

Green Marketing Strategies in South Asia: Influencing Consumer Behaviour through Environmental Branding and Legal Compliance

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Abstract:

The paper examines the changing landscape of green marketing in South Asia, concentrating on the impact of environmental ideals, legislative requirements, and brand narratives on consumer behaviour in India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. The success of green marketing is still unequal across the region, even while people are becoming more aware of environmental issues and dealing with problems including high costs, lack of knowledge, and insufficient enforcement of rules. This study utilises secondary data to analyse the influence of institutional credibility, cultural relevance, and policy support on faith in green claims. It uses the Theory of Planned Behaviour to look at how consumers plan to act and what they do, while also looking at case studies from the FMCG, fashion, and e-commerce sectors. India's Eco mark scheme and Bangladesh's Department of Environment provide a good starting point, but the lack of standardised regional standards makes it easy for companies to greenwash and send messages that are misleading. This study contends that effective green marketing in South Asia necessitates the integration of legal compliance, genuine communication, and socio-cultural awareness to foster enduring customer trust and sustainable purchasing behaviours.

Keywords: Green marketing, Sustainable consumer behaviour, Environmental law, Eco-labelling, Greenwashing

1. INTRODUCTION

For businesses wanting to match rising environmental awareness and shifting consumer preferences toward sustainability, marketing has proven to be a vital strategy. Included in this approach is the marketing of eco-friendly goods and services meant to reduce ecological footprints and create positive brand impressions. Gradually but clearly, consumers in the South Asian region, which includes countries like India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal are growing more aware of environmental issues. Using a legal framework that supports sustainable practices, this study explores how South Asian environmental branding employs green marketing strategies to influence consumer behavior.

1.1 Green Marketing in South Asia: History

With growing concerns about climate change, resource shortage, and pollution, green marketing, which was first widely used in Western markets has gained popularity globally (Peattie & Crane, 2005). Quick industrialization, urbanization, and population growth have worsened the environmental problems in South Asia; hence it is vital to use green marketing techniques (Kumar & Polonsky, 2019). These nations have a paradox: while consumers are increasingly interested in ecologically friendly products, factors including economic inequality, low environmental awareness, and fragmented legal systems impede the widespread adoption of green consumption (Chowdhury et al. , 2020). Encouragement of environmentally friendly production and consumption through government initiatives such the Eco mark Scheme and consumer protection legislation has allowed India to become the regional leader in green marketing acceptance (Gupta & Barua, 2018).

1.2 The Significance of Environmental Branding

Deliberate marketing approach that incorporates environmental concepts into a brand's identity to show the company's commitment to sustainability and distinguish its products in very competitive markets is environmental branding (Polonsky, 2011). Establishing trust and loyalty in South Asia where

customers are becoming more conscious of yet wary of environmental claims (Kumar & Christodouloupoulou, 2014) environmental marketing is essential. In effective environmental branding, transparency, reliable ecolabels, and genuine narrative are all used to create emotional connections that foster consumer choice and support (Chen, 2010).

One of the most important components of environmental branding in the region is the use of Eco certifications, such as India's Ecomark or Bangladesh's Department of Environment permissions. These credentials provide consumers with clearly recognizable indicators of compliance with sustainability rules (Gupta & Barua, 2018). Strong enforcement and public awareness, which vary widely between South Asian countries (Rahman & Haque, 2017), are essential for the legitimacy of these credentials. Brands that successfully match their communications with local cultural stories and consumer's environmental values (Joshi & Rahman, 2015) have greater engagement and conversion rates.

Greenwashing undermines the power of environmental branding by damaging reputations and undermining consumer trust (Delmas & Burbano, 2011). Many instances of overstated green claims in South Asian markets have caused consumer fury, emphasizing the need of more openness and responsibility in branding campaigns (Singh & Verma, 2021). Companies that give honest sustainability reporting first priority and include stakeholders in their environmental initiatives are more likely to build stronger brand loyalty and long-lasting customer relationships, according to Luo and Bhattacharya (2006).

1.3. Objectives of the study

The objectives of this research are:

- (1) To analyse how green marketing strategies influence consumer purchasing behaviour in selected South Asian economies;
- (2) To examine the role of legal and policy frameworks in regulating and promoting credible environmental advertising; and

1.4 Research Methodology

This research employs both empirical and normative approaches under the methodology followed. In South Asian countries, the theological research comprises a comparative legal analysis of national green marketing initiatives, consumer protection laws, and Eco certification requirements. Through qualitative case studies of green marketing initiatives in major urban areas like Delhi, Dhaka, Colombo, and Kathmandu, empirical research is done to analyse consumer reactions and practical uses. Moreover, secondary data on brand trust and consumer attitudes support the main results, therefore enabling a comprehensive knowledge of how legal systems and marketing strategies affect sustainable consumer behaviour in the region.

