Systems:

India is the second-largest developing economy in the world. With the growing population at a faster rate, the energy consumption is increasing at 4.3 %. The construction sector in India is one of the major consumers of energy and other resources all over the globe. Ratings are mostly voluntary schemes which can be adopted by the builders to promote his residential projects and create marketing buzz which will stimulate the buyer's interest towards the eco-friendly buildings. In fact, most of the assessment schemes follow specific criteria for the assessment which have regulatory mandates. This led to the standardization of the process. The Pimpry – Chinchwad Municipal Corporation is the first municipal corporation who promotes the eco- friendly concept in construction industry. With the help of GRIHA, Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment they invite registrations from the builders.

- **TERI-GRIHA Rating System**

Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment is widely known as GRIHA. The meaning this word in Sanskrit is 'Abode,' a place of residence, a house, or home. As everybody knows, all buildings are required resources from construction to operation and then demolition. They use energy, water, materials, etc. and emit wastes either directly in the form of municipal wastes or indirectly as emissions from electricity generation. GRIHA attempts to minimize a building's resource consumption, waste generation, and overall ecological impact to within certain nationally acceptable limits/benchmarks.

GRIHA is a rating system which provides; the benchmark against which the building performance measured against the nationally acceptable criteria. The primary criteria are to study the environmental performance of a building over its entire life cycle. It is a rating system, based on accepted energy and environmental principles. It tries to strike a balance between the established practices and emerging concepts, both national and international.

According to GRIHA, (2015), this is an alternative system for LEED. Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment (GRIHA), developed by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) and it is jointly prepared by Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) and forwarded as the rating system for buildings nationally.

It was established on 1st, November 2007 under the guidance of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE). It is a 'design evaluation system' for eco-friendly buildings which is suitable for various types of buildings in different climatic zones. GRIHA rating systems consider various aspects, such as energy consumption, waste generation, renewable energy adoption, etc.

It helps the builders to manage, control and optimize the utilization of the resource. As per this rating system, total 100 points can be achieved with a set of 34 criteria. Some of the points are mandatory, and 50 is the minimum qualifying score. The buildings can make Ratings as 1 – 5 stars, 1 star for every 10 points over 50. The rating system applies to new and existing buildings of various uses. The criteria appraisal will be revised every three years to take into account the latest scientific developments during this period. The aims of this rating system are to achieve efficient resource utilization, enhanced resource efficiency, and better quality of life the buildings(grihaindia.org, 2016)

- **GRIHA Rating and Certification Process**

According to The Energy and Resource Institute and GRIHA Council, 2015 following is the process of rating and certification process:

Master Plan Rating: It includes step by step process, 1. The Project team will register the project, 2. The GRIHA council will organize the Half day workshop for the project team, 3. GRIHA will access online documentations submitted by the Team. 4. GRIHA will provide the receipt of completed documentation5. Review of documentation by GRIHA Council and comments sent to Project team, 6. Revised documentation submitted by the project team will be received by GRIHA Council, 7. Documentation sent to External Evaluators by GRIHA Council, 8. Comments of External Evaluators directed to the project team, 9. Revised documentation from Project team shared with External Evaluators, 10. Master plan rating awarded by GRIHA Council based on points and feedback of External evaluators.

As per GRIHA rating, the project is reviewed, and phase wise Rating offered by them. At each stage, the help will be extended by the team and proper directions will be given to the project team. This helps them to review and rectify the errors so that they can achieve final ratings by GRIHA.

Both GRIHA and LEED-INDIA both the rating systems are operating at the national level. They have a checklist of criteria and points can be achieved by the project team. These criteria are based on their relative importance. LEED is active since 2001 and GRIHA are efficiently working since 2007. However, very few projects are registered for the ratings. The total number of buildings registered with GRIHA is 179, and that with LEED is 1505. The number of buildings rated is still much smaller – 8 for GRIHA and 223 under IGBC(www.usgbc.org/, 2015)it is clear that the Indian construction sector has yet to warm up to the voluntary rating system(grihaindia.org, 2015)

6. Need to study business opportunities for the eco-friendly buildings.

Today, "Green" marketing has included in the overall business strategy of the business. It is a way of doing business, but is very much crucial from the business point of view because achieving profitability is the fundamental objective of all the businesses. however, it is advisable (a) To study the assessment of accepting green as a business strategy, and developing eco-friendly buildings (b)Highlighting and integrating this concept into their marketing program and communicating the green concept to their customers. (c) Study the available business opportunities for the eco-friendly buildings. (d) Effects of external and internal environment on this business strategy. Green is slowly and steadily becoming the symbolic colour of eco-consciousness in India. The growing consumer awareness and concern over future global environmental crisis, the opportunities are increasing to the marketers to attract and convince consumers towards the eco-friendly buildings.

