

Green Marketing in the Ayurvedic Product Industry in India: A Conceptual Review, Framework, and Research Agenda

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Abstract

Green marketing has shifted from a peripheral ethical initiative to a core strategic imperative shaped by environmental crises, regulatory pressures, and evolving consumer expectations. In India, the Ayurvedic product industry represents a distinctive domain for green marketing because Ayurveda is inherently aligned with natural living, ecological balance, and ethical consumption. However, the growing commercialization of Ayurvedic products has also intensified challenges such as consumer scepticism, greenwashing risks, fragmented eco-certification, and persistent intention-behaviour gaps. This conceptual article synthesizes global and Indian scholarship on green marketing through the lens of Ayurvedic products. The review integrates evidence on green consumer psychology, demographic determinants, policy and regulatory dynamics, eco-labelling, digital assurance, and green supply chain management. Building on this synthesis, the paper proposes a conceptual model of Green Ayurveda Branding (GAB), emphasizing the central role of trust mechanisms, authenticity, cultural compatibility, and innovation-driven sustainability. A set of propositions is advanced to guide future empirical research. The study contributes by offering a structured conceptual roadmap for researchers, policymakers, and Ayurvedic businesses seeking to strengthen sustainability performance, consumer trust, and long-term competitiveness in domestic and international markets.

Keywords: Green marketing, Ayurveda, eco-labels, greenwashing, sustainability, consumer trust, green supply chain, green branding.

1. Introduction

Sustainability has emerged as a defining force in global markets, transforming both corporate strategy and consumer expectations. Green marketing, broadly defined as the planning, promotion, distribution, and pricing of products designed to reduce environmental harm, is increasingly viewed as a strategic necessity rather than an optional ethical initiative. Early scholarship positioned environmental marketing as a mechanism to balance organizational goals with societal responsibility (Polonsky, 1994; Shearer, 1990). However, contemporary research extends this view, framing green marketing as a performance-driven strategy and brand differentiator capable of delivering growth, resilience, and long-term legitimacy (Gupta & Mehta, 2022; NielsenIQ, 2023).

Multiple forces are driving this transformation. Governments are strengthening regulatory mechanisms such as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), carbon disclosure norms, and sustainability auditing. In

parallel, consumer values have shifted, especially among Millennials and Gen Z, who increasingly demand transparency in sourcing, manufacturing, packaging, and ethical business practices (IBM, 2023). Such trends have redefined competition: brands are now expected to demonstrate measurable sustainability rather than symbolic messaging.

Within this evolving context, the Ayurvedic product industry in India provides a unique and highly relevant setting. Ayurveda, as an indigenous knowledge system, is deeply rooted in ecological harmony, natural ingredients, and holistic well-being. These features make Ayurveda naturally compatible with green marketing narratives such as chemical-free consumption, cruelty-free ethics, biodegradable packaging, and ethical sourcing (Roy, 2025). However, the rapid commercialization of Ayurveda into FMCG, cosmetics, nutraceuticals, and wellness services has also intensified challenges, including consumer distrust, greenwashing risks, fragmented regulation, and supply chain inconsistencies (Kumar & Deshpande, 2024; Sheela, 2025).

This paper addresses this emerging gap by presenting a conceptual synthesis of green marketing literature with a focused reference to Ayurvedic products. It aims to (a) review key scholarly and policy insights, (b) highlight challenges and opportunities, (c) propose an integrative conceptual model of Green Ayurveda Branding (GAB), and (d) advance propositions to guide future empirical research.

2. Methodological Approach: Conceptual Review Design

This paper adopts a conceptual review methodology, drawing upon recent empirical studies, bibliometric evaluations, legal analyses, case studies, and conceptual frameworks related to green marketing and Ayurvedic product markets. The approach is interpretive and integrative rather than statistical, consistent with conceptual research traditions in marketing and sustainability.

The literature base includes global studies (e.g., Spain, Egypt, Brazil, South Korea, Japan, U.S.) and India-focused studies covering consumer behavior, demographic drivers, eco-labeling, green supply chain management, and regulatory governance. The review further integrates insights from cross-industry green marketing research, including hospitality and tourism, where green marketing mix models offer transferable relevance for Ayurveda-based wellness services (Ahmed, 2025; Atshan & Jomon, 2025).