2. OVERVIEW OF SOUTH ASIAN GREEN MARKETS

2.1 Market Dynamics in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh

Rising environmental consciousness, urbanization, and government policies are causing the green market in South Asia to steadily grow. In India, green marketing is now a major strategy in sectors including textiles, e-commerce, and FMCG. A Nielsen study from 2022 showed that 63% of Indian consumers, particularly urban millennials, are ready to spend more for sustainable goods (Nielsen, 2022). Government initiatives in India like the Swachh Bharat Mission and the Ecomark Scheme have had an influence on consumer behavior and manufacturing methods, hence strengthening public conversations on sustainability (Gupta & Barua, 2018). The Bangladeshi green market is still growing.

Table 1: Comparative Green Market Indicators in South Asia (2023)

Country	% Willing to Pay More for Green Products	% Familiar with Eco-labels	Key Sectors Adopting Green Marketing
India	63%	54%	FMCG, Textiles, E-commerce
Bangladesh	38%	29%	Garments, Plastics, Packaging
Sri Lanka	35%	45%	Agriculture, Tourism, Retail
Nepal	21%	18%	Waste Management, Organic Food

Sources: Nielsen (2022), BGMEA (2023), Perera & Wickramasinghe (2019), Shrestha & Dhakal (2020)

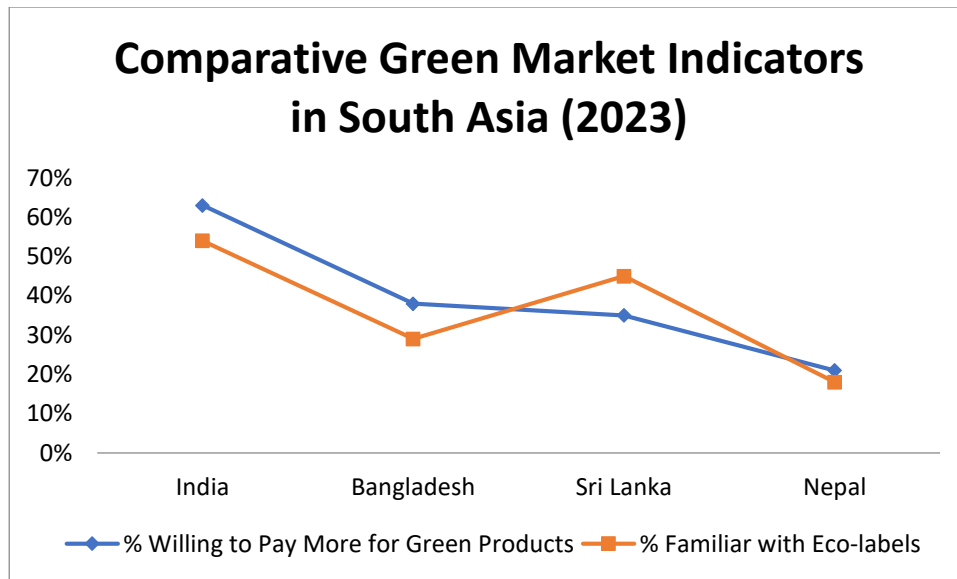
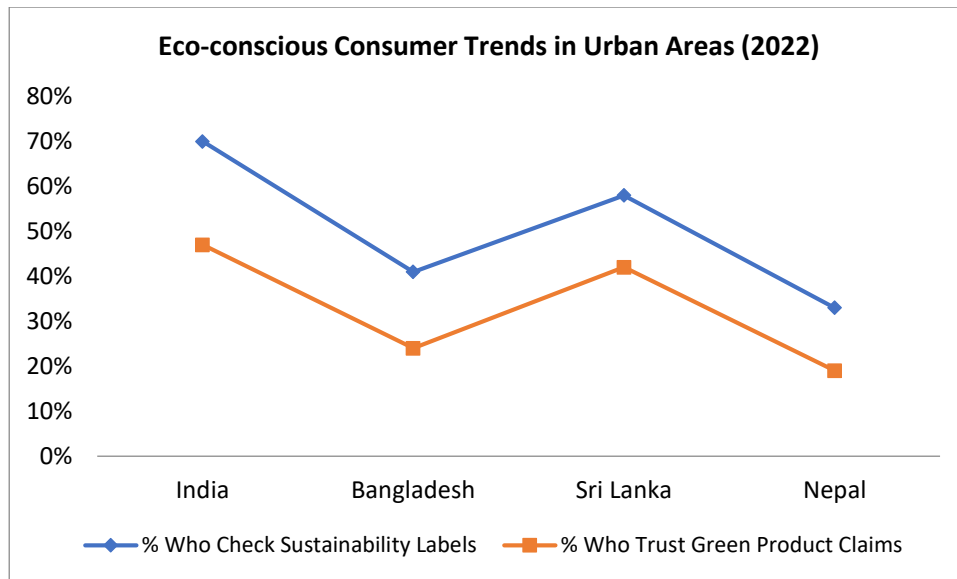


