E-ISSN No : 2581-6195 | Volume : 9 | Issue : 4 | April 2026

"A STUDY ON BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY IN WASTE RECYCLING AND UPCYCLING WITH REFERENCE TO UDUPI DISTRICT"

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Access Online

Article DOI:
10.5281/zenodo.20325531

ABSTRACT

The growing concerns of environmental degradation and resource scarcity have positioned waste recycling and upcycling as critical pathways for sustainable development. This study, titled "*Business Opportunity in Waste Recycling and Upcycling with Reference to Udupi District*", investigates the potential for entrepreneurial ventures that transform waste into valuable resources while simultaneously addressing ecological challenges. The research emphasizes the increasing generation of municipal solid waste, plastic, paper, e-waste, and organic refuse in Udupi District, and explores how systematic recycling and innovative upcycling practices can be harnessed to create viable business models. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical approach, examining existing recycling initiatives, government policies, and community participation, while identifying gaps that can be leveraged by entrepreneurs. Special attention is given to opportunities in compost production, plastic reprocessing, paper and textile recycling, and creative upcycling for consumer markets. The findings reveal that Udupi District, with its expanding urbanization, educational institutions, and environmentally conscious population, offers fertile ground for green entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the study underscores the role of technology adoption, skill development, and public-private partnerships in strengthening the waste management ecosystem. It concludes that waste recycling and upcycling, when strategically integrated into local economic planning, can generate employment, foster innovation, and contribute to the realization of a circular economy. Thus, the district holds significant promise for sustainable business ventures that align economic growth with environmental stewardship.

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How to Cite:
Mr. Kishor Krishna Marakala, Ms. Pooja (2026), "A Study on Business Opportunity in Waste Recycling and Upcycling with Reference to Udupi District", International Educational Journal of Science & Engineering (IEJSE),Vol: 9, Issue: 4, 33-40

1. INTRODUCTION

The growing global concern for environmental sustainability has brought waste management to the forefront of business innovation. Among the most promising sectors within this domain are waste recycling and upcycling, both of which offer significant business opportunities. As urbanization and consumerism increase, so does the volume of waste, prompting a need for smarter and more sustainable solutions. This shift not only addresses environmentalissues but also unlocks economic potential through the creation of new products, jobs, and markets.

Recycling involves converting waste materials into reusable raw materials, reducing the dependency on virgin resources and lowering environmental impact. Businesses that specialize in recycling can tap into various waste streams—such as plastics, paper, metals, and electronics—to supply raw materials to manufacturers at a lower cost. With supportive government policies, increasing public awareness, and growing demand for eco-friendly products, the recycling industry is becoming a lucrative venture with long-term viability.

On the other hand, upcycling takes waste management a step further by transforming discarded materials into products of higher value or utility. This

Research Paper

creative approach appeals to niche markets such as sustainable fashion, interior design, and handcrafted goods. Upcycling not only minimizes waste but also allows businesses to differentiate themselves through innovation and storytelling, which is increasingly value by environmentally conscious consumers.

The intersection of sustainability and profitability makes waste recycling and upcycling attractive sectors for entrepreneurs and investors alike. As global economies transition toward circular models, businesses that can effectively repurpose waste stand to gain a competitive edge while contributing to environmental preservation.The future hold simmense potential for those who can turn trash into treasure—quite literally.

Objectives of study:

1. To Identify potential business opportunities in waste recycling and upcycling
2. To analyse regulatory frameworks and policies affecting waste recycling and upcycling businesses
3. To underst and waste management challenges and opportunities in different sectors
4. To Identify innovative solutions and technologies for waste recyclingan dupcycling.
5. To Develop business models and strategies for waste recycling and upcycling businesses.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Primary: Data will be collected through surveys, interviews, and field visits to recycling and upcycling businesses to understand real-life experiences.

Secondary: Information will be gathered from books, articles, websites, and reports to study existing knowledge and trends in recycling and upcycling.

Sources of data:

1. **Primary data:** data will be collected through surveys, interviews, and fields visits to recycling and upcycling business to understand real- life experiences.
2. **Secondary data:** The secondary data were used for supporting this study and to get finding of other researchers in the area. The sources of secondary data were newspaper, internet sources and other related materials were used.