3. Green Marketing as a Strategic Imperative

The transition toward sustainability has moved from the margins of business discourse to the center of corporate strategy. Earlier contributions highlighted environmental marketing primarily as a mechanism for social responsibility and ethical alignment (Polonsky, 1994; Shearer, 1990). However, contemporary studies argue that sustainability now functions as a performance driver, influencing brand equity, stakeholder trust, and financial resilience (Gupta & Mehta, 2022; McKinsey, 2022).

Consumer evidence supports this strategic shift. IBM's (2023) global consumer research suggests that sustainability matters to a large majority of consumers and that a significant share is willing to pay more for sustainable brands. Similarly, market intelligence reports emphasize that sustainability-driven brands often outperform competitors during crises due to higher trust and loyalty (McKinsey, 2022). Green marketing therefore operates not only as an ethical framework but also as a strategic mechanism for risk management, differentiation, and long-term competitiveness.

For the Ayurvedic industry, these dynamics are particularly significant. Ayurvedic products already possess strong associations with naturalness, purity, and wellness. Yet, in contemporary markets, these

associations are insufficient unless supported by credible sustainability performance, transparent sourcing, scientific validation, and verified eco-certification (Joshi & Tyagi, 2023; Kumar & Deshpande, 2024).

4. Global Green Marketing Insights: Cross-Cultural Evidence

Green marketing adoption varies across cultural, regulatory, and economic environments. In Spain, Benegil (2022) demonstrated that ecolabel usage has shifted toward greater sincerity, with many companies adopting green practices beyond superficial branding. Such sincerity enhances consumer confidence and strengthens long-term loyalty.

In Egypt, Mostafa (2023) used structural equation modelling (SEM) to confirm that environmental concern and environmental knowledge strongly influence green purchasing intentions. However, the persistence of intention–behavior gaps indicates that awareness alone does not guarantee action. Behavioral translation requires incentives, accessibility, and trust-building mechanisms (Mostafa, 2023). Asian contexts reveal further complexity. Collectivist societies such as Japan and South Korea show stronger green behavior shaped by social conformity and shared norms, whereas U.S. consumers tend to frame green purchasing as individual responsibility and ethical consumption (Lee, 2023; McCabe & Corona, 2023). In Brazil, Avallone (2023) highlighted a structural constraint: consumers continued heavy use of plastic bags despite environmental awareness due to a lack of accessible alternatives.

These findings underscore that green marketing must be localized. For Ayurvedic firms expanding internationally, this implies the need to adapt green messaging, certification strategies, and product positioning to local regulatory standards and cultural expectations (Chitra, 2024; Pokhrel, 2024).

5. Green Consumer Psychology in Ayurvedic Product Markets

Consumer orientation toward green purchasing is shaped by environmental concern, health consciousness, cultural compatibility, perceived effectiveness, and trust in brands. In the Ayurvedic sector, green buying often reflects a combined motivation: personal health and planetary responsibility.

Sharma and Trivedi (2023) found that consumers with higher Ayurvedic knowledge demonstrate stronger green behavior, particularly when supported by trust in recognized certifications such as “organic,” “eco-friendly,” and “AYUSH-approved.” However, the intention–behavior gap remains substantial due to price constraints, limited access, and skepticism toward marketing claims (Sharma & Trivedi, 2023).

This trust challenge is reinforced by evidence from Indian consumers, where 41% of Ayurvedic buyers report distrust toward “green” claims due to inconsistent labeling, unclear ingredient origins, and weak third-party authentication (Kumar & Deshpande, 2024). These patterns indicate that green consumer psychology in Ayurveda is not solely value-driven; it is strongly shaped by perceived credibility, verification mechanisms, and risk perception.

6. Demographic Determinants of Green Ayurvedic Consumption

Green consumer behaviour is significantly influenced by age, education, income, gender, and cultural orientation. Studies show that educated consumers tend to demonstrate higher willingness to pay for green products (Joshi, 2024). Similar trends are visible in India, where urban millennials increasingly adopt green lifestyles aligned with Ayurveda’s sustainability philosophy (FICCI & ASSOCHAM, 2024).