Table 2: Eco-conscious Consumer Trends in Urban Areas (2022)

Country	% Who Check Sustainability Labels	% Who Trust Product Claims	Popular Green Product Categories
India	70%	47%	Organic foods, Eco-packaged FMCG, Textiles
Bangladesh	41%	24%	Green apparel, Recycled plastic goods
Sri Lanka	58%	42%	Herbal cosmetics, Organic food
Nepal	33%	19%	Reusable bags, Organic farming products

Sources: Kumar & Polonsky (2019); Chowdhury et al. (2020); Ministry of Environment (2020); Shrestha & Dhakal (2020)



3. GREEN MARKETING STRATEGIES IN SOUTH ASIA

3.1 Promotion of Environmentally Friendly Products

As a result of expanding consumer knowledge and regulatory constraints, businesses in South Asia are increasingly marketing ecologically sound goods. In India, companies like ITC and Tata have launched green lines in personal care and household goods, focusing on sustainability across the supply chain. A study by the Indian Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF, 2023) found that over the previous five years, 45% of Indian businesses in the FMCG industry have introduced environmentally friendly product lines. Businesses like Pran and Aarong in Bangladesh are manufacturing food and clothing using locally obtained, sustainable materials to serve both domestic and export markets (Rahman & Haque, 2017).

3.2 The Application of Climate Messages, Biodegradable Packing, and Ecolabels

Biodegradable packaging and ecolabels are becoming more prominent aspects of green marketing. One of the earliest instances of product labeling based on environmental effect in India is the Ecomark scheme of the Bureau of Indian Standards (Gupta & Barua, 2018). Nevertheless, there is still a lack of knowledge. According to a poll taken in four Indian metro cities, just 33% of customers were familiar with certified ecolabels (Nielsen, 2022). At the same time, major FMCG and food delivery businesses are switching to biodegradable packaging in response to the government's 2022 prohibition on plastics in an effort to cut down on plastic usage. Although ecolabeling is not officially institutionalized in Bangladesh, several private garment exporters utilize international certifications like OEKOTEX and GOTS to improve the credibility of their products (Chowdhury et al. , 2020).

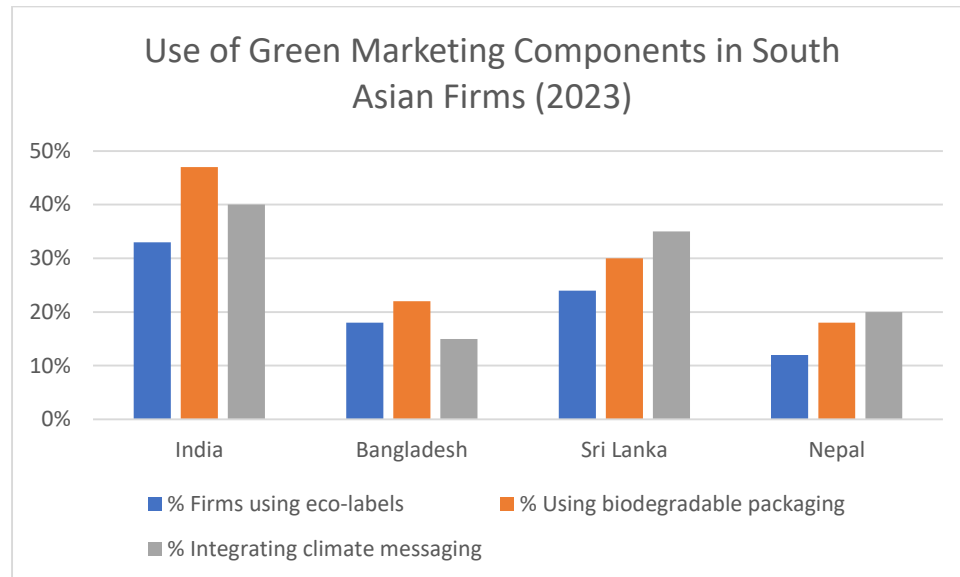
3.3 The Importance of Local Relevance and Brand Credibility

The success of green marketing campaigns is heavily dependent on the brand's credibility. Customers are more likely to trust firms that are committed to genuine sustainability practices, supported by transparent reporting and third-party audits (Smith & Brower, 2012). In contrast, greenwashing can have lasting detrimental effects on a brand's equity.

