© July 2026 | JU2609 | Volume 1 | Special Issue 1 | ISSN: ISSN: 3107-7536
(Online) Vyavahāra: International Journal of Commerce, Ethics, Law & Management

Green Marketing as a Competitive Strategy in Modern Business: A Study of Indian Companies Business Approach

Neha J, LLM, The Tamil Nadu Dr.Ambedkar Law University,
Christy J, LLM, The Tamil Nadu Dr.Ambedkar Law University

Abstract

Green marketing has emerged as an effective business approach that combines environmental responsibility with sustainable economic growth. This research paper examines the green marketing practices adopted by Indian companies and their contribution to sustainable development in India. The study analyses corporate initiatives undertaken to minimise environmental impact through sustainable production, eco-friendly product development, renewable energy use, waste reduction, and environmental conservation projects, while also evaluating how responsibly and sustainably companies operate beyond financial performance.

This study further explores marketing strategies that encourage consumer preference for environmentally responsible products and support India's sustainable development objectives. Additionally, it examines the legal and regulatory framework governing green marketing and its role in ensuring transparency and preventing misleading environmental claims.

Keywords:

Green Marketing, Business Approach, Corporate Initiatives, Environmental Responsibility, Sustainable Economic Growth.

1. Introduction:-

Environmental sustainability has become an important strategic concern in the modern business environment due to growing awareness of environmental degradation. In response, businesses have increasingly adopted green marketing, which involves developing, promoting, and distributing environmentally responsible products and services while balancing profitability and sustainability. India, as one of the world's fastest-growing economies, faces major environmental challenges. At the same time, increasing consumer awareness, government initiatives, and commitment towards sustainable development have encouraged businesses to adopt environmentally responsible practices. Across sectors such as FMCG, automobile, information technology, and energy, Indian companies are integrating green marketing strategies to strengthen brand value, gain competitive advantage, and promote sustainable growth. This paper examines the concept and growth of green marketing in India, analyses the regulatory framework and key drivers influencing its adoption, and evaluates selected company practices to understand their contribution towards sustainable development.

2. Conceptual Framework of Green Marketing

Green marketing encompasses a firm's efforts to design, promote, price, and distribute products in a manner that is environmentally sustainable. It operates across four primary dimensions:

Green Product Design: Incorporating recyclable materials, minimising toxic inputs, designing for end-of-life disassembly, and reducing packaging.

Green Pricing: Reflecting the true environmental cost of products, offering price incentives for eco-friendly choices, and communicating value beyond price.

Green Distribution: Optimising supply chains to reduce emissions, using electric or low-carbon logistics, and designing distribution networks for minimal ecological footprint.

Green Promotion: Communicating environmental attributes transparently, avoiding greenwashing, obtaining credible third-party certification, and educating consumers.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework for Green Marketing in India

3.1 Ecomark Rules, 2024: An Ecomark certification may be granted only to products that possess a valid licence or certificate of conformity under the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016 or comply with applicable Quality Control Orders issued by the Central Government, and satisfy the prescribed environmental criteria. The criteria for certification emphasise environmental sustainability by encouraging reduction of pollution through minimisation of waste and emissions, promotion of recyclable and recycled materials, conservation of non-renewable resources including energy, and limitation of materials causing adverse environmental impacts[1].

Also factors considered for granting Ecomark certification include the production process, sourcing of raw materials, efficient use of natural resources, environmental impact, emissions and waste generation, disposal and packaging practices, compliance with Extended Producer

[1] Press Information Bureau, Government of India, "Press Release" (date of publication), available at: PIB Press Release (last visited June 30, 2026).

Responsibility (EPR), use of recycled and recyclable materials, and substitution of hazardous substances with environmentally safer alternatives[2].

3.2 Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 (amended 2021, 2022): Prohibits specific single-use plastic items and mandates Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR-means the responsibility of a producer for the environmentally sound management of the product until the end of its life) for plastic packaging, compelling companies to either recycle their plastic footprint or pay into a recycling fund[3].

3.3 E-Waste Management Rules, 2022: Establishes EPR obligations for manufacturer, producers and importers of electronic equipment, requiring collection and environmentally sound recycling targets[4].

3.4 SEBI BRSR (Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting) Framework, 2021: Mandates the top 1,000 listed companies (by market capitalisation) to report on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) parameters in a standardised format, creating a significant disclosure obligation and incentivising genuine green performance. This is not merely presenting the data collected, but an approach to drive an organization's commitment to sustainability and demonstrate it to the interested parties in a transparent manner.

Since 2020, there have been accelerating incentives from the United Nations (UN) to overlay ESG data with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), based on their work, which began in the 1980s. In less than 20 years, the ESG movement has grown from a corporate social responsibility initiative launched by the United Nations into a global phenomenon[5].