According to Raju and Zhang, "Any new marketing strategy has a huge influence of all other marketing strategies". The entire way of doing business changes with accepting minor/ major policy decision of the business. The organization develops the marketing strategies related to the 4 P's of marketing e.g. Product, price, place and Promotion(Zhang, 2010) This defines how organizations will engage their customers, prospects, and competitors in the market arena. Buyers/ customers are profit centre of any organizations; marketing strategy is closely linked with sales.

Accepting and implementing Eco-friendly concept as a business strategy for building residential property can be a new approach for the builders. It is essential to study the external forces which will directly affect the sustenance and growth of the business.

Many organizations adopt the new concepts of doing business; most of them are short-sighted and follow inward looking approach to marketing. They gave more importance to the organizational growth and profit and forget to consider needs/ wants of the customers. As a result they are not able to adjust with the rapid changes in their markets. According to the,(Levitt, 1925-2006) the organizations can be trapped in this situation because they omit to think about the basic objectives of the business, its environment and opportunities for them. To avoid such situation and to think in the business point of view, it is essential to study the acceptance of the eco-friendly concept and available business opportunities for the residential buildings.

This research also focuses on the business side and researcher felt that it is necessary to study the available business opportunities for Eco- friendly buildings. This requires understanding how builders perceive “Eco- friendly residential buildings” including their acquaintance of sustainability features and what supports and inhibits the uptake of these features. This study presents their engagement in adopting sustainable solutions for their projects and perceived barriers and probable solutions o them.

7. **Objectives:**

1. To understand the builders perception towards the eco- friendly residential buildings in Pune city.
2. To identify the builders awareness of the eco- friendly features.
3. To discuss the builders understanding about the barriers to implement the eco- friendly concept.
4. To pursue the viewpoint of the builders towards the solution to overcome perceived barriers in implementing eco- friendly concept in construction.

8. **Methodology:**

This sampling process is used to learn more about the research context. **Purposive sampling methods** were used to reach to the respondents.. A purposive sampling means researchers select the respondents deliberately, who have knowledge about the eco- friendly construction, and registered their residential building projects for GRIHA certification. Five (5) registered builders were approached to explore the concepts related to the Eco- friendly buildings and the rating systems used for certification. . The other purpose for selecting the purposive sampling was to discover the new ideas from the research consultants and experts (respondents) rather than testing of

hypothesis. The qualitative survey was conducted for conceptual clarity and constructs the study objectives.

In-depth interviews were held with the builders. As part of the interview each one was asked to complete a Sustainability Features Checklist, to understand the particular sustainability features implemented by them in their current residential projects. The questions were asked to understand their viewpoint about the barriers and remedial measures in implementing eco- friendly residential buildings.

9. Qualitative interviews with builders:

The in-depth interview was conducted with the builders. The **content of the interview** is as follows:

- The reasons for adopting the eco- friendly building concept for the residential projects.
- What changes has been introduced by the builders to alien Eco- friendly building concept with the organizational values, mission, and culture.
- The modification in the traditional business model to implement the Eco- friendly criteria. The affect of the same on the success of the business.
- What problems they may have encountered while introducing this concept and any changes they have made to it.
- Questions on their perceptions about “Eco- friendly buildings” (before the presentation of the Features Checklist).
- Completion of the Sustainability Features Checklist.
- Perceived significance of the gap between the conventional buildings and the eco- friendly buildings.
- Discussion of any changes they would like to make to their project in terms of green attributes, including what could be done easily and what would be harder to do.
- Any special skills will be needed on your board of directors and at the staff level? Who will monitor the changes?
- Potential customer(s) for green buildings? What are their demographic characteristics?
- Marketing promotional program to communicate the presence of the eco- friendly property. Will you mention eco friendly nature of your property in your promotional programme?
- Probing how this gap might be bridged, including what difference this would make and what success would look like.
- How critical is the government support for your product? Is raw material easily available? If not, how will you manage regular supply of raw material?