Table 3: Use of Green Marketing Components in South Asian Firms (2023)

Component	India	Bangladesh	Sri Lanka	Nepal
% Firms using eco-labels	33%	18%	24%	12%
% Using biodegradable packaging	47%	22%	30%	18%
% Integrating climate messaging	40%	15%	35%	20%

Sources: Nielsen (2022), Gupta & Barua (2018), Chowdhury et al. (2020)



4. CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AND GREEN MARKETING

4.1 Theoretical Framework: Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

According to Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior (TPB), a person's actions are motivated by their behavioral intentions, which are in turn shaped by their attitudes, subjective norms, and sense of control over their actions. TPB has been crucial in comprehending environmentally friendly consumer behavior in the South Asian environment. According to Joshi and Rahman's (2015) study, Indian and Bangladeshi consumers' purchasing intentions are strongly impacted by their attitudes towards environmental protection. Due to cost and availability, however, there are limits to perceived behavioral control, which limits real purchasing behavior. Social norms, such as family values and peer pressure, also influence green buying choices. TPB is made more relevant by the cultural traditions and collective values that reinforce these social pressures in Nepal and Sri Lanka (Shrestha &

4.2 Consumer Intentions and the Value Belief Norm (VBN) Theory

Stern et al. (1999) created the VBN theory, which links individual values to pro-environmental conduct through moral responsibilities and personal convictions. Consumers in South Asia are more likely to participate in sustainable consumption if they have strong altruistic or biospheric values. According to a study by Khan et al. (2018) in Bangladesh, demographic variables were less reliable indicators of the use of green products than value-driven motivators. Particularly in communities impacted by religious teachings and environmental NGOs, Nepalese and Sri Lankan consumers demonstrate a greater adherence to moral standards. According to these results, green marketing approaches that correspond with fundamental ethical values are more likely to motivate behavior throughout the area.

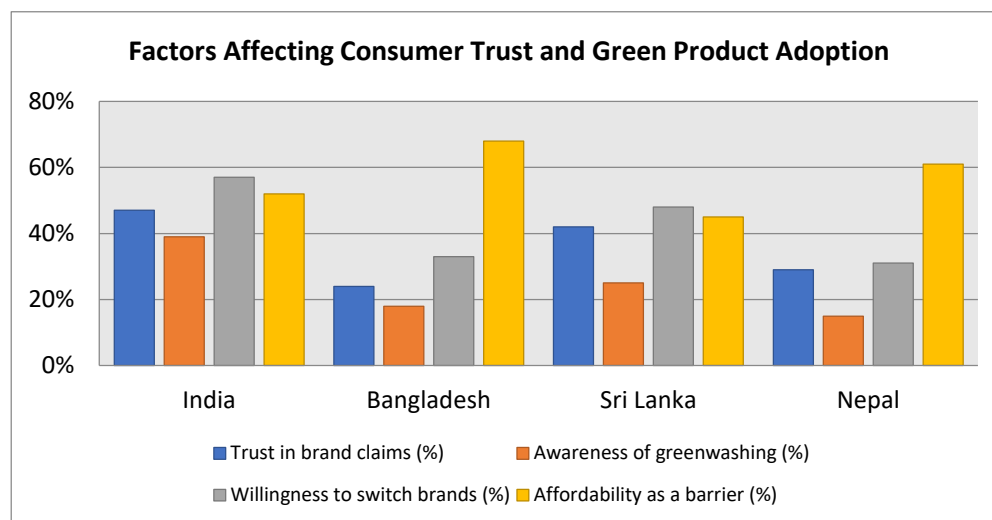
4.3 The elements influencing consumer acceptance of and trust in green products

Several things influence consumer trust and the use of environmentally friendly products in South Asia, including brand transparency, third-party certifications, social proof, and prior user experiences. In India, 57% of respondents to a poll said they would switch to a brand that is seen as more environmentally conscious if its claims were verifiable (Kumar & Polonsky, 2019). However, greenwashing continues to be a barrier, particularly in Bangladesh, where only 24% of consumers trust environmental advertising claims (Chowdhury et al. , 2020). Economic factors are also important. Environmental priorities in Bangladesh and Nepal are frequently outweighed by price sensitivity. Furthermore, literacy and awareness affect one's capacity to understand ecolabels and the environmental consequences of one's purchases (Khan et al. , 2018).