Limitations of the paper:

- Limited availability of accurate and up-to-date data on waste generation and recycling rates in some regions.
- The findings may not be universally applicable, as recycling infrastructure and opportunities vary widely by region or country.
- Limited understanding of the complex relationships between waste recycling and upcycling businesses and their stakeholders.
- The complexity of waste recycling and upcycling industries may make it challenging to capture all relevant aspects.
- Contextual factors, such as regulatory frameworks or market conditions, may limit the applicability of the findings.
- The research design may not be suitable for capturing the complexity of waste recycling and upcycling businesses.
- Difficulty in accessing stakeholders, such as business owners, policymakers, or industry experts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on waste management in India highlights several recurring themes, including the challenges of waste generation, collection, segregation, and recycling. Below is a review of the most relevant studies and findings that inform this paper on waste management practices in Udupi District.

Gautam, A., Singh, M., & Tiwari, R. (2018) highlighted that the increasing population in Indian cities has directly impacted waste generation rates, with urban areas generating around 70-80% of the total municipal solid waste (MSW). In their study of solid waste management in the coastal towns of Maharashtra, they noted that waste segregation remains one of the most significant barriers to effective waste management in these areas. Their findings are directly relevant to the situation in Udupi, where a mix of urban and rural characteristics complicates waste management efforts.

Kumar & Mishra (2020) discussed the challenges of waste segregation and resource recovery in small towns in India. They found that although there are many policies in place aimed at improving waste

management, the lack of public awareness and insufficient infrastructure are key reasons why these policies have been ineffective. This mirrors the findings from a 2016 report by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), which found that urban local bodies often face significant challenges in implementing source segregation and recycling programs due to the lack of facilities and logistical support.

Chavan, S., Patel, R., & Narayan, K. (2017), a study on coastal waste management in Kerala, they examined how tourism and fishing activities contribute significantly to waste generation, particularly plastic and organic waste. Udupi, known for its religious and tourist significance, shares similar characteristics, which means that tourism and related activities are likely significant contributors to the waste burden in the region. The study emphasized that waste management efforts in coastal regions must account for these unique factors, such as seasonal influxes of tourists and the disposal of organic waste from fishing activities.

Bhide & Sundaresan (2021) in their study on municipal solid waste management in small towns of Karnataka, including Udupi, pointed out that decentralized management systems often lead to inefficiency due to lack of coordination between different levels of government (state, district, and municipal). Local governance bodies, especially in smaller towns and rural areas, often lack the financial and technical resources required to implement effective waste management programs. This is a recurring theme in Sharma (2019), where local governments in rural Karnataka were found to struggle with implementing consistent waste collection and recycling services.

Rai & Sharma (2019) and Sathaye et al. (2021), is the absence of comprehensive waste segregation at the source. While there is a growing recognition of the importance of source segregation to improve recycling rates and reduce landfill dependency, many regions in India, including Udupi, continue to struggle with inadequate public awareness and the absence of necessary infrastructure for segregation.

A case study by Menon & Srinivasan (2018) on waste management practices in urban and rural parts of India found that while cities have made some progress with waste segregation and recycling, rural areas and small towns often lack the necessary infrastructure, such as separate bins for organic and non-organic waste, to make these practices effective.

Tiwari & Sharma (2020) found that public participation in waste segregation is low in many smaller towns, largely due to insufficient educational outreach and lack of incentives.

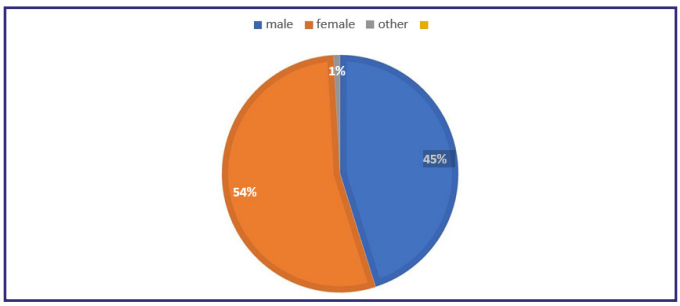
According to Kumar, R., Tiwari, N., & Sharma, P. (2021), a more collaborative approach between local governments, the private sector, and NGOs could facilitate better waste management outcomes. Their study emphasized that adopting the "Polluter Pays" principle and incorporating waste pickers into the formal waste management system could significantly improve recycling rates. Similarly, Reddy & Rao (2020) suggest that integrating waste management into urban planning, with a focus on promoting composting and resource recovery, could enhance sustainability.