10. Features Checklist to understand the eco- friendly features:

- Site Selection criteria process is followed with at most care.
- The design of the building ensures Low-impact on environment
- Controlled Air and water pollution is one ensured.
- Preserve and protect landscape during construction
- Construction Management Practices followed by the organization
- Building design is Energy efficient
- Renewable energy utilization at the site.
- Zero ozone depletion potential (ODP) materials are used for the construction.
- Achieving indoor comfort requirements (visual/thermal/acoustic) for the occupants.
- Maintaining good Indoor Air Quality(IAQ)
- Use of low-volatile organic compounds (VOCs) paints and other compounds in building interiors.
- Use of low-flow fixtures and systems in the buildings.
- Reducing landscape water demand
- Water Quality is checked
- On-site water reuse system is established.
- Rainwater Recharge has been implemented
- Utilization of BIS (Bio- Waste Industrial Symbiosis) recommended waste materials in building structure
- Reduction in embodied energy of building structure
- Use of low-environmental impact materials in building interiors
- Avoided post-construction landfill
- Treat organic waste on site
- Labor safety and sanitation
- Design for Universal Accessibility
- Dedicated facilities for service staff
- Increase in environmental awareness
- Smart metering and monitoring
- Operation, Maintenance Protocols
- Performance Assessment for Final Rating
- Innovation

(Source: Griha Manual version 2015)

11. What is an Eco- friendly house?

Builders were asked about their perception towards the eco- friendly buildings. It was asked to judge them on the following parameters.

- Provide a healthier and more comfortable environment
- Improve long-term economic performance
- Incorporate energy and water efficient technologies
- Include renewable energy technologies
- Bring higher resale value
- Reduced costs for site preparation, parking lots and roads
- Lower energy costs due to optimal orientation
- Less landscape and maintenance cost
- Reduced costs for site preparation, parking lots and roads
- Lower energy costs due to optimal orientation

12. What changes have been made?

The detailed discussion was made about the required changes for the organisation to implement the eco- friendly concept. The discussions points were:

- Importance of internal Resource analysis for introducing innovative practices like, eco- friendly building construction.
- Necessity of adequate Marketing skills to achieve success for eco- friendly residential project.
- Productive capabilities and technical agility is very important to be successful in the market.
- Management's willingness to take risk, value skills, and experience to respond to the opportunities.
- Availability of skilled and experienced project team and contractors.
- Effective promotion of the eco- friendly building projects.

13. Barriers to sustainability uptake:

The researcher wants to study the builders understanding about the barriers in implementing the eco- friendly concept. the discussion were made on the following points:

- Lack of building codes and regulation
- Lack of incentives

- Higher investment cost and final price
- Risk of investment
- Lack of Public awareness
- Difficult to promote green buildings
- Lack of design and construction team
- Lack of government support

14. Rating system adopted by GRIHA

In the development process, rating system recommended by the GRIHA for the eco- friendly certification of residential buildings plays very important role. Hence, the researcher discussed about the Griha rating system with the builders. The various points were included in the discussion.

- The Griha rating system is easy to understand and encourages better design for the eco- friendly buildings.
- Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment (TERI–GRIHA) is effective for the Indian market.
- This Method provides better evaluation of the green buildings
- This rating system promotes the environmental benefits.

15. Responsible factors for the business opportunities

- The increasing urban population would create a vast demand for new construction within environmental friendly framework generates the demand for green constructions.
- With the increase in the educational level buyers are more aware on the climatic changes and prefer eco friendly properties.
- The emerging middle class society will opt for green construction when they realize the potential long term savings from reducing operational costs.
- Increasing trend in the change of family lifestyle from joint families to nuclear families which means an increase in the need for more housing.
- Lack of incentives to the builders for initiating eco friendly concept.
- In order to achieve environmental clearance (EC) the new projects need to adopt environment friendly measures and techniques. The process is time consuming.
- Due to the international pressure India is engaging proactively working for climate change and global warming programme but the efforts are insufficient
- Government to provide subsidies for research and development of green building products, systems and technologies

The researcher received appropriate information about the eco- friendly residential building projects from the builders. The points of discussion were linked with the objectives set for the research. Based on the contribution made by the builders, the researcher wants to suggest the following actions to get better business opportunities for the eco- friendly buildings.

16. Findings from the discussion:

- It was found that the builders are aware that the eco- friendly building concept is contemporary as well as revolutionary in the construction business. For successful introduction and implementation special marketing efforts are required by the builders. The builders are aware about the requirement of marketing skills to be successful in the market. They perceived that, for the effective accomplishment special marketing strategy and skills are required by the organization.
- Builders are concerned about Affordability of the eco- friendly buildings, especially for those on lower incomes. According to them buyers are worried about their return on investment and assumed they will not be gained. As per their opinion the buyers want to spend their money on leisure activities and lifestyle. They expect quick direct benefits hence it is very difficult to motivate them to buy eco- friendly residential property.
- It was expressed by the builders, that buyers perceive low or doubtful returns or benefits from the eco- friendly buildings. Cost is also seen as a significant disincentive for the purchase of eco- friendly buildings.
- Builders are optimistic about the response from the young buyers they feel that they are more aware and will respond favorably towards the eco-friendly buildings.
- The majority part of the buyers of eco- friendly building projects is rich and wealthy. At the same time Affluent potential buyers are more inclined to the eco- friendly buying behavior .Since they are more conscious about the eco-friendly residential property they can respond positively, and have demonstrated potential business opportunity.
- According to the builders, Eco- friendly buildings concept is relatively new for the buyers. Hence, before taking decision they search for maximum information related to the Eco- friendly residential building concept.
- According to the builders, buyers are showing interest it is a clear indication about the respondents trust on the eco- friendly nature of the green products. Most of the respondents were agreed upon the eco friendly nature of the products but it was also observed that the remarkable numbers of consumers are not able to decide about the eco friendly nature of the green products.