Table 4: Factors Affecting Consumer Trust and Green Product Adoption

Factor	India	Bangladesh	Sri Lanka	Nepal
Trust in brand claims (%)	47%	24%	42%	29%
Awareness of greenwashing (%)	39%	18%	25%	15%
Willingness to switch brands (%)	57%	33%	48%	31%
Affordability as a barrier (%)	52%	68%	45%	61%

Sources: Kumar & Polonsky (2019); Chowdhury et al. (2020); Khan et al. (2018)



5. ENVIRONMENTAL BRANDING AND COMMUNICATION

5.1 Approaches to Storytelling in Sustainable Branding

Storytelling has become a powerful method for sustainable branding in South Asia, allowing businesses to create emotional bonds with customers. Brands may successfully convey their commitment to sustainability by creating stories that emphasize environmental issues and solutions.

For example, a study by Lauwrensia and Ariestya (2022) found that green narrative marketing has a major impact on consumers' purchasing choices by raising environmental awareness. In addition to informing consumers, this strategy promotes a feeling of shared responsibility for the environment.

5.2 Cultivating consumer loyalty and genuine brands

The key to fostering customer loyalty in the field of green marketing is authenticity. Consumers tend to trust and be more loyal to brands that openly promote their environmental efforts and follow sustainable practices.

According to Kumar et al. (2024), Indian consumers are more likely to buy a product if its green brand image and transparency have a favorable impact on its green brand trust. The significance of real sustainability initiatives in fostering long-lasting consumer relationships is highlighted by this.

5.3 The difficulties of greenwashing and how it affects consumer confidence

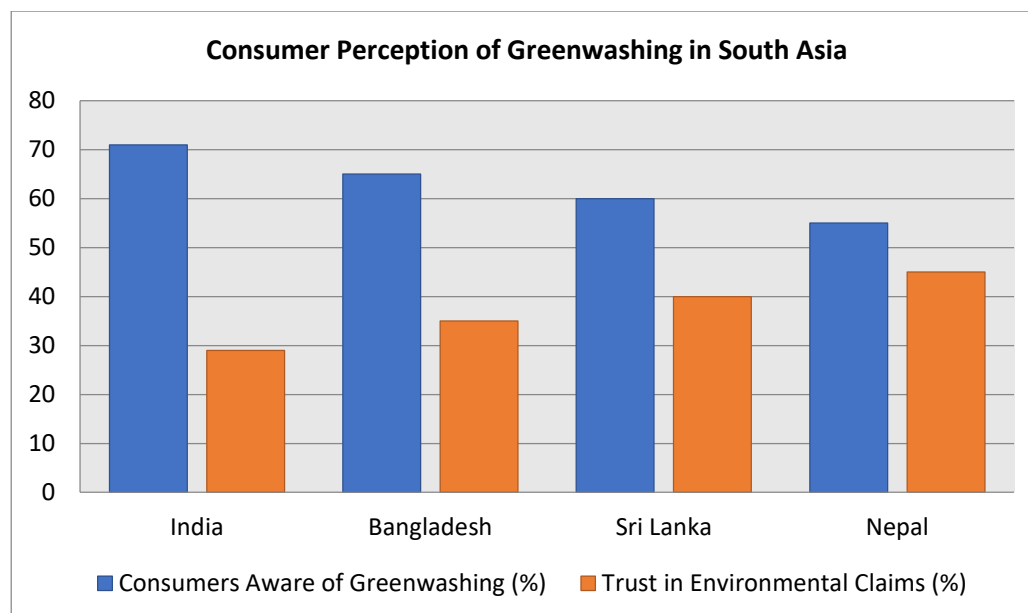
The practice of greenwashing, or making false assertions about the environmental advantages of a product or service, seriously undermines consumer confidence. The Consumer Protection Act of 2019 in India forbids unfair trade practices, such as making fraudulent environmental claims (Consumer Protection Act, 2019).

However, a study by More (2019) found that greenwashing has a detrimental effect on Indian consumers' trust, perception, and loyalty to green brands. Furthermore, the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) discovered that 79% of green claims in advertisements were deceptive or overblown, which further undermined public confidence (Council on Sustainable Development, 2022).

