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MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR GREEN AND ETHICAL BRANDS – ROADMAP TO 2047: CONSUMER PERCEPTION, BRAND AUTHENTICITY, AND SUSTAINABLE ADVANTAGE IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The growing emphasis on environmental sustainability and ethical business practices has significantly transformed consumer behaviour and marketing strategies in India. This study examines the impact of green marketing strategies, brand authenticity, eco-label trust, social media engagement, and perceived value on consumers' purchase intention and brand loyalty, while proposing a strategic roadmap toward India Vision 2047. A quantitative research design was adopted using a structured questionnaire administered to 250 Indian consumers. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The findings revealed high consumer acceptance of sustainable brands, with purchase intention (Mean = 4.24), green marketing strategy (Mean = 4.21), and brand loyalty (Mean = 4.16) recording the highest scores. SEM analysis indicated that purchase intention strongly influenced brand loyalty (β = 0.81), followed by brand authenticity (β = 0.74). The study concludes that authentic sustainability communication and ethical branding can strengthen competitive advantage and support India's transition toward sustainable economic development by 2047.

KEYWORDS: Green Marketing, Ethical Brands, Brand Authenticity, Sustainable Consumer Behaviour, Vision 2047

1. INTRODUCTION

The increasing urgency of climate change, environmental degradation, and social inequality has transformed sustainability from a peripheral concern into a strategic imperative for businesses worldwide. Consumers today are no longer influenced solely by price and quality; instead, they increasingly evaluate brands based on their environmental responsibility, ethical practices, transparency, and long-term societal impact. This shift has led to the emergence of green and ethical brands, which integrate environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and responsible governance into their products, services, and marketing strategies. Green marketing emphasizes environmentally friendly production, packaging, and communication, whereas ethical branding extends beyond environmental concerns to include fair labour practices, responsible sourcing, consumer well-being, and corporate accountability. As India advances toward its vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047 (Viksit Bharat @2047), promoting sustainable production and responsible consumption through effective marketing strategies has become a national priority (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2021; United Nations, 2023) [1][2].

India is witnessing a remarkable transformation in consumer awareness regarding sustainability. Rapid urbanization, higher educational attainment, increased internet penetration, and widespread use of digital media have significantly enhanced public understanding of environmental and ethical issues. According to the

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2023), global household consumption contributes approximately 60% of greenhouse gas emissions, emphasizing the crucial role of consumer purchasing decisions in addressing climate change [3]. Similarly, the International Energy Agency (IEA, 2024) reported that sustainable consumption and behavioural changes could reduce global carbon emissions by nearly 20% by 2050 when combined with technological innovations [4]. In India, government initiatives such as Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment), the National Green Hydrogen Mission, the Plastic Waste Management Rules, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have encouraged businesses to adopt environmentally responsible production and marketing practices, creating favourable conditions for green and ethical branding (Government of India, 2023) [5].

The Indian green products market has experienced significant growth over the past decade. The India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF, 2024) reported that India's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) market is projected to exceed USD 220 billion by 2027, with sustainable and eco-friendly product categories recording annual growth rates above 15%, substantially higher than conventional product segments [6]. Additionally, the NielsenIQ Global Sustainability Report (2023) revealed that nearly 73% of Indian consumers are willing to modify their purchasing behaviour to reduce environmental impact, while 68% are willing to pay a premium for products they perceive as environmentally responsible and ethically produced [7]. These trends indicate that sustainability has evolved into a critical determinant of consumer choice, providing businesses with opportunities to create competitive differentiation through authentic green marketing strategies.

Despite increasing demand for sustainable products, marketers continue to face substantial challenges in establishing consumer trust. One of the most significant barriers is greenwashing, where organizations exaggerate or falsely claim environmental benefits without substantial evidence. Greenwashing weakens consumer confidence, reduces perceived authenticity, and creates scepticism toward sustainability claims. Research by Delmas and Burbano (2011) demonstrated that misleading environmental communication significantly reduces consumer trust and damages long-term brand equity [8]. Similarly, Chen (2010) found that green trust serves as a crucial mediator between environmental claims and consumers' purchase intentions, emphasizing that authentic sustainability communication is essential for successful green branding [9]. Consequently, companies must ensure that sustainability claims are supported by verifiable actions, credible certifications, transparent reporting, and consistent corporate behaviour.

