

# Sustainable Shopping

*Make your buying choices environment friendly*

**G**lobal climate change is now one of the most pressing problems and the effect individual consumption has on the climate is substantial. The food we eat, our household energy consumption, the transport system we use and many other human activities impact greenhouse gas (GHG) emission and climate change. Every single consumer has the potential to mitigate climate change by changing his or her consumption behaviour. By adopting sustainable consumption you also can join hands with the global community working against climate change.



## The Reality

Whatever be the figures and facts, some areas of concern need immediate attention. The results of the Global ImagePower Green Brands Survey 2011 by Penn Schoen Berland, a research based strategic communication advisory, show that 'limited choice' and 'lack of transparency in labelling' are the key obstacles to buying green products in India. The availability of eco-friendly products, lack of product information, poor packaging are some critical factors in the growth of sustainable consumption in India.

## Sustainable Consumption

Sustainable consumption is the use of goods and services to satisfy our basic needs and improve our quality of life in the ways that are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. It is a broad term which aims at increasing the use of renewable energy sources, efficiently using natural resources, improving resource efficiency, diminishing the emission of pollutants, minimising waste and an ever-increasing load of landfills and all the factors which will not risk the needs of future generations. Awareness of the environmental, social and economic aspects of consumption leads to sustainable consumption.

## Right Products

What you purchase and consume on a day-to-day basis might appear to be fractional contribution to the environment; however, it makes a significant difference to the environment. Hence, shopping for the right products is really important. You have the option to buy goods that are environmentally less harmful, ethically produced, organic and respectful of our indigenous people and traditions. Think a little bit about what you buy.

The results of third annual Greendex Survey 2010 conducted by the National Geographic Society indicates that Indian consumers are on the top in terms of environmentally sustainable consumer behaviour. It included people's transportation patterns, household energy and resource use, consumption of food and everyday consumer goods, and what consumers are doing to minimise the impact these activities have on the environment.

'Green' is an emerging product category; few standards exist and new products and technology solutions are coming to market. In this situation the government and the regulatory and standards organisations in India, e.g. the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), should formulate new criteria, Standards, and certification system for green products in the country and publicise them.

## Plan Your Regular Shopping

- ? Make a list. It is helpful to make a list before you go shopping so that you don't end up buying things you don't really need and thereby produce extra waste.
- ? Shop locally -- preferably from shops, farms or enterprise that make or obtain their produce locally -- you can cut down on the need for transport and, therefore, harmful carbon dioxide emissions.
- ? Consider transport options. If you need to use transport to go to the market, go for the least damaging option.
- ? Make single shopping trips to cut emissions and save time. It's worth doing all of your shopping at time.
- ? Shop together as a household. If you live with a family or in an apartment block, you can minimise costs and carbon emissions by coordinating your shopping. This will cut on fuel costs and the amount of shopping you will need to do.
- ? Invest in a sturdy recycled carrier bag for all your shopping trips.