Furthermore, Swaminathan, V., Radhakrishnan, S., & Kumari, K. (2021) have suggested that effective waste management requires strong community engagement and awareness-building programs. They emphasize that successful waste management in rural and semi-urban areas depends on active participation from the local population and partnerships with NGOs to promote segregation and recycling.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

Gender.

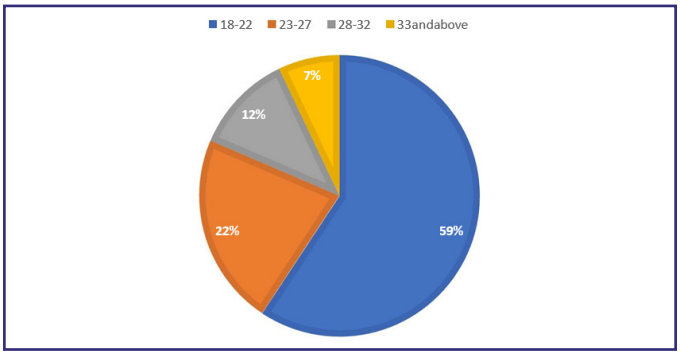
Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	51	45.1
Female	61	54
Other	01	0.9
Total	113	100



INTERPRETATION:
The data indicates that out of 113 total respondents, the majority were females, making up 54% of the sample (61 individuals). Male respondents constituted 45.1% (51 individuals), while only the respondent identified as other, comprising 0.9% of the total. This shows a relatively balanced gender distribution with the slight majority of female participants. The inclusion of the non-binary category also reflects an effort toward inclusivity in the survey.

AgeGroup.

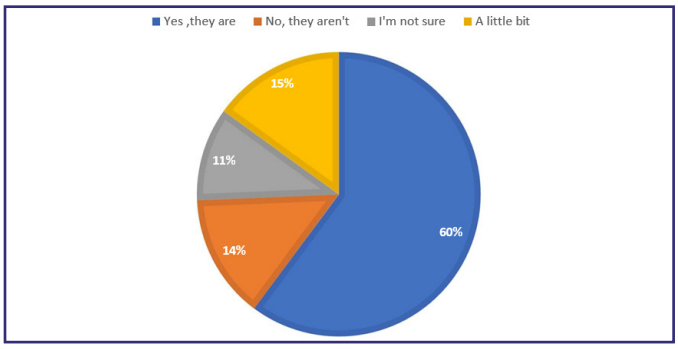
Response	No. of responses	Percentage
18-22	67	59.8
23-27	25	22.3
28-32	13	11.6
33andabove	8	6.3
Total	113	100



INTERPRETATION:
Most respondents (59.8%) are aged 18-22, followed by 23-27 (22.3%).A smaller portion falls in the 28-32 (11.6%) and 33+(6.3%) age groups, showing the survey is largely dominated by younger individuals.

Opinion of respondents regarding clean surrounding.

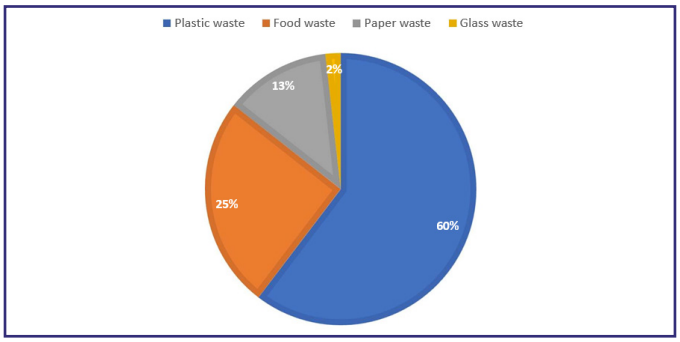
Response	No of Responses	Percentage
Yes	68	60.2
No	16	14.2
I'm not sure	12	10.6
A little bit	17	15
Total	113	100



INTERPRETATION:
Most respondents (60.2%) believe their surroundings are clean. However, 14.2% say they aren't, 15% say "a little bit," and 10.6% are unsure, showing mixed perceptions about cleanliness.

Types of waste commonly thrown in your area.