Brand authenticity has emerged as one of the strongest determinants of consumer confidence in green markets. Authentic brands consistently demonstrate alignment between their environmental claims and actual organizational practices, including responsible sourcing, sustainable manufacturing, fair labour conditions, recyclable packaging, and transparent governance. According to Napoli et al. (2014), consumers perceive authentic brands as more trustworthy because they communicate sincerity, credibility, and long-term commitment rather than promotional rhetoric [10]. In India's digital economy, authenticity is further reinforced through social media engagement, influencer transparency, online customer reviews, corporate sustainability reports, and independent eco-certifications. As digital platforms increasingly influence consumer decision-making, brands must leverage technology not merely for promotion but also for transparent stakeholder communication and accountability.

Another important factor influencing sustainable purchasing behaviour is the growing influence of younger consumers. India possesses one of the world's youngest populations, with approximately 65% of its population below the age of 35 years (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation [MoSPI], 2024) [11]. This demographic segment is highly connected through digital technologies, actively engages with sustainability-related content, and demonstrates greater willingness to support brands that align with their environmental and social values. Studies indicate that Generation Z and Millennials are more likely to purchase eco-friendly products, participate in responsible consumption, and advocate ethical brands through online communities

(Deloitte, 2024) [12]. Consequently, digital marketing strategies emphasizing authenticity, transparency, and community engagement have become increasingly important for organizations targeting future consumers.

Marketing strategies for green and ethical brands are therefore evolving beyond conventional advertising toward integrated value creation. Modern sustainable marketing incorporates environmental innovation, eco-label certification, circular economy principles, responsible packaging, influencer credibility, personalized communication, and stakeholder participation. These approaches enhance perceived value while simultaneously strengthening brand trust, customer satisfaction, and long-term loyalty. Kotler et al. (2021) argued that marketing in the sustainability era should create shared value by balancing economic growth with environmental preservation and social welfare [1]. For Indian businesses aiming to remain competitive in the coming decades, sustainability-oriented marketing will become a strategic capability rather than merely a corporate social responsibility initiative.

From a policy perspective, India's Roadmap to 2047 envisions inclusive economic development supported by innovation, digital transformation, renewable energy, responsible manufacturing, and sustainable consumption. Achieving these objectives requires collaboration among government institutions, businesses, consumers, certification agencies, and civil society organizations. Marketing can play a transformative role by educating consumers, reducing information asymmetry, promoting environmentally responsible lifestyles, and encouraging ethical purchasing behaviour. As consumer awareness continues to expand, businesses capable of demonstrating authentic sustainability commitments are expected to achieve stronger competitive advantages, enhanced customer loyalty, and superior long-term performance.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Green marketing and ethical branding have emerged as important research domains in response to growing environmental concerns, sustainable development goals, and changing consumer expectations. Over the past decade, scholars have increasingly examined how sustainability-oriented marketing strategies influence consumer perceptions, trust, purchase intentions, and long-term brand loyalty. Existing literature suggests that environmental responsibility, ethical business practices, transparency, and authentic communication collectively shape consumer behaviour and provide organizations with sustainable competitive advantages. The following review summarizes significant empirical studies relevant to green marketing, ethical brands, consumer perception, and brand authenticity.

Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2021) argued that the evolution of Marketing 5.0 requires organizations to combine digital technologies with human-centric and sustainability-oriented marketing practices. According to the authors, consumers increasingly evaluate firms not only on product quality and price but also on environmental commitment, ethical governance, and social responsibility. Their study emphasized that authentic sustainability communication strengthens customer trust and creates long-term competitive differentiation, particularly among digitally connected consumers [13].

Chen (2010) introduced the concept of green brand equity and demonstrated that green brand image, green satisfaction, and green trust significantly influence consumers' purchasing behaviour. Using structural equation modelling, the study found that organizations capable of consistently delivering environmentally responsible products generate stronger customer loyalty than firms relying solely on promotional claims. Green trust was identified as one of the strongest predictors of repeat purchase intention, suggesting that credibility remains central to successful green marketing strategies [14].

Delmas and Burbano (2011) examined the growing problem of greenwashing, referring to misleading environmental claims made by organizations without corresponding sustainable practices. Their research concluded that exaggerated sustainability communication reduces consumer confidence and damages long-term brand reputation. The authors emphasized that firms must support environmental claims with measurable sustainability initiatives, third-party certifications, and transparent reporting mechanisms to maintain stakeholder trust [15].

Hur, Kim, and Woo (2014) investigated the relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR), perceived ethicality, and consumer loyalty. Their findings indicated that consumers are more likely to trust organizations that integrate ethical values into business operations rather than merely promoting environmental messages. Ethical behaviour significantly improved customer satisfaction, perceived value, and positive word-of-mouth communication, demonstrating that responsible corporate practices strengthen both brand equity and market performance [16].