Evidence indicates that women, particularly in the age group of 25–45, represent a highly responsive segment for green Ayurvedic skincare and wellness products, driven by concerns about chemical exposure, cruelty-free ethics, and holistic well-being (IIM Bangalore, 2024; Jain & Patel, 2024). Digital

literacy also plays a strong role, as online reviews, influencer narratives, and transparency content shape trust and trial behavior (Geethanjali, 2025; Gyan, 2025).

However, demographic drivers operate differently across regions. In Europe, environmental awareness is strongly shaped by regulatory enforcement and green political culture, whereas in India motivations are often anchored in cultural traditions such as Ayurveda, yoga, and naturopathy (Chitra, 2024). This suggests that Ayurvedic firms must segment audiences using both demographic and cultural lenses.

7. Policy and Regulatory Context: Drivers and Gaps

Policy frameworks significantly influence green consumerism by shaping incentives, enforcement, and credibility. In Mexico, Sachdeva (2021) and Geeta (2021) found that environmental programs existed, but participation remained low due to weak enforcement, low awareness, and limited incentives. Similar patterns are visible in India, where government promotion of Ayurveda through the Ministry of AYUSH has increased awareness but has not fully translated into consistent green purchasing behaviour (Vijayalakshmi, 2025).

The regulatory environment for Ayurveda and natural products remains fragmented. Overlapping jurisdictions among the Ministry of AYUSH, FSSAI, and the Drug Controller General of India create procedural uncertainty for manufacturers and contribute to consumer confusion (Sheela, 2025). Furthermore, weak enforcement against misleading eco-claims increases the risk of greenwashing.

Recent proposals such as the Green Ayurveda Labelling Scheme (GALS) reflect attempts to standardize sustainability requirements, including recyclable packaging and green supply chain compliance. International examples such as Romania's Green Certificate policy suggest that fiscal incentives (subsidies, tax breaks, certification support) can effectively drive green innovation (Pahari, 2024; Chakravarty, 2024).

8. Cultural Compatibility and Localized Green Behavior

Green consumerism is not uniform across contexts; it is culturally embedded. Research indicates that consumers often practice eco-friendly behaviors without recognizing them as “green marketing” consumption (Mhatre, 2024; Krupa, 2024). In rural India, traditional practices such as herbal hair oils, turmeric skincare, and plant-based cleansing are common, but these are not always framed as sustainability behaviors.

Ayurvedic marketing can leverage such indigenous eco-practices by aligning sustainability narratives with cultural pride and vernacular storytelling. For instance, region-specific evidence suggests that consumers in Rajasthan and Gujarat respond strongly when herbal consumption is linked with religious or ritual significance (Prakash, 2025; Neha, 2025). Similarly, campaigns tied to festivals such as Diwali can position Ayurvedic herbal soaps or eco-safe products as culturally meaningful sustainable gifts (Verma, 2025; Saumya, 2025).

This highlights the importance of cultural compatibility as a key driver of green Ayurvedic branding, particularly beyond urban markets.

9. Greenwashing Risks in Ayurvedic Branding

The mainstreaming of green marketing has intensified the risk of greenwashing—where firms exaggerate or fabricate environmental claims. In Ayurveda, greenwashing is particularly risky because the sector is

already symbolically linked with purity and naturalness. This creates a marketing environment where eco-claims can easily be made without operational verification (Roy, 2025).

Empirical evidence suggests that consumer skepticism is rising. Kumar and Deshpande (2024) reported that a substantial proportion of Ayurvedic consumers distrust green claims due to inconsistent labeling and unclear ingredient origins. Historical critiques of cosmetic advertising also demonstrate how nature symbolism is often used as a design tool rather than a sustainability commitment (Prakash, 2025).

High-profile controversies, such as Coronil during COVID-19, further illustrate how credibility crises can emerge when claims are not aligned with scientific validation and regulatory approval (Khalikova & Kumar, 2025). Such cases reinforce the importance of evidence-based marketing and ethical communication.

10. Eco-Labels, Certifications, and Digital Assurance Mechanisms

Eco-labels have evolved into critical trust signals influencing purchase decisions. Consumer research indicates strong responsiveness to labels such as “chemical-free,” “eco-packaged,” and “100% natural,” but credibility depends on verification and enforcement (FICCI, 2023).

Ayurvedic firms increasingly rely on certifications such as USDA Organic, India Organic, and AYUSH Premium Mark to enhance trust and differentiation (Gopakumar, 2025; Sridevi, 2025). However, labels alone are insufficient if consumers perceive them as unverified or ambiguous.