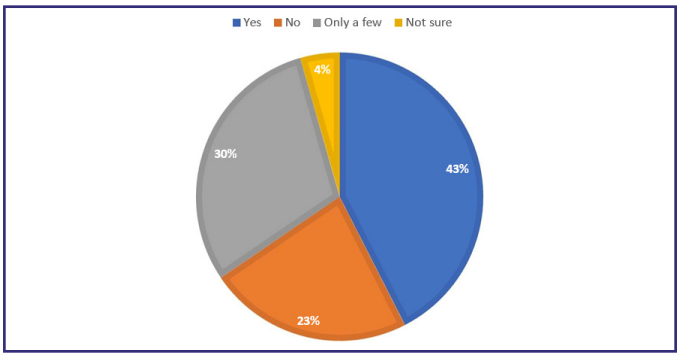
Response	No. of Responses	Percentage
Plastic waste	67	60.4
Food waste	28	25.2
Paper waste	14	12.3
Glass waste	2	1.8
Total	113	100



INTERPRETATION:
Plastic waste is the most commonly thrown (60.4%), followed by food waste (25.2%). Paper (12.3%) and glass waste (1.8%) are less frequent.

Opinions regarding having dustbins in their surroundings.

Response	No. of Responses	Percentage
Yes	48	42.5
No	26	23
Only a few	34	30.1
Not sure	5	4.4
Total	113	100

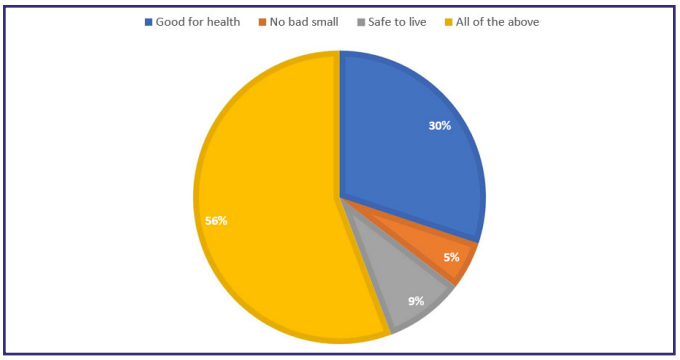


INTERPRETATION:

42.5% of the respondents said there are dustbins in their public area, while 30.1% said only a few. 23% said no, and 4.4% were unsure, showing limited dustbin availability.

Benefits by keeping the surroundings clean.

Response	No. of Responses	Percentage
Good for health	34	30.1
No bad smell	6	5.3
Safe to live	10	8.8
All of the above	63	55.8
Total	113	100

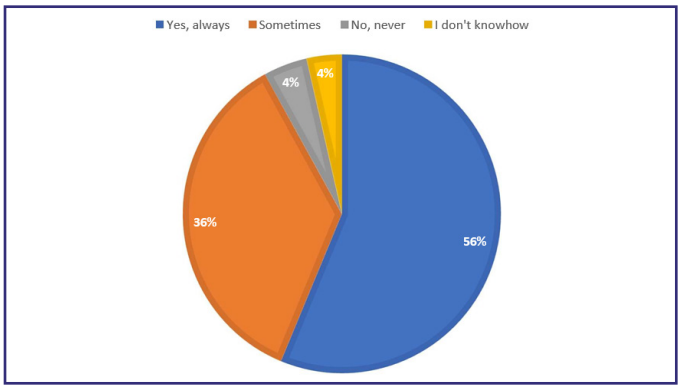


INTERPRETATION:

Most respondents (55.8%) believe keeping surroundings clean brings multiple benefits. 30.1% said it's good for health, while fewer noted no bad smell (5.3%) and safety (8.8%).

Separation of wet waste and dry waste.

