

Digital Marketing as a Catalyst for Promoting Sustainable and Ethical Consumption: An Indian Perspective towards Achieving SDG 12

Aiman khan
Research Scholar
Teerthanker Mahaveer Institute of Management and Technology
Teerthanker Mahaveer University
Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh

Amit Kansal
Professor
Teerthanker Mahaveer University
Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh

Abstract

With growing environmental concerns and increasing awareness of sustainability in India, digital marketing is emerging as a powerful tool to influence ethical consumer behavior. This paper examines how digital platforms- social media, influencer campaigns, AI, and content marketing- are being used to encourage sustainable consumption among Indian consumers. Emphasis is placed on SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and the strategies adopted by Indian brands such as Tata, FabIndia, and Forest Essentials to integrate sustainability into their digital marketing practices. The study draws from secondary data , case studies , and academic literature, offering insights into how digital marketing can shape the future of ethical consumerism in India. And given the increasing emphasis on climate consciousness, corporate transparency, and consumer empowerment, understanding the role of digital marketing in fostering sustainable practices becomes critical. This paper aims to bridge the gap between marketing innovation and environmental responsibility by analyzing trends, case studies, and digital consumer engagement patterns in the Indian context. Through an evidence-based approach, it highlights the urgency of leveraging technology to promote sustainability while maintaining competitive advantage and consumer loyalty.

Keywords: Digital marketing, sustainable consumption, India, SDG 12, ethical branding, consumer behavior

1.Introduction

India , with its vast population and rapid digitalization, stands at a unique intersection of tradition and modern consumerism. The country faces mounting environmental challenges- overconsumption, pollution, and rising carbon footprints- necessitating a shift towards sustainable living. Digital marketing, powered by the internet revolution and smartphone penetration, plays a vital role in influencing consumer behavior (IAMAI, 2023).This paper explores how digital marketing can be strategically used in India to promote ethical and sustainable consumption aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12.

2.Objectives of the Study

1. To examine how digital marketing strategies act as catalysts for promoting both sustainable and ethical consumption behaviors among India consumers.
2. To assess the effectiveness of specific digital marketing tools (e.g., social media campaigns , influencer partnership, content marketing) in advancing the targets of SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production) within the Indian market.
3. To explore the key challenges and enabling factors faced by Indian businesses when implementing digital marketing initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable and ethical consumption.

3.Literature Review

Sustainable consumption involves meeting present needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet theirs (UNDP, 2021). In India, the National Action Plan on Climate Change and the Swachh Bharat Mission emphasize behavioral change and public participation. According to Joshi and Rahman (Rahman, 2015), Indian consumers are becoming more conscious of their environmental footprints. Research by Kumar and Polonsky (A study of Indian millennials' sustainable consumption behavior, 2021) shows that digital platforms offer opportunities to influence consumer choices, especially when aligned with cultural values. Digital marketing includes influencer marketing , eco-based storytelling, and targeted online campaigns . Studies by Mishra and Singh (Singh, 2020) reveal that sustainability- focused messages on social media drive higher engagement in India, especially among urban youth.

Additionally, Bhardwaj and Khanna (M. Bhardwaj, 2023) emphasized the role of influencer marketing on platform like Instagram and YouTube in promoting eco- conscious products, nothing that Indian consumers often trust peer reviews and social proof more than traditional advertisements. Their findings suggests that the authenticity of influencers and content relatability significantly impact the adoption of sustainable products, particularly among Gen Z and millennials.

4.Methodology

This study uses qualitative secondary data analysis, collecting academic papers, sustainability reports, digital case studies of Indian companies, and government data. A thematic approach is used to analyze the strategies and impact of digital marketing in promoting sustainable consumption in India.

5.Discussion

5.1 Social Media and Sustainability

Social media in India- particularly Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook- acts as a powerful platform for raising awareness. For instance, **Tata group** uses social campaigns like #DoRight to promote eco-conscious practices. Influencers such as Komal Basith and Abhinav Mahajan promotes green living to millions of followers.

5.2 Influencer and Community- Driven Campaigns

Sustainable influencer collaborates with eco- brands like **Bare Necessities** or **Mamaearth**, creating authentic connections with followers. Influencers with regional reach help build trust in tier 2 and 3 cities, a growing market for sustainability.

5.3 Content Marketing and Brand Storytelling

Indian brands like FabIndia and Forest Essentials incorporate local artisanship and organic production into their brand story. Their digital storytelling focuses on heritage , craftsmanship, and minimalism- values that resonate with Indian culture.

5.4 Personalization and Data Analytics

With increasing use of AI and data analytics, companies can tailor content to consumers who are likely to engage with eco-friendly products. Flipkart and Amazon India use algorithms to promote sustainable product categories.

5.5 Challenges in the Indian Context

While awareness is growing, affordability and accessibility remain challenges. Many Indian consumers prioritize price over sustainability. Additionally, the prevalence of greenwashing and lack of regulatory oversight can mislead consumers (TERI, 2022).

6. Findings

- Digital campaigns rooted in authentic storytelling and local values gain higher trust among Indian consumers.
- Sustainable influencers in India are helping bridge the gap between knowledge and action.
- Brands that provide eco-friendly options at competitive prices see more traction.
- There is need for government and industry regulations to control greenwashing and ensure transparency.

7. Conclusion

India's digital ecosystem offers a fertile ground for promoting sustainable and ethical consumption. When leveraged authentically, digital marketing can catalyze meaningful behavior change and support SDG 12. Collaboration among brands, policy makers, and digital creators is essential to make sustainability both aspirational and accessible to all Indian consumers.

Bibliography

- B. Kumar, & M. (2021). A study of Indian millennials' sustainable consumption behavior. *Journal of consumer Behavior*, 20(5), 1145-1156.
- Gupta, R. S. (2023, January). social media marketing and sustainability awareness in India. *International Journal of Sustainable Development and World Ecology*, 30(1), 80-89.