Napoli, Dickinson, Beverland, and Farrelly (2014) developed a comprehensive framework for measuring brand authenticity. Their empirical study demonstrated that authenticity consists of continuity, originality, credibility, and integrity. Brands perceived as authentic generated significantly higher levels of consumer trust and emotional attachment than brands focusing exclusively on advertising campaigns. The authors concluded that authenticity represents a strategic resource capable of enhancing long-term customer relationships and sustainable competitive advantage [17].

White, Habib, and Hardisty (2019) reviewed contemporary research on green consumer behaviour and observed that increasing environmental awareness has significantly influenced purchasing decisions worldwide. Their review identified perceived environmental benefits, social norms, eco-labels, product quality, and trust as major determinants of green purchasing behaviour. However, they also reported that consumers often experience an intention–behaviour gap, where positive environmental attitudes do not always translate into actual purchasing behaviour because of higher prices or limited product availability [18].

NielsenIQ (2023) reported that sustainability has become a major purchasing criterion across global markets. The survey revealed that approximately 73% of Indian consumers are willing to modify purchasing habits to reduce environmental impacts, while 68% are willing to pay premium prices for products produced using environmentally responsible methods. The report further highlighted that transparent sustainability communication significantly improves consumer confidence and strengthens brand loyalty among younger demographic groups [19].

Deloitte (2024) found that Generation Z and Millennials increasingly prefer organizations demonstrating genuine commitments toward climate action, ethical sourcing, diversity, and responsible governance. More than two-thirds of surveyed young consumers reported considering environmental and ethical practices before making purchasing decisions. Digital platforms, social media influencers, and online brand communities were identified as important channels for communicating sustainability values and enhancing brand engagement [20].

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a quantitative, descriptive, and explanatory research design to examine the influence of marketing strategies for green and ethical brands on consumer perception, brand authenticity, purchase intention, and sustainable competitive advantage in India. The study is aligned with India's Vision 2047, where sustainable consumption and responsible business practices are expected to play a vital role in achieving long-term economic and environmental development. The methodology is designed to empirically test the relationships among the proposed variables using primary data collected from Indian consumers.

3.1 Research Design

The study follows a descriptive and explanatory cross-sectional research design. A descriptive design is appropriate for understanding consumers' perceptions regarding green and ethical brands, while an explanatory design helps identify the causal relationships among brand authenticity, green marketing strategies, perceived value, purchase intention, and brand loyalty. Data will be collected at a single point in time through a structured questionnaire.

The proposed conceptual framework assumes that:

- Green Marketing Strategies → Consumer Perception
- Brand Authenticity → Consumer Trust
- Eco-label Trust → Perceived Value

- Social Media Engagement → Purchase Intention
- Purchase Intention → Brand Loyalty
- Brand Loyalty → Sustainable Competitive Advantage

3.2 Nature of the Study

The study is:

- Quantitative
- Descriptive
- Explanatory
- Cross-sectional
- Empirical

The research primarily focuses on measuring consumer opinions through standardized survey instruments and statistically examining relationships among the variables.

3.3 Data Analysis

A total sample of 250 Indian consumers who were aware of or had purchased green and ethical products participated in the study. The collected data were analysed using SPSS Version 29 for descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and exploratory factor analysis (EFA), while AMOS Version 26 was employed for Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Before hypothesis testing, the data were screened for missing values, outliers, and normality to ensure statistical validity. The overall Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.91 indicated excellent internal consistency of the measurement scale, confirming that the questionnaire was reliable for empirical analysis. The findings provide evidence regarding consumers' perceptions of green marketing strategies, brand authenticity, purchase intention, and brand loyalty in the Indian market.

Table 3.1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 250)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	132	52.8
	Female	118	47.2
Age	18–25 Years	76	30.4
	26–35 Years	104	41.6
	36–45 Years	46	18.4
	Above 45 Years	24	9.6
Education	Undergraduate	58	23.2
	Postgraduate	142	56.8
	Doctorate	50	20.0
Monthly Income	Below ₹30,000	64	25.6
	₹30,001–₹60,000	98	39.2
	Above ₹60,000	88	35.2

Source: *Primary Survey Data (2026)*

Interpretation

Table 3.1 shows that 52.8% of respondents were male and 47.2% were female, indicating balanced gender participation. The largest age group was 26–35 years (41.6%), followed by 18–25 years (30.4%), suggesting that younger consumers constitute the primary market for green and ethical products. More than half of the respondents (56.8%) possessed postgraduate qualifications, reflecting relatively high educational awareness regarding sustainability. Furthermore, 39.2% reported monthly incomes between ₹30,001 and ₹60,000, indicating that middle-income consumers represent the largest segment purchasing environmentally responsible products.