Response	No. of Responses	Percentage
Yes, always	63	56.3
Sometimes	40	35.7
No, never	5	4.5
I don't know how	4	3.6
Total	113	100

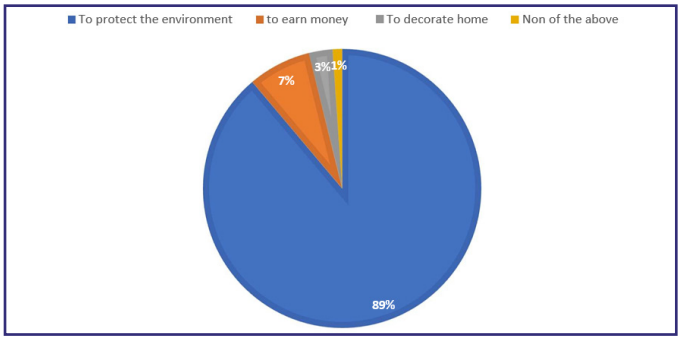


INTERPRETATION:

Over half of the respondents (56.3%) always separate wet and dry waste, while 35.7% do so sometimes. A small portion either never separates (4.5%) or doesn't know how (3.6%).

Goal of recycling.

Response	No. of responses	Percentage
Protect the environment	97	85.8
To earn money	8	7.1
To decorate home	3	0.9
None of the above	5	4.4
Total	113	100

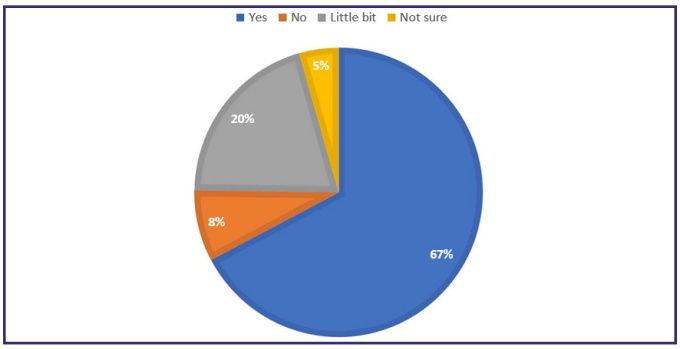


INTERPRETATION:

A large majority (85.8%) believe that the main goal of recycling is to protect the environment, while smaller portions see it as a way to earn money (7.1%), decorate the home (0.9%), or are unsure (4.4%).

Cleanliness of college or workplace environment.

Response	No. of Responses	Percentage
Yes	76	67.3
No	9	8
Little bit	23	20.4
Not sure	5	4.4
Total	113	100

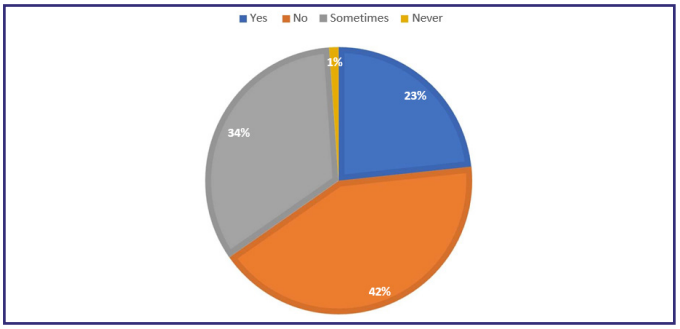


INTERPRETATION:

Most respondents (67.3%) feel that their college or workplace environment is clean. Meanwhile, 20.4% think it's only a little clean, 8%say it's not clean, and 4.4% are unsure.

Throwing wastes on the roadside.

Response	No. of responses	Percentage
Yes	25	22.1
No	45	39.8
Sometime	36	31.9
Never	7	6.2
Total	113	100

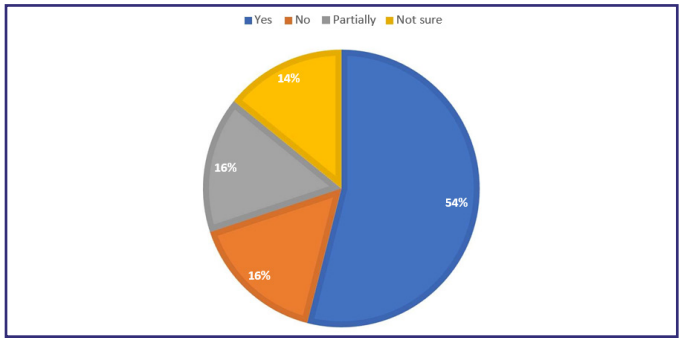


INTERPRETATION:

Out of 113 respondents, the majority (39.8%) answered "No", while a notable portion (31.9%) admitted to sometimes throwing waste on the roadside. A smaller percentage answered "Yes" (22.1%), and only a few (6.2%) claimed to "Never" throw waste on the roadside.