- IAMAI. (2023). *Internet in India Report*. Retrieved from <https://www.iamai.in/>
- Kotler, K. &. (2021). *Marketing 5.0 :Trchnology for Humanity*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley.
- M. Bhardwaj, &. R. (2023). Influencer marketing and green consumerism: A study on Indian youth. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 45-54.
- Rahman, Y. J. (2015). Factors affecting green purchase behavior and future research directions. *International Strategic Management Review*, 3(1-2), 128-143. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ism.2015.04.001>
- Singh, P. M. (2020). Digital Sustainability campaigns and consumer responses in India. *Asian Journal of Business Ethics*, 9(2), 133-149.
- TERI. (2022). *Green Marketing and Consumer Perceptions in India*. The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI).
- UNDP. (2021). *Sustainable Development Goals: Goal12 - Responsible Consumption and Production*. UNDP.
- MEHRA, A., & JAIN, V. (2021). A review study on the brand image on the customer's perspective. *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Business and Government*| Vol, 27(3), 773.
- Jha, R. S., Tyagi, N., Jain, V., Chaudhary, A., & Sourabh, B. (2020). Role of Ethics in Indian Politics. *Waffen-Und Kostumkunde Journal*, 9(8), 88-97.
- Kumar, A., Kansal, A., & Jain, V. (2020). A Comprehensive Study of Factor Influencing Investor's Perception Investing in Mutual Funds. *European Journal of Molecular & Clinical Medicine*, 7(11), 2020.
- Veeraiah, V., Ahamad, S., Jain, V., Anand, R., Sindhwani, N., & Gupta, A. (2023, May). IoT for Emerging Engineering Application Related to Commercial System. In *International Conference on Emergent Converging Technologies and Biomedical Systems* (pp. 537-550). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
- Jain, V. (2021). Word of mouth as a new element of the marketing communication mix: Online consumer review. *South Asian Journal of Marketing & Management Research*, 11(11), 108-114.
- Kansal, A., Jain, V., & Agrawal, S. K. (2020). Impact of digital marketing on the purchase of health insurance products. *Jour of Adv Research in Dynamical & Control Systems*, 12.

- Jain, V., Chawla, C., Arya, S., Agarwal, R., & Agarwal, M. (2019). An Empirical Study of Product Design for New Product Development with Special Reference to Indian Mobile Industry. *TEST Engineering & Management*, 81, 1241-1254.
- Jain, V. (2017). Emerging Digital Business Opportunities and Value. *Data Analytics & Digital Technologies*.
- Khan, H., Veeraiah, V., Jain, V., Rajkumar, A., Gupta, A., & Pandey, D. (2023). Integrating Deep Learning in an IoT Model to Build Smart Applications for Sustainable Cities. In *Handbook of Research on Data-Driven Mathematical Modeling in Smart Cities* (pp. 238-261). IGI Global.
- Jain, V, Agarwal, M. K., Hasan, N., & Kaur, G. ROLE OF MICROFINANCE AND MICROINSURANCE SERVICES AS A TOOL FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION.
- Gupta, N., Sharma, M., Rastogi, M., Chauhan, A., Jain, V., & Yadav, P. K. (2021). Impact of COVID-19 on education sector in Uttarakhand: Exploratory factor analysis. *Linguistics and Culture Review*, 784-793.
- Jain, V. (2021). Information technology outsourcing chain: Literature review and implications for development of distributed coordination. *ACADEMICIA: An International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 11(11), 1067-1072.
- Jain, V. I. P. I. N., Chawla, C. H. A. N. C. H. A. L., & Arya, S. A. T. Y. E. N. D. R. A. (2021). Employee Involvement and Work Culture. *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Business and Government*, 27(3), 694-699.
- Setiawan, R., Kulkarni, V. D., Upadhyay, Y. K., Jain, V., Mishra, R., Yu, S. Y., & Raisal, I. (2020). *The Influence Work-Life Policies Can Have on Part-Time Employees in Contrast to Full-Time Workers and The Consequence It Can Have on Their Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment and Motivation* (Doctoral dissertation, Petra Christian University).
- Verma, C., Sharma, R., Kaushik, P., & Jain, V. (2024). The Role of Microfinance Initiatives in Promoting Sustainable Economic Development: Exploring Opportunities, Challenges, and Outcomes.

- Verma, C., Sharma, R., Kaushik, P., & Jain, V. (2024). The Role of Microfinance Initiatives in Promoting Sustainable Economic Development: Exploring Opportunities, Challenges, and Outcomes.
- Jain, V. (2021). An overview on employee motivation. *Asian Journal of Multidimensional Research*, 10(12), 63-68.
- Jain, V. (2021). A review on different types of cryptography techniques “should be replaced by” exploring the potential of steganography in the modern era. *ACADEMICIA: An International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 11(11), 1139-1146.
- Jain, V., Chawla, C., Arya, S., Agarwal, R., & Agarwal, M. (2019). Impact of Job Satisfaction on relationship between employee performance and human resource management practices followed by Bharti Airtel Limited Telecommunications with reference to Moradabad region. *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering*, 8, 493-498.
- Verma, C., Sharma, R., Kaushik, P., & Jain, V. (2024). The Role of Microfinance Initiatives in Promoting Sustainable Economic Development: Exploring Opportunities, Challenges, and Outcomes.
- Jain, V., Verma, C., Chauhan, A., Singh, A., Jain, S., Pramanik, S., & Gupta, A. (2024). A Website-Dependent Instructional Platform to Assist Indonesian MSMEs. In *Empowering Entrepreneurial Mindsets With AI* (pp. 299-318). IGI Global.