Digital assurance mechanisms are therefore becoming essential. QR codes, NFC-based authentication, and blockchain traceability systems enable consumers to access sourcing, manufacturing, and certification information. These tools increase transparency and reduce greenwashing risk, strengthening trust and brand equity (FICCI, 2023; Obahiagbon & Ogwu, 2024).

11. Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM) in Ayurveda

Green marketing credibility depends heavily on sustainability performance across the supply chain. Jomon and Jeyalakshmi (2025) emphasized that Ayurvedic firms must integrate Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM) practices, covering the full product lifecycle from herb sourcing to packaging and distribution.

Best practices include sustainable harvesting, ethical sourcing partnerships, biodegradable packaging, circular economy strategies such as herbal waste valorization, and carbon-sensitive logistics. However, barriers remain, including cost limitations, supplier unawareness, uneven access to certified raw materials, and regulatory uncertainty (Jomon & Jeyalakshmi, 2025).

Sustainable supply chain governance is particularly important for Ayurvedic firms seeking global competitiveness, where sustainability metrics increasingly influence consumer choice and regulatory compliance (Obahiagbon & Ogwu, 2024).

12. Innovation Opportunities: Green Nanotechnology and Green Entrepreneurship

Ayurveda’s future competitiveness in green markets depends on innovation that integrates tradition with modern science. Singh and Rai (2022) highlighted Ayurveda’s potential as a green innovation platform within India’s emerging sustainability ecosystem. Thiipe et al. (2023) demonstrated that green nanotechnology can enhance the efficacy and bioavailability of herbal formulations through eco-friendly synthesis processes.

From a marketing perspective, such innovation allows Ayurvedic firms to position themselves as modern custodians of tradition—combining scientific validation, sustainability, and performance-driven product value. Similarly, Prajapati (2024) emphasized Ayurveda’s role in developing green entrepreneurship, especially through rural herbal enterprises that strengthen biodiversity conservation and local livelihoods.

13. Proposed Conceptual Model: Green Ayurveda Branding (GAB)

Based on the synthesized literature, this paper proposes a conceptual model of Green Ayurveda Branding (GAB). The model integrates sustainability strategy, trust mechanisms, cultural compatibility, consumer psychology, and behavioural outcomes.

13.1 Model Components

Antecedents

These are the major factors that shape how consumers *think and feel* about green Ayurvedic products.

1. Green Marketing Mix Practices: (Kaur & Popli, 2022; Attih, 2025)
2. Authenticity and Scientific Validation (Nisha & Prakash, 2025; Naini, 2025)
3. Trust Mechanisms (Eco-labels, QR codes, blockchain) (FICCI, 2023)
4. Cultural Compatibility and Local Narratives (Jamal, 2021; Fauziyah, 2021)
5. Regulatory and Policy Context (Sheela, 2025; Vijayalakshmi, 2025)

Mediators

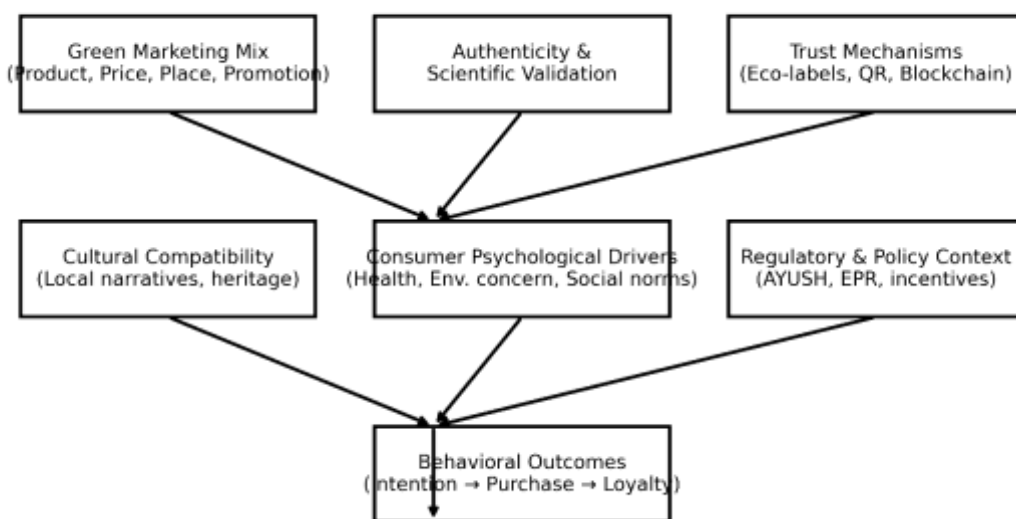
- Consumer Psychological Drivers: Health consciousness, environmental concern, perceived consumer effectiveness, social norms, and green social identity (IIM Bangalore, 2024; Khandai, 2025).