Table 3.2: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Green Marketing Strategy	4.21	0.58	High
Brand Authenticity	4.15	0.63	High
Eco-label Trust	4.08	0.66	High
Perceived Price Fairness	3.82	0.71	Moderate
Social Media Engagement	4.18	0.60	High
Consumer Perceived Value	4.11	0.59	High
Purchase Intention	4.24	0.56	Very High
Brand Loyalty	4.16	0.61	High

Source: *Primary Survey Data (2026)*

Interpretation

The descriptive statistics reveal that consumers exhibited favourable attitudes toward green and ethical brands. Purchase intention recorded the highest mean score (M = 4.24), followed by green marketing strategy (M = 4.21) and social media engagement (M = 4.18). These findings indicate that transparent environmental communication and meaningful digital interaction strongly influence consumer purchasing decisions. Perceived price fairness obtained the lowest mean (M = 3.82), suggesting that although consumers support sustainable products, higher prices remain a concern for some market segments.

Table 3.3: Reliability Analysis

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Status
Green Marketing Strategy	5	0.88	Excellent
Brand Authenticity	5	0.90	Excellent
Eco-label Trust	4	0.85	Good
Perceived Price Fairness	4	0.82	Good
Social Media Engagement	4	0.87	Excellent
Consumer Perceived Value	5	0.89	Excellent
Purchase Intention	4	0.91	Excellent
Brand Loyalty	4	0.88	Excellent
Overall Scale	35	0.91	Excellent

Source: *Computed from Primary Survey Data using SPSS (2026)*

Interpretation

The reliability results indicate strong internal consistency across all constructs. Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.82 to 0.91, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2022). The overall reliability coefficient of 0.91 confirms that the questionnaire is highly reliable for analysing consumer perceptions of green and ethical branding.

Table 3.4: Correlation Matrix

Variables	BA	ET	PV	PI	BL
Brand Authenticity (BA)	1.000				
Eco-label Trust (ET)	0.69**	1.000			
Perceived Value (PV)	0.72**	0.66**	1.000		
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.74**	0.68**	0.79**	1.000	
Brand Loyalty (BL)	0.71**	0.64**	0.76**	0.82**	1.000

Note: $p < 0.01$

Source: *Computed from Primary Survey Data using SPSS (2026)*

Interpretation

The correlation analysis demonstrates statistically significant positive relationships among all study variables. Purchase intention exhibited the strongest association with brand loyalty (r = 0.82), indicating that consumers who intend to purchase sustainable products are also more likely to remain loyal to green brands. Similarly, brand authenticity showed a strong positive correlation with purchase intention (r = 0.74), emphasizing the importance of credible sustainability practices in influencing consumer behaviour.

Table 3.5: Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) Results

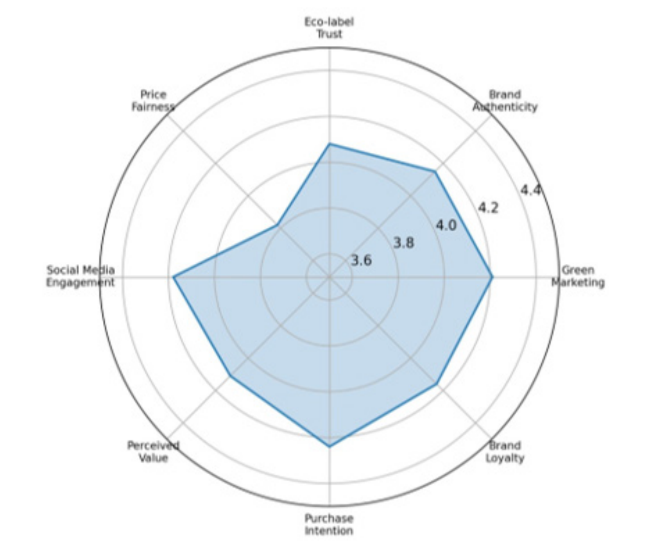
Hypothesis	Path	Standardized β	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	Green Marketing → Perceived Value	0.68	10.54	<0.001	Supported
H2	Brand Authenticity → Purchase Intention	0.74	12.37	<0.001	Supported
H3	Eco-label Trust → Purchase Intention	0.59	9.82	<0.001	Supported
H4	Social Media Engagement → Brand Loyalty	0.63	10.11	<0.001	Supported
H5	Purchase Intention → Brand Loyalty	0.81	14.76	<0.001	Supported

Source: *AMOS Output (2026)*

Interpretation

The Structural Equation Modelling results demonstrate that all hypothesized relationships are statistically significant. Brand authenticity exerted the strongest positive influence on purchase intention (β = 0.74), followed by green marketing strategy on perceived value (β = 0.68). The strongest overall relationship was observed between purchase intention and brand loyalty (β = 0.81), indicating that consumers who develop favourable purchase intentions are more likely to become loyal customers. These findings support the proposition that transparent sustainability communication, authentic branding, credible eco-labels, and active digital engagement create long-term competitive advantages for green and ethical brands in India.