3.5 Consumer Protection Act, 2019 and CCPA Guidelines: Empower the Central Consumer Protection Authority to act against misleading environmental claims in advertising and labelling. The District Collector is empowered to make investigation regarding the complain. Where the Central Authority is satisfied after investigation that any person is found

---

[2] The Ecomark Rules, 2024, Rule 3, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, Gazette of India.

[3] The Plastic Waste Management rules, 2016, Rule 9.

[4] The E-Waste Management Rules,2022, Rule 5, 6 & 7

[5] The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, *Background Material on Sustainability and Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) (Revised Edition 2024)*, Sustainability Reporting Standards Board, New Delhi (2024), available at ICAI Sustainability BRSR Background Material (last visited June 29, 2026).

to publish, or is a party to the publication of, a misleading advertisement, it may impose on such person a penalty which may extend to ten lakh rupees[6].

3.6 Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) Guidelines on Environmental Claims, 2023: The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) takes a pivotal stride towards enhancing transparency and accountability in environmental advertising through the unveiling of comprehensive draft guidelines on "Environmental/Green Claim. It provides specific guidance on substantiation requirements for environmental claims in advertising, including prohibition on vague terms without qualification.

i. Absolute environmental claims such as “eco-friendly”, “sustainable”, or “planet friendly” must be supported by reliable evidence or recognised certifications and cannot be justified through disclaimers or links.
ii. Comparative claims such as “greener” must clearly demonstrate environmental benefits over previous or competing products with transparent evidence.
iii. General environmental claims should consider the product’s full life cycle and specify any limitations to avoid misleading consumers.
iv. Environmental claims must clearly indicate whether they relate to the product, packaging, service, or a specific component.
v. Advertisements should not exaggerate environmental benefits or highlight legally required standards as unique advantages; “free-of” claims must be accurate and properly explained.
vi. Certifications or seals used in advertisements must clearly identify the evaluated environmental attributes and be issued by accredited agencies.
vii. Advertisements should avoid visual elements that falsely imply environmental benefits, unless directly linked to substantiated environmental claims.
viii. Future environmental commitments should only be advertised when supported by clear and actionable implementation plans.
ix. Carbon offset claims must disclose if offsets occur after two years and cannot present legally required reductions as voluntary environmental achievements.
x. Claims such as compostable, biodegradable, recyclable, non-toxic, or free-of must be scientifically supported and clearly specify their scope and environmental impact[7].

[6] The Consumer Protection Act,2019, s.21(4).

4. International Frameworks and Guidelines

4.1 ICC Framework for responsible environmental Marketing Communications

The ICC Framework for Responsible Environmental Marketing Communications provides the global self-regulatory standard for ensuring that environmental marketing is both responsible and ethical. From marketing agencies to individual influencers and from small businesses to global brands, the ICC Environmental Framework applies to all those in the marketing and advertising ecosystem and supports companies in applying consistent standards across jurisdictions.

The Environmental Framework builds on the ICC Advertising and Marketing Communication Code, a international go-to guide for responsible marketing and advertising. It is the benchmark for almost 50 self-regulatory codes in countries around the world. Since 1937, it protects consumers and supports advertising and creative freedom by setting the standard for responsible advertising and marketing communication all over the world.

The ICC Code, 2024 covers some of the biggest issues facing the advertising and marketing industries. From influencer marketing, AI and environmental claims, to marketing to children and teenagers, the ICC Code has it covered[8].

4.2 UNEP Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information: These guidelines developed by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Trade Centre (ITC), helping companies to communicate sustainability performance clearly and assist governments in standardizing labels to empower informed consumer choices.

4.3 International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network- ICPEN an organisation composed of consumer protection authorities from over 70 countries, representing some 5 billion global citizen-consumers. It organised a Global Consumer Protection Campaign 2025 (#Greenwashing Alert) empowering consumers to identify and avoid misleading advertising strategies, demand transparency in environmental information,

[7] Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), *Guidelines for Advertisements Making Environmental/Green Claims* (2024), available at: ASCI Guidelines for Advertisements Making Environmental/Green Claims (last visited June 30, 2026).

[8] International Chamber of Commerce, *ICC Framework for Responsible Environmental Marketing Communications* (International Chamber of Commerce, Paris).

and promote responsible consumption that encourages the choice of products and services with a real and positive environmental impact.