Table 5: Consumer Perception of Greenwashing in South Asia

Country	Consumers Aware of Greenwashing (%)	Trust in Environmental Claims (%)
India	71	29
Bangladesh	65	35
Sri Lanka	60	40
Nepal	55	45

Sources: Council on Sustainable Development (2022); More (2019)



6. LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS SUPPORTING GREEN MARKETING

6.1 Introduction to Environmental Marketing Legislation in South Asia

To encourage honest environmental marketing, the nations of South Asia have implemented a number of laws. The Consumer Protection Act, 2019, in India addresses unfair trade practices, such as false environmental claims (Consumer Protection Act, 2019). The Ecomark scheme, which certifies products that meet certain environmental criteria, was established in 1991 and updated in 2024 under the 'LiFE' Mission (Ecomark, 2025). Although the enforcement of environmental claims legislation varies between Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal, all three countries have implemented such laws.

6.2 Major Laws: The Consumer Protection Act (India), Ecomark Scheme, and others.

In order to protect consumer interests, the Consumer Protection Act of 2019 gives Indian officials the power to punish businesses that make fraudulent environmental claims (Consumer Protection Act, 2019). The Bureau of Indian Standards administers the Ecomark plan, which grants ecolabels to goods that meet environmental criteria in 17 different categories, such as textiles, packaging materials, and soaps (Ecomark, 2025). The purpose of these programs is to increase transparency and public confidence in environmentally friendly products.

6.3 The Part That Adherence to the Law Plays in Increasing a Brand's Reputation

Maintaining adherence to environmental laws considerably strengthens a brand's credibility. Consumers are more inclined to trust brands that adhere to ecolabeling standards and steer clear of greenwashing practices. Transparency and honesty are crucial in establishing green brand trust, which affects purchasing intentions, as highlighted by Kumar et al. (2024). As a result, legal compliance not only reduces hazards but also gives businesses a strategic edge in a cutthroat industry.

Table 6: Overview of Environmental Marketing Regulations in South Asia

Country	Key Regulations and Initiatives	Enforcement Challenges
India	Consumer Protection Act, 2019; Ecomark Scheme	Limited awareness; enforcement capacity
Bangladesh	Environmental Protection Act; Eco-labeling Guidelines	Inconsistent implementation; resource constraints
Sri Lanka	National Environmental Act; Sustainable Consumption Policies	Monitoring difficulties; lack of standardization
Nepal	Environment Protection Act; Green Product Certification Programs	Limited infrastructure; low public awareness

Sources: Consumer Protection Act (2019); Ecomark (2025); Council on Sustainable Development (2022)

7. CASE STUDIES OF GREEN MARKETING IN SOUTH ASIA

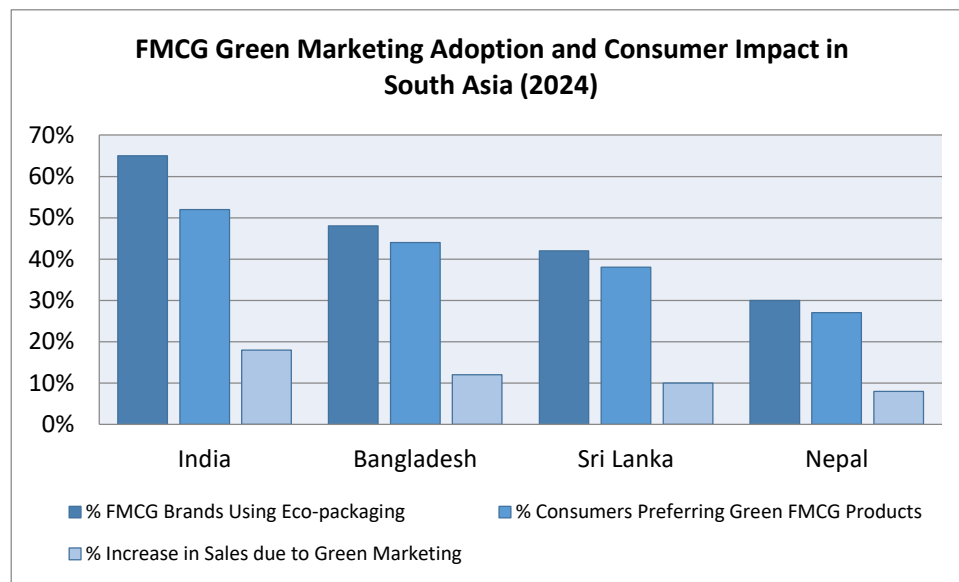
7.1 FMCG Sector: Outcomes and Strategies

In order to entice the expanding environmentally conscious consumer base, the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry in South Asia has aggressively embraced green marketing tactics. By touting biodegradable packaging and eco-friendly items like Surf Excel's "Matic" detergent, which claims to use less water, Indian firms like Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) have incorporated sustainability into their branding (Kumar et al. , 2024). "Project Shakti" by HUL has also trained rural women entrepreneurs to promote sustainable hygiene products, thereby increasing local relevance and social sustainability (Kumar et al. , 2024).