Knowledge regarding the difference between recycling and upcycling.

Response	No. of responses	Percentage
Yes	61	54
No	18	15.9
Partially	18	15.9
Not sure	16	14.2
Total	113	100

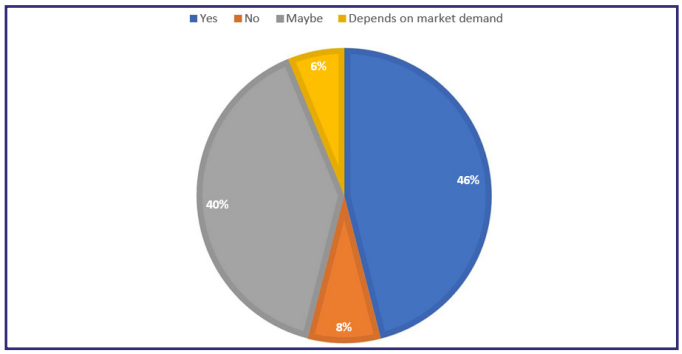


INTERPRETATION:

The survey shows that 54% responded "Yes," indicating a positive view, while the rest were split among "No" (16%), "Partially" (16%), and "Not sure" (14%), showing mixed or uncertain opinions.

Opinion on whether cycling/ upcycling business can succeed in your area.

Response	No. of Responses	Percentage
Yes	52	46
No	9	8
Maybe	45	39.8
Depends on market demand	7	6.2
Total	113	100

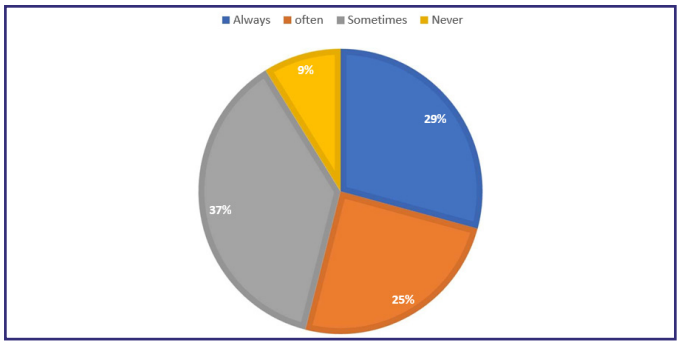


INTERPRETATION:

Most respondents (46%) said "Yes," while 40% said "Maybe." Only 8% said "No," and 6% felt it depends on market demand, showing overall positive or tentative interest.

Items are reused as often as possible.

Response	No. of Responses	Percentage
Always	33	29.2
Often	28	24.8
Sometimes	42	37.2
Never	10	8.8
Total	113	100

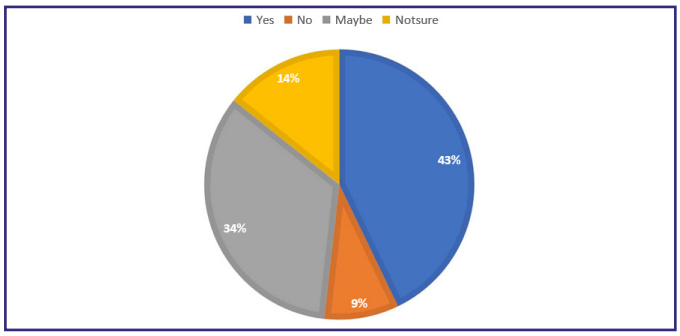


INTERPRETATION:

The survey shows that most people respond sometimes (37%), followed by always (29%), often (25%), and never (9%).A total of 113 people took part in the survey.

Upcycling is viewed as a promising business opportunity.

Response	No. of responses	Percentage
Yes	48	42.9
No	10	8.9
Maybe	38	33.9
Not sure	16	14.3
Total	113	100

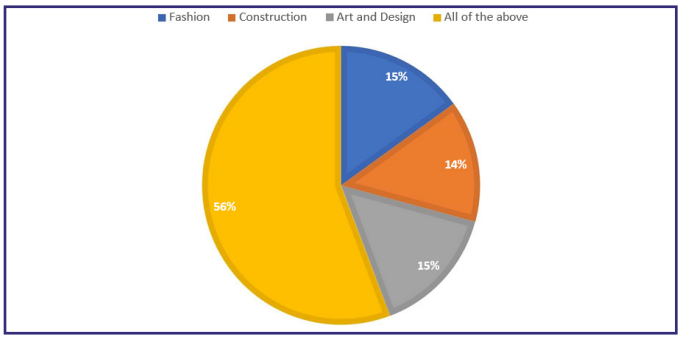


INTERPRETATION:

The survey shows that 43% of people answered "Yes", 34% said "No", 14% chose "Maybe", and 9% were "Not sure". A total of 113 people participated in the survey.

