



IntelliMindEd, 2(6); 2026, 647-656

DOI: [10.69687/ime.nseeepsd.2026.1.55](https://doi.org/10.69687/ime.nseeepsd.2026.1.55)

National Seminar on Effect of Ecopreneurship on Environment Protection & Sustainable Development

Green Marketing Strategies Adopted by Ecopreneurs for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development: A Study with Special Reference to Selected Indian Companies

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Abstract

Introduction: Green marketing is a vital business strategy promoting environmentally friendly products and practices, significantly influenced by rising global awareness of ecological issues. Originating in the 1980s, it emphasizes sustainability across product development, packaging, and supply chains, reflecting a brand's commitment to social responsibility. As public awareness of global warming and pollution increases, demand for eco-friendly products continues to rise across various sectors, including consumer goods, industrial products, and services.

Methodology: The paper utilizes secondary data sourced from a variety of research papers, journals, articles, reports, and relevant company websites, ensuring a comprehensive analysis of existing literature and information for its conclusions. It is organised around two objectives: to study the concept of green marketing and its challenges, and to explain the green marketing strategies adopted by some selected Indian ecopreneurs for environmental protection and sustainable development. The literature reviewed covers Sathish T (2024) on green marketing in the digital era, Soumen Nath, Soumi Chakraborty and Kallal Banerjee (2023) on green marketing and sustainable development in India, Geetesh Yadav (2022) on the

IntelliMindEd | ISSN: 2998-8527, USA | National Seminar on Effect of Ecopreneurship on Environment Protection & Sustainable Development, Department of Commerce & Management Studies, AKNU, Rajamahendravaram, AP, India

three R's, Sunita P. Kharate (2021) on the Indian context, Szabo and Webster (2020) on perceived greenwashing, Mukonza and Swarts (2019) on retail sector performance, and Amoako et al. (2018) on green marketing and the SDGs.

Results & Discussion: Green marketing strategies are documented across four company categories. Among FMCG companies, Colgate-Palmolive targets net-zero carbon emissions by 2040, 100% recyclable packaging by 2025 and sustainable sourcing; Hindustan Unilever prioritises reducing plastic usage, sustainable sourcing, biodegradable ingredients and recycled plastics; and Dabur India has eliminated carton packaging for Dabur Red Toothpaste under its Project Prakriti strategy, aiming for net-zero emissions by 2045 and water positivity by 2030. Among e-retailers, Amazon has eliminated single-use plastics in its Indian fulfilment centres since December 2019 and targets a 50% reduction in shipment emissions by 2030, while Myntra runs Myntra Circular and the Myntra for Earth store. Among MNCs, Infosys and TCS pursue green IT, green buildings and sustainable supply chains, and Wipro's Green ware range is RoHS compliant. Among conglomerates, ITC invests in renewable energy and water stewardship, Reliance Industries targets net-zero carbon by 2035, and L&T targets carbon neutrality by 2040 and water neutrality by 2035.

Conclusion: The study highlights the interconnectedness of green marketing and sustainable development in India, pointing to globalization as a catalyst for businesses to embrace eco-friendly practices in response to rising consumer environmental awareness. It indicates that these initiatives can enhance economic, social, and environmental progress in the country. However, it also emphasizes the necessity for further research to investigate the challenges and opportunities that accompany the implementation of green marketing and sustainability strategies in the Indian context.

Keywords: Green Marketing; Ecopreneurs; Green Marketing Mix; Greenwashing; Green Marketing Myopia; Green Product; Green Consumer; Sustainable Development; Indian Companies; Corporate Responsibility.

1. Introduction

1.1 Concept of Green Marketing

Green marketing has emerged as a vital strategy in the 21st century, emphasizing the promotion of environmentally friendly products and sustainable business practices. As
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public awareness of global warming and pollution increases, demand for eco-friendly products continues to rise across various sectors, including consumer goods, industrial products, and services. This comprehensive approach encompasses product modifications, production process alterations, packaging innovations, and shifts in advertising strategies, all aimed at reducing environmental impact and appealing to eco-conscious consumers.

Green Product: Green products focus on sustainability by minimizing environmental impacts throughout their life-cycle, characterized by features such as waste reduction, use of recycled materials, design for reuse or recycling, reliance on renewable resources, and overall lower environmental effects compared to traditional alternatives. These attributes contribute to a more sustainable economy and encourage responsible consumption practices.

Green Consumer: A green or ecological consumer prioritizes purchasing products that are environmentally friendly and sustainably produced, focusing on quality and their long-term impact on health and the environment. These consumers favour items with minimal packaging, natural ingredients, low pollution during production, minimal waste generation, and energy-efficient operation. True green consumers go beyond simply buying eco-friendly products; they also embrace a lifestyle aligned with the 3R concept of reduce, reuse, and recycle, emphasizing a commitment to sustainability in both their consumption habits and overall lifestyle choices.