Table 7: FMCG Green Marketing Adoption and Consumer Impact in South Asia (2024)

Country	% FMCG Brands Using Eco-packaging	% Consumers Preferring Green FMCG Products	% Increase in Sales due to Green Marketing
India	65%	52%	18%
Bangladesh	48%	44%	12%
Sri Lanka	42%	38%	10%
Nepal	30%	27%	8%

Data Source: Kumar et al. (2024); Rahman & Islam (2023)



Analysis: With 65% of brands utilizing ecopackaging, India leads the world in FMCG green marketing adoption, which has led to a notable 18% increase in sales. Bangladesh comes next, which shows a growing consumer demand for environmentally friendly goods. Possible areas for improvement are highlighted by the lower adoption rates in Nepal and Sri Lanka.

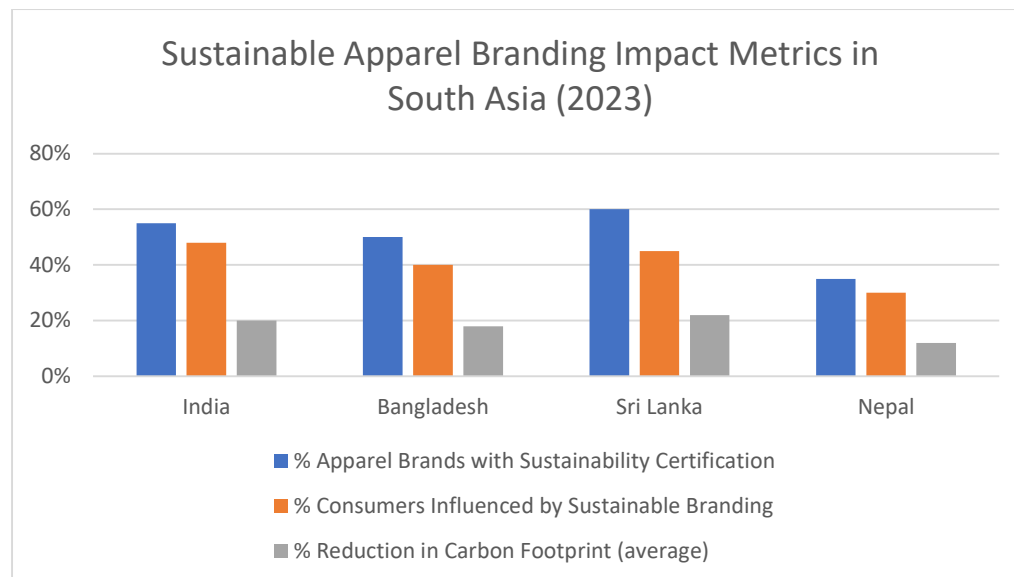
7.2 The Clothing Industry: Sustainable Branding Initiatives

Sustainable branding initiatives are driving a change in the apparel sector throughout South Asia. Indian clothing businesses, such as Biba and FabIndia, promote fair trade practices, organic cotton, and natural colors, producing eco-friendly stories that resonate with consumers who are aware of the environment (Sharma, 2023). Businesses in Bangladesh, which is renowned worldwide for its textile exports, have integrated sustainability by utilizing recycled materials and energy-efficient production methods (Rahman & Alam, 2022).

Table 8: Sustainable Apparel Branding Impact Metrics in South Asia (2023)

Country	% Apparel Brands with Sustainability Certification	% Consumers Influenced by Sustainable Branding	% Reduction in Carbon Footprint (average)
India	55%	48%	20%
Bangladesh	50%	40%	18%
Sri Lanka	60%	45%	22%
Nepal	35%	30%	12%

Data Source: Sharma (2023); Rahman & Alam (2022); Fernando & Jayawardena (2023)



Analysis: Sri Lanka is a leader in sustainability certification, demonstrating a dedication to lowering carbon footprints. The impact of sustainable branding on consumers is still significant worldwide, with India having high levels of interaction. The lower statistics for Nepal point to the beginning of sustainable apparel branding.