Outcomes

- Behavioural Outcomes: Purchase intention → actual purchase → loyalty → brand evangelism (Khandai, 2025).

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Green Ayurveda Branding (GAB)

Conceptual Model: Green Ayurveda Branding (GAB)



14. Research Propositions

Based on the conceptual model, the following propositions are advanced:

- P1:** Green marketing mix practices positively influence consumer trust in Ayurvedic brands (Attih, 2025; Kaur & Popli, 2022).

P2: Eco-label credibility positively influences green purchase intention in Ayurvedic products, mediated by consumer trust (FICCI, 2023; Kumar & Deshpande, 2024).

P3: Cultural compatibility strengthens the relationship between green promotion and purchase intention in Ayurvedic markets (Jamal, 2021; Fauziyah, 2021).

P4: Scientific validation moderates the relationship between brand authenticity and consumer trust (Nisha & Prakash, 2025; Khalikova & Kumar, 2025).

P5: Digital assurance mechanisms reduce consumer skepticism and weaken greenwashing perceptions (FICCI, 2023; Obahiagbon & Ogwu, 2024).

P6: Green supply chain management positively influences green brand equity and international competitiveness of Ayurvedic firms (Jomon & Jeyalakshmi, 2025).

P7: Demographic variables such as education, gender, and income significantly predict willingness to pay for green Ayurvedic products (Joshi, 2024; Jain & Patel, 2024).

P8: Brand happiness positively predicts loyalty and brand evangelism for green Ayurvedic brands (Khandai, 2025).

P9: Government promotional efforts increase purchase intention, but the effect is stronger when regulatory enforcement is perceived as credible (Vijayalakshmi, 2025; Sheela, 2025).

P10: Intention - behaviour gaps are primarily driven by price sensitivity, availability constraints, and trust deficits (Mostafa, 2023; Sharma & Trivedi, 2023).

15. Implications

15.1 Managerial Implications

Ayurvedic firms must ensure sustainability is embedded operationally, not merely symbolically. Strategies include:

- adopting verified eco-certifications,
- strengthening green supply chains,
- implementing QR/blockchain traceability,
- investing in scientific validation and standardized formulations,
- avoiding exaggerated claims that may trigger credibility loss.

15.2 Policy Implications

Policymakers should:

- harmonize AYUSH, FSSAI, and DCGI regulatory roles (Sheela, 2025),
- strengthen enforcement against greenwashing,
- introduce fiscal incentives for green-certified Ayurvedic firms (Pahari, 2024; Chakravarty, 2024),
- develop standardized schemes such as GALS.

15.3 Research Implications

Future research must focus on:

- rural consumer behaviour,
- post-purchase sustainability practices,
- longitudinal loyalty patterns,
- empirical testing of the GAB model,
- scaling green nanotechnology and blockchain solutions.

Conclusion

Green marketing has become a strategic imperative in modern markets, shaped by consumer consciousness, regulatory transformation, and sustainability-driven competition. The Ayurvedic product industry in India is uniquely positioned to benefit from this transition because of its natural alignment with ecological living and holistic wellness. Yet, challenges such as greenwashing, trust deficits, fragmented regulation, and intention - behaviour gaps constrain sustainable growth.

This conceptual article synthesized global and Indian literature to propose an integrated Green Ayurveda Branding (GAB) model. The framework highlights that sustainability success in Ayurveda depends on the convergence of authenticity, trust mechanisms, cultural compatibility, scientific validation, and operational sustainability through green supply chain management. The study offers a structured research agenda and practical roadmap for businesses and policymakers to build credible, competitive, and environmentally responsible Ayurvedic brands in a globally conscious marketplace.

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