Green Marketing Mix: A green marketing mix incorporates sustainable practices into the traditional four Ps — product, price, place, and promotion — by ensuring that products are environmentally friendly, priced to reflect their eco-benefits, distributed through sustainable channels, and promoted with messaging that emphasizes their environmental advantages. This approach not only helps reduce the ecological footprint

of products but also appeals to environmentally conscious consumers, driving brand loyalty and enhancing corporate responsibility.

Green marketing mix elements: The four fundamental elements of green marketing — product, price, place, and promotion — highlight the strategic approach businesses need to adopt for sustainability. Companies should develop products from non-toxic, eco-friendly materials that minimize waste, recognizing that while these green products might incur higher costs, many consumers are willing to pay a premium for environmentally responsible options. Logistics management plays a crucial role in the place aspect, as optimizing transportation can significantly reduce carbon emissions and the overall carbon footprint. Lastly, effective promotion through advertising and social media is essential to communicate the environmental advantages of these products, attracting environmentally conscious consumers and enhancing brand loyalty.

1.2 Challenges in Green Marketing

Green Washing: Greenwashing is a deceptive marketing strategy that companies use to falsely portray their products or practices as environmentally friendly, often through exaggerated claims or misleading visuals. This tactic exploits the increasing consumer demand for sustainable options, ultimately aiming to enhance the company's reputation without substantial environmental commitment. It can undermine genuine efforts towards sustainability and mislead consumers who are seeking to make eco-conscious choices.

Green Marketing Myopia: Green marketing requires a careful balance between enhancing environmental quality and meeting customer needs, as neglecting either can lead to “green marketing myopia.” Companies focusing solely on the ecological benefits of natural and organic products may alienate consumers if they don't also highlight immediate advantages relevant to their lives. To succeed, brands must effectively

communicate eco-friendly promises while ensuring customer satisfaction, thus fostering loyalty and long-term success.

2. Literature Review

Gautam Rawat and Mohan Chandra Pande in their paper "Adoption of Green Marketing Strategies" and Sathish T in his paper "A Systematic Review Of Green Marketing In Digital Era (2024)" provides a comprehensive analysis of current research on green marketing practices, particularly in the context of digital strategies. The study explores how digital marketing techniques can effectively promote environmental sustainability and influence consumer behaviours towards green products, while also investigating the role of technological innovations in enhancing green marketing efforts. By synthesizing existing literature, the paper aims to highlight the evolving landscape of green marketing in a digital-first world.

Soumen Nath, Soumi Chakraborty, and Dr. Kallal Banerjee in their study "Green marketing and sustainable development in India: A comparative study (2023)" emphasize the growing importance of green marketing as a pivotal strategy for advancing sustainable development in both India and other nations, highlighting its relevance in addressing contemporary market demands and environmental challenges.

"Green Marketing In India: An Overview (2022)" authored by Geetesh Yadav's paper highlights the foundational principles of green marketing through the "three R's": Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle, illustrating their vital role in promoting sustainable practices in India. The study aims to explore the emerging phenomenon of green marketing, underscoring its necessity and relevance in the Indian context while also identifying the challenges faced by businesses in adopting these strategies. Additionally, it aims to analyse the current trends in green marketing, contributing to a deeper understanding of its impact on sustainable business practices within the country.

"Green Marketing In Indian Context (2021)" by Ms. Sunita P. Kharate explains pros and cons of green marketing in detail as well as the Indian context of green marketing along with how customer has been accepting it. It covers the widespread scope which includes modifications in manufacturing process to the marketing strategy of a business.

The study "Perceived green washing: the effects of green marketing on environmental and product perceptions (2020)" conducted by Szerena Szabo and Jane Webster explored the complex dynamics of green marketing, specifically focusing on how consumers perceive green washing, along with its impact on environmental and product perceptions. Their findings suggest that these perceptions are intricately linked not only to consumer satisfaction but also to the level of interactivity on websites, indicating that digital engagement plays a significant role in shaping consumer attitudes toward green marketing initiatives.

"The influence of green marketing strategies on business performance and corporate image in the retail sector (2019)" by Chipu Mukonza, Ilze Swarts focussed on analysing the green marketing strategies used by many companies to improve their corporate image and business performance.

In their paper, "Green marketing and the SDGs: emerging market perspective (2018)", George Kofi Amoako, Robert Kwame Dzogbenuku, Joshua Doe, and Geoffrey Kwasi Adjaisson explored the role of sustainable marketing strategies in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), highlighting a positive correlation between green marketing initiatives and consumer purchasing behaviour. Their research emphasizes the importance of eco-friendly marketing in promoting sustainable practices within emerging markets, suggesting that effective green marketing can enhance both environmental outcomes and business success.