5. Strategies behind Green Marketing

5.1 Tata Group

Tata Group integrates green marketing through a holistic strategy centered on sustainable innovation, renewable energy, and eco-friendly manufacturing. Driven by their Group-wide **Aalingana** (sustainability) vision, they champion "Green Energy for Green Mobility" to achieve net-zero emissions, influencing branding and corporate reputation across multiple subsidiaries. Tata Group's green marketing and sustainability initiatives span several key areas[9]:

a. Automotive & Mobility: Tata Motors promotes sustainable transportation by expanding its Electric Vehicle (EV) portfolio and targeting net-zero greenhouse gas emissions for passenger vehicles by 2040. Through its 'Go Green' initiative, launched in partnership with an NGO, the company plants a sapling for every new commercial vehicle sold and for customer vehicle servicing. Customers receive a certificate and geotagged plantation link to track the sapling, supporting environmental awareness and increasing green cover across multiple states in India.

b. Energy Production: Tata Power is actively transitioning to renewables, with plans to develop massive solar and wind capacities in Tamil Nadu and investments in pumped hydro storage, targeting 100% renewable electricity in their operations.

c. Sustainable Manufacturing: Tata Green Batteries (a joint venture with GS Yuasa) employs zero-effluent discharge and RoHS-compliant manufacturing processes, aligning their core operations with environmental stewardship.

d. FMCG & Supply Chain: Tata Consumer Products Limited (TCPL) utilizes circular economy models to optimize packaging material and reduce the use of natural resources through their "Better Living" and sustainable sourcing initiatives.

[9] Tata Sustainability Group, *Climate Change and Energy*, available at Tata Sustainability – Climate Change and Energy (last visited June 30, 2026).

5.2 Patanjali Ayurved Ltd

Patanjali Ayurved Limited (PAL) transformed green marketing into a competitive advantage by integrating sustainability across its operations and modified 5 P's of marketing.

Product: Centered on 'Swadeshi' (indigenous manufacturing) and completely chemical/preservative-free formulations to win consumer health trust.

Pricing: Removed the "green premium" barrier by pricing its natural alternatives 10% to 30% cheaper than conventional rivals, capturing the lower-income mass market.

Place: Funneled distribution through an exclusive network of 'Swadeshi Kendras', 'Arogya Kendras', and 'Chikitsalayas' (clinics offering free doctor consultations, with proprietary medicines bought on-site).

Promotion: Leveraged mass-market 'umbrella branding' (selling everything from soap to flour under the single "Patanjali" name) to reduce individual product advertising costs and foster collective brand equity.

Packaging: Retained a hyper-simple design aesthetic to communicate a philosophy of eco-simplicity, scaling so rapidly that packaging giants (e.g., Manjushree Technopack) established local plants near PAL's base in Haridwar.

PAL's market success significantly influenced India's FMCG sector, prompting competitors such as Hindustan Unilever, Colgate-Palmolive, Nestle, Dabur, Emami, and Himalaya to expand their herbal and environmentally oriented product portfolios to remain competitive.

5.3 ITC Limited

ITC is a market leader in India's FMCG sector, housing over 25 indigenous brands. As the clear market leader in the Indian paperboard and packaging industry, ITC provides eco-friendly packaging solutions and manufactures high-quality specialty paper and paperboards. Through their pioneering **e-Choupal** initiative, they digitally connect millions of farmers to agricultural markets. ITC's green marketing strategy in sustainable packaging is based on reducing environmental impact through innovation, circular economy practices, and eco-friendly packaging solutions. Under its ITC Next vision, the company adopts a three-pronged approach:

Better Plastic by making packaging reusable, recyclable, and biodegradable;

Less Plastic by reducing plastic intensity, increasing recycled content, and using life cycle assessments; and

No Plastic by developing alternatives through renewable materials such as paper, wood, bamboo, bagasse, and moulded fibre technologies.

The company has introduced packaging modifications across its product portfolio by replacing conventional plastics with eco-friendly alternatives. Examples include **Aashirvaad Namma Chakki Customized Atta**, which uses a premium paper-based pack replacing over 70% of plastic content; **Sunfeast Farmlite Core Digestive (800g Pack)**, introduced with a 100% paper outer bag; **Savlon Wet Wipes**, redesigned with a PET layer containing 70% post-consumer recycled (PCR) plastic; **Engage Perfume Spray (120 ml)**, launched in PET bottles containing 50% PCR to reduce virgin plastic use; and **Mangaldeep's 3-in-1 Scent portfolio**, which transitioned from multi-layer plastics to 100% mono-material laminate.

Additionally, ITC developed **BioSeal**, a sustainable paperboard solution with environment-friendly coating technology as an alternative to multi-layer plastic packaging for food service and delivery applications. These initiatives reflect ITC's strategy of reducing virgin plastic consumption, promoting recyclability, and advancing circular economy practices[10].