- The GRIHA RATING SYSTEM is easy to understand and encourages better design for the eco- friendly buildings but builder's feels that it is very difficult for them to convince the buyers about the same.
- In order to achieve environmental clearance (EC) the new projects need to adopt environment friendly measures and techniques. The process is time consuming and builders are not getting substantial benefits from it. they are also expecting support from the government and expect subsidies for research and development of green building products, systems and technologies
- According to the builders, higher investment cost and risk of investment are the major obstacles for the builders. Buyers are not ready to pay expected final price.
- Builders are worried about the lack of Public awareness for the eco- friendly buildings. They find it difficult to promote green buildings.
- Lack of design and construction team is a major concern of the builders. They need skillful employees for the accomplishment of this concept in to reality.

17. Suggestions:

- Buyers are confused in regards to eco- friendly design buildings, leading to feelings of ambivalence and negativity among them. "Green washing" is caused due to the less awareness and buyers are not ready to believe on the green features. Hence, Municipal Corporation (PCMC) can develop a special Green Building website which can be readily accessible with the complete information about the green buildings. This site can be interactive and highlight the opportunities, issues, and solutions related to the Eco-friendly buildings.
- The builders must stressed on eco- friendly nature of their residential building projects and more and new buyers can be educated about the health and other benefits of eco friendly buildings at individual and social level. They must provide facts and figures about the cost savings and the environmental contribution of the projects. They can provide comparative statement between conventional buildings and Eco – friendly buildings.
- Many builders have to rethink about the green claims of the building projects. Environmental business strategy must revolve around the performance and value addition to the buyers. This must be communicated properly to the buyers which will improve their response to the business. To achieve this, a joint movement must be started by all the concerned and they can Seek partnerships with regional, public, private, and non-profit organizations to foster a regional marketing campaign. This will generate awareness, interest

and desire in the minds of the buyers. This will led to the positive action/ reaction from the buyers and they will prefer to buy the Green residential property.

- The green claims and design must not be add-on and adopted randomly for any one project but must be a way of doing business. This required support from all the employees. For effective involvement it is essential to have trained and knowledgeable employees. Internal training for the employees can develop such employees and they can deal effectively for the expansion of the business. Internal training programs Continue and expands the professional development opportunities and requirements for staff.
- This research reveals that, it is necessary to strengthen the green claims made by the developer's. Confidence and trust building are keys for the success of eco-friendly building projects. To achieve this, maximum care must be taken by the developers from starting to the completion of the project. They must set proper benchmarking for the projects so that buyers can check the property against those benchmarks. The evaluation process must be simple to understand and must be realistic.
- Builders are facing problem of capital investment to develop eco- friendly buildings if they get financial support from the government and financial institutes they can develop interest in developing eco- friendly buildings.
- Eco- friendly construction material must be available at the subsidized rates it will help the builders to reduce the cost and improve the profit margin. This will motivate them to adopt eco- friendly construction in their future projects.
- If builders want to pursue the new concepts they need to train people and hire experts in eco-friendly concepts. Hence, green consultants can work as a mentor for the builders and they can train people so that expert human resource can be available for the builders.

18. Conclusion:

In the last decades the unrestrained brunt of industrial activities heavily affected the natural environment. For marketers, environmentalism has become a criterion influencing customer purchase behaviour. Environmentalism has fast emerged as a worldwide phenomenon. Business firms too have risen to the occasion and have started responding to environmental challenges by practicing green marketing strategies. This research has gone a substantial way towards meeting the objectives set for the same. Findings of this study will be helpful to identify the builder's perspective to understand the business opportunities for the green residential buildings. "Green" marketing is an exciting chance for the builders to sell and please more buyers. Nevertheless, full dedication and support from Government, Green consultants, builder's and community is required to covert this idea in to the successful environmental and marketing strategy.

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