3. Objectives

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1. To study the concept of green marketing and its challenges.
2. To explain the green marketing strategies adopted by some selected Indian ecopreneurs for environmental protection and sustainable development.

4. Research Methodology

The paper utilizes secondary data sourced from a variety of research papers, journals, articles, reports, and relevant company websites, ensuring a comprehensive analysis of existing literature and information for its conclusions.

5. Green Marketing Strategies Adopted by Indian Companies

5.1 FMCG Companies

5.1.1 Colgate-Palmolive: Colgate-Palmolive's green marketing strategies emphasize sustainability throughout its value chain, targeting significant goals such as achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2040, ensuring 100% recyclable packaging by 2025, and committing to sustainable sourcing practices. These initiatives reflect the company's dedication to minimizing plastic waste and enhancing water conservation efforts, positioning Colgate-Palmolive as a leader with environmentally responsible business practices.

5.1.2 Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL): Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) has actively embraced green marketing strategies by prioritizing initiatives such as reducing plastic usage, sourcing materials sustainably, minimizing waste, incorporating biodegradable ingredients, utilizing recycled plastics, enhancing transparency regarding carbon footprints, and significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions. These efforts not only align with global sustainability goals but also resonate with environmentally conscious consumers, reinforcing HUL's commitment to a greener planet.

5.1.3 Dabur India: Dabur India is taking significant steps towards environmental sustainability by eliminating carton packaging for its Dabur Red Toothpaste and

partnering with Reliance Retail for direct sales in select stores. This initiative not only reduces paper waste — redirected towards providing notebooks for underprivileged children — but also aligns with Dabur's broader "Project Prakriti" strategy, which aims for net-zero emissions by 2045, water positivity by 2030, and proactive measures against climate change, water scarcity, and plastic pollution.

5.2 e-Retailer Companies

5.2.1 Amazon: Amazon has committed to eliminating single-use plastics in its fulfilment centres in India by implementing measures such as using paper cushions for packaging instead of bubble wraps and replacing plastic tapes with biodegradable paper options since December 2019. Additionally, the company aims to achieve net-zero carbon emissions in all shipments, targeting a 50% reduction by 2030.

5.2.2 Myntra: Myntra effectively utilizes green marketing strategies by emphasizing sustainable practices, collaborating with eco-friendly brands, and launching initiatives such as "Myntra Circular," which focuses on pre-owned clothing, and the "Myntra for Earth" store. These efforts not only align with consumer values but also aim to mitigate the environmental impact of the fashion industry, showcasing Myntra's commitment to sustainability.

5.3 MNCs

5.3.1 Infosys & TCS: Infosys and TCS focus on sustainability goals through initiatives like green IT, green buildings, and sustainable supply chains.

5.3.2 Wipro: Wipro InfoTech's introduction of the Wipro Green ware range marks a significant step in promoting sustainable technology in India, showcasing their commitment to environmental responsibility. By ensuring that these desktops and laptops are RoHS compliant, Wipro not only reduces hazardous substances in their

products but also contributes to minimizing e-waste, thereby addressing critical environmental concerns associated with electronic devices.

5.4 Conglomerate Companies

5.4.1 ITC: ITC's commitment to green marketing reflects its holistic approach to sustainability, integrating eco-friendly practices in manufacturing and packaging with robust waste recycling initiatives. By investing in renewable energy, promoting water stewardship, and supporting sustainable agriculture, ITC not only aims to minimize its environmental footprint but also enhance social welfare, thereby positioning itself as a leader in corporate responsibility within the Indian market.

5.4.2 Reliance Industries: Reliance Industries is actively pursuing a comprehensive green marketing strategy that includes significant investments in renewable energy, implementing carbon reduction measures, and developing circular economy initiatives. By promoting sustainable products and practices throughout its operations, the company aims to achieve its ambitious goal of becoming a net-zero carbon entity by 2035, reflecting its commitment to environmental responsibility and sustainable growth.

5.4.3 L&T: L&T's green marketing strategies emphasize sustainable solutions such as clean energy, water management, and green infrastructure, targeting reductions in carbon emissions and enhanced resource efficiency. The company aims to foster a circular economy, setting ambitious goals to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040 and water neutrality by 2035, reflecting its commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainability.

6. Conclusion

The study highlights the interconnectedness of green marketing and sustainable development in India, pointing to globalization as a catalyst for businesses to embrace eco-friendly practices in response to rising consumer environmental awareness. It

indicates that these initiatives can enhance economic, social, and environmental progress in the country. However, it also emphasizes the necessity for further research to investigate the challenges and opportunities that accompany the implementation of green marketing and sustainability strategies in the Indian context.

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