5.4 Hindustan Unilever limited

Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) adopts a comprehensive green marketing strategy centred on circular economy principles, sustainable packaging, low-carbon operations, and responsible sourcing.

a. Plastic Circularity and Waste Management : HUL follows a circular economy approach by collecting and responsibly processing more plastic than it uses in the packaging of finished goods since 2021. The company also promotes 100% Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) to strengthen sustainable waste management systems.

b. Adoption of Post-Consumer Recycled (PCR) Packaging: HUL increasingly replaces virgin plastic with post-consumer recycled (PCR) plastic across its packaging portfolio. In collaboration with Banyan Nation, it became one of the first companies in India to introduce PCR bottles and has expanded PCR integration across 25 brands.

c. Project Circular Bharat: Through Project Circular Bharat, HUL advances green marketing by combining behaviour change initiatives for source segregation, inclusion of waste workers, and development of integrated recycling infrastructure to create a closed-loop circular system.

[10] ITC Limited, *ITC Sustainability Report 2026* (ITC Limited, 2026).

d. Green Logistics and Low-Carbon Transportation: Under its "Load More, Travel Less" strategy, HUL improves transport efficiency to reduce fuel consumption and emissions, while integrating electric vehicles (EVs) and exploring natural gas alternatives in logistics operations.

e. Sustainable Sourcing and Industrial Partnerships: HUL promotes responsible sourcing through partnerships for sustainable raw materials, including sustainable soda ash procurement for detergent manufacturing.

f. Product Innovation for Climate Action: Through innovations such as Stratos, HUL reduces dependence on high greenhouse gas-impact palm oil and promotes deforestation-free alternatives, integrating sustainability into product design and development[11].

5.5 Mamaearth

Mamaearth's green marketing strategy is built around environmental sustainability, afforestation, and circular packaging practices. Through its **"Plant Goodness"** initiative, the company links every customer purchase to tree plantation and provides traceable updates through GPS coordinates and photographs of saplings, contributing to large-scale afforestation across India and supporting environmental conservation. The brand further strengthens its sustainability commitment through investments in agroforestry projects involving teak, mahogany, and cocoa plantations. In partnership with authorised Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) recyclers, the company diverts significant quantities of plastic waste from oceans and landfills while progressively adopting post-consumer recycled (PCR) materials to reduce dependence on virgin plastic. Combined with its **toxin-free product** positioning and use of recycled packaging materials, these initiatives establish Mamaearth as an environmentally responsible and sustainability-driven brand.

5.6. Dabur

Dabur's green marketing strategy is built on its strong herbal and Ayurvedic identity supported by sustainability-driven innovation and research. It's strategy is strongly reflected in its brand philosophy and logo through the concept of a **"Herbal Kingdom – A Greener Tomorrow."** Through its **"bush-to-brand"** approach, Dabur integrates natural ingredient sourcing, scientific product development, and environmental responsibility across the product

[11] Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL), Sustainability Highlights FY 2024–2025 (last visited June 30, 2026).

life cycle. Its in-house research team undertakes extensive testing of ingredients and products to ensure quality while promoting sustainable practices such as recycling and reusing herbal waste and conducting life cycle assessments. By combining Ayurvedic expertise with eco-conscious production processes, Dabur positions itself as a natural and environmentally responsible brand[12].

Conclusion :

Green marketing is no longer a niche or reputational indulgence for Indian companies, it is rapidly becoming a competitive necessity. The case studies presented in this paper demonstrate that India's most successful companies are those that have integrated environmental responsibility into the core of their business strategy, producing authentic green marketing narratives that resonate with consumers, investors, regulators, and communities.

REFERENCES

- Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), Guidelines for Advertisements Making Environmental/Green Claims (2024), available at: https://ascionline.in (last visited June 30, 2026).
- Dabur India Limited, Our Vision, available at: https://www.dabur.com (last visited June 30, 2026).
- Government of India, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, The Ecomark Rules, 2024, Gazette of India.
- Government of India, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 (as amended in 2021 and 2022).
- Government of India, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, E-Waste Management Rules, 2022.
- Hindustan Unilever Limited, Sustainability Highlights FY 2024–2025, available at: https://www.hul.co.in (last visited June 30, 2026).
- Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), Background Material on Sustainability and Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR), Revised Edition (2024), Sustainability Reporting Standards Board, New Delhi.

[12] Dabur India Limited, Our Vision (last visited June 30, 2026).

- International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), ICC Framework for Responsible Environmental Marketing Communications, Paris.
- ITC Limited, ITC Sustainability Report 2026, ITC Limited (2026).
- Press Information Bureau, Government of India, Press Release on Ecomark Rules, 2024, available at: https://pib.gov.in (last visited June 30, 2026).
- Tata Sustainability Group, Climate Change and Energy, available at: https://www.tata.com/sustainability (last visited June 30, 2026).
- The Consumer Protection Act, 2019.
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) & International Trade Centre (ITC), Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information.
- International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network (ICPEN), Global Consumer Protection Campaign 2025.
- Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) Framework, 2021.