The sectors benefits most from upcycling/ recycling materials.

Response	No. of responses	Percentage
Fashion	17	15.3
Construction	16	14.4
Art and Design	15	13.5
All of the above	63	56.8
Total	113	100



INTERPRETATION:

The survey results show that most people (57%) chose "All of the above "as their response.

Fashion got 15%, Construction 14%, and Art and Design 14%. In total, 113 people responded.

FINDINGS

1. A majority of people support recycling and believe it's important for environmental protection.
2. Consumers are increasingly open to buying upcycled items, especially if they are stylish, functional, and affordable.
3. Some people believe that separated waste ends up in the same landfill, leading to scepticism and reduced motivation to recycle.
4. Some people are not fully aware of the benefits or differences between recycling and upcycling.
5. Many individuals are willing to separate their waste at home if proper facilities and clear instructions are provided.
6. A common barrier is the perception that separating and managing waste is time-consuming or complicated.
7. Upcycling is still unfamiliar to many and some people view upcycled products as lower quality or less appealing.
8. Public participation in recycling programs often depends on how easy and accessible the process is.
9. People generally support stricter policies and more

public investment in recycling infrastructure.
10. Those with more environmental education or exposure are more likely to engage in sustainable waste practices.
11. Some consumers believe that eco-friendly or upcycled products are more expensive and not worth the price.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Invest in sustainable practices, such as waste reduction, recycling and upcycling to reduce environmental impact and improve brand reputation.
2. Develop new products and services that in corporate recycled or upcycled materials, creating new revenue streams and market opportunities.
3. Partner with stakeholders, including suppliers, customers, and governments, to drive innovation and growth in waste recycling and upcycling.
4. Conduct further studies on the economic, social, and environmental benefits of waste recycling and upcycling, and identify areas for improvement and innovation.
5. Develop case studies of successful waste recycling and upcycling businesses, highlighting best practices and lessons learned.
6. Analyse the effectiveness of policies and regulations aimed at promoting waste recycling and upcycling, and identify areas for improvement.
7. Identify market opportunities and niches in waste recycling and upcycling, and develop innovative products and services to meet these needs.
8. Develop sustainable business models that prioritize waste reduction, recycling and upcycling, and create new revenue streams and market opportunities.

CONCLUSION

The growing demand for sustainability has led to a surge in business opportunities within the waste recycling and upcycling sectors. As environmental concerns intensify, businesses that focus on waste reduction, resource conservation, and repurposing materials are gaining momentum. Recycling helps reduce the strain on natural resources, while upcycling transforms waste into new, innovative products. Both practices are critical in promoting a circular economy, where materials are reused instead of discarded. This shift not only helps conserve resources but also opens doors for new markets and revenue streams, making it an attractive option for entrepreneurs and investors.

Technological advancements are playing a key role in the evolution of waste recycling and upcycling. Innovations such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and automation are improving the efficiency of sorting and processing waste materials. These technologies reduce contamination rates, enhance recycling outcomes, and enable better tracking of recycled goods. Additionally, the growing consumer demand for eco-friendly products is driving businesses to incorporate sustainable practices into their offerings. Companies that use recycled materials or upcycled goods are gaining a competitive edge, appealing to a market that increasingly prioritizes environmental impact in purchasing decisions.

Despite its potential, the waste recycling and upcycling industry faces challenges, such as inadequate infrastructure in some regions and contamination of recyclable materials. However, these challenges also present opportunities for growth and innovation. By developing new technologies, improving public education, and fostering collaborations between businesses, governments, and consumers, the sector can overcome barriers and expand globally. Ultimately, recycling and upcycling not only contribute to environmental sustainability but also create jobs, boost local economies, and offer businesses a profitable and impactful way to participate in the circular economy.

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