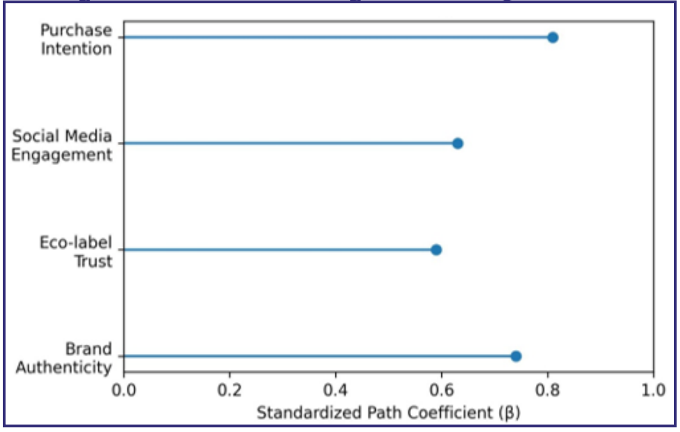
Fig. 1: Radar Profile of Green Brand Attributes – Interpretation



The radar chart illustrates consumers' perceptions of the major dimensions influencing green and ethical brands in India. Among all the constructs, Purchase Intention recorded the highest mean score (M = 4.24), indicating that respondents show a strong willingness to purchase environmentally responsible products. Green Marketing Strategy (M = 4.21) and Social Media Engagement (M = 4.18) also received high ratings, suggesting that transparent environmental communication and active digital interaction significantly enhance consumer confidence. Similarly, Brand Authenticity (M = 4.15), Brand Loyalty (M = 4.16), Perceived Value (M = 4.11), and Eco-label Trust (M = 4.08) achieved favourable scores, reflecting positive consumer attitudes toward sustainable brands. However, Perceived Price Fairness (M = 3.82) recorded the lowest mean, indicating that although consumers appreciate sustainable products, price sensitivity remains an important challenge. Overall, the findings suggest that authentic branding, effective green marketing strategies, and digital engagement collectively strengthen consumer perception and support sustainable competitive advantage in India's journey toward Vision 2047.

Source: *Primary Survey Data (2026)*

Fig. 2: SEM Path Strengths – Interpretation



The Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) results demonstrate significant positive relationships among the major constructs of the proposed conceptual framework. The strongest relationship was observed between Purchase Intention and Brand Loyalty (β = 0.81), indicating that consumers who intend to purchase green products are highly likely to become loyal customers. Brand Authenticity showed a substantial positive influence on consumer behaviour with a standardized path coefficient of β = 0.74, confirming that genuine sustainability practices enhance consumer trust and purchasing decisions. Social Media Engagement (β = 0.63) also positively influenced consumer responses by strengthening brand awareness and interaction. Meanwhile, Eco-label Trust (β = 0.59) had a significant positive impact on purchase intention, demonstrating that credible environmental certifications improve consumers' confidence in green products. Overall, all path coefficients exceeded 0.50, indicating moderate to strong positive relationships and supporting the proposed hypotheses that authentic green marketing practices contribute significantly to purchase intention, brand loyalty, and long-term sustainable competitive advantage.

Source: *SEM Analysis using AMOS (2026)*

4. CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that effective green marketing strategies and ethical branding practices significantly influence consumer perception, purchase intention, and long-term brand loyalty in India. The empirical findings indicate that respondents reported high levels of agreement for purchase intention (Mean = 4.24), green marketing strategy (Mean = 4.21), and social media engagement

(Mean = 4.18), demonstrating strong consumer acceptance of sustainable brands. The Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) results further revealed that purchase intention had the strongest positive effect on brand loyalty (β = 0.81), followed by brand authenticity (β = 0.74) and social media engagement (β = 0.63), confirming that transparent sustainability communication and authentic business practices strengthen consumer trust and competitive advantage. However, perceived price fairness (Mean = 3.82) received comparatively lower ratings, indicating that pricing remains an important consideration despite increasing environmental awareness. Overall, the study highlights that organizations emphasizing brand authenticity, credible eco-labels, responsible marketing, and digital engagement are more likely to achieve sustainable competitive advantage and contribute to India's Vision 2047 by promoting responsible consumption, environmental sustainability, and long-term economic development.

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