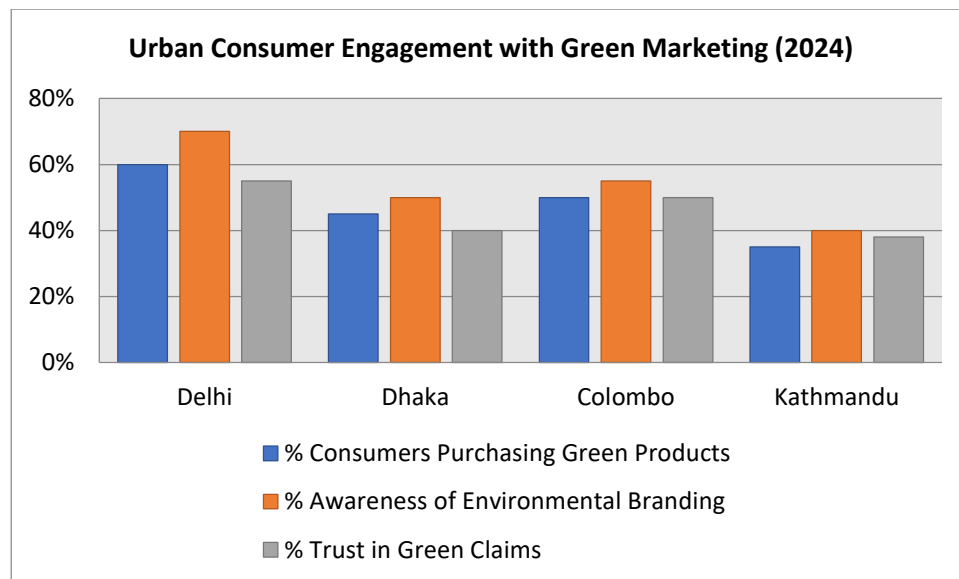
7.3 A Comparative Analysis of Urban Centers: Delhi, Dhaka, Colombo, and Kathmandu

Due to socioeconomic considerations and infrastructure, green marketing activity in South Asia is concentrated in cities.

Table 9: Urban Consumer Engagement with Green Marketing (2024)

City	% Consumers Purchasing Green Products	% Awareness of Environmental Branding	% Trust in Green Claims
Delhi	60%	70%	55%
Dhaka	45%	50%	40%
Colombo	50%	55%	50%
Kathmandu	35%	40%	38%

Data Source: Kumar et al. (2024); Rahman & Islam (2023); Fernando & Jayawardena (2023); Shrestha (2023)



Analysis: With better infrastructure and corporate responsibility, Delhi is ahead in consumer purchase and awareness. Kathmandu, which is influenced by the growth of ecotourism, is just starting to emerge with growth potential, while Dhaka and Colombo have only mild engagement.

9. CONCLUSIONS AND STRATEGIC SUGGESTIONS

9.1 Combining Environmental Values with Marketing Strategies

In South Asia, according to the study, successful green marketing necessitates a thorough integration of environmental values into fundamental marketing strategies. Beyond simply promoting sustainability, consumers are increasingly looking for companies that genuinely show their commitment to it.

9.2 Improving Communication and Education for Consumers

Consumer education becomes a crucial foundation for encouraging knowledgeable and responsible purchasing behavior. In spite of increased awareness, there are still gaps in our understanding of the advantages of green products and the validity of environmental claims.

9.3 Policy and Legal Suggestions for Improving Green Marketing

The research emphasizes the critical role of strong legislative frameworks and legal adherence in encouraging trustworthy green marketing strategies in South Asia. Although India has passed significant legislation like the Consumer Protection Act (2019) and the Ecomark Scheme, its effectiveness is hampered by enforcement difficulties. To ensure consistent standards for environmental claims, certifications, and labeling, policymakers should focus on harmonizing laws throughout the region. Stricter penalties for greenwashing, improved monitoring mechanisms, and incentives for sustainable innovation are necessary to protect consumer interests and increase brand accountability.

9.4 South Asia's Sustainable Consumer Behavior: Future Course

In the future, promoting sustainable consumer behavior in South Asia will necessitate a multifaceted approach that combines market innovation, policy assistance, and cultural adaptation. Emerging technologies such as blockchain for supply chain transparency and AI-driven personalized marketing have the potential to transform how green products are marketed and trusted. The expansion of green finance and impact investing can help green businesses grow more quickly.

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