

Promotion of Sustainability and Sustainable Development by the Indian Businesses in their Festival Marketing

Nidhi Pandey^{1*}, Dr. Vanita Kumari Soni²

Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, India

Abstract:

Festival Marketing is the strategy used by the businesses during festivals to attract the customers. They use a variety of tactics under this, one of them is Sustainability. The companies claim that they fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals through Festival marketing. When a business follows sustainability during the festivals, it follows all the 5 Cs of sustainability- Clean, Culture, Community, Corporate Governance, and Care. The purpose of the study is to check if the claims made by the companies are true or they are making false claims just to increase their sales. This study is based on more than 100 newspaper articles published online on Economic Times, Times of India, Financial Express, Business Standard, ANI etc. between year 2019 to 2025. The study follows a process-oriented approach to know how companies are making their festival marketing a success by promoting sustainability and sustainable development. Thematic Data Analysis has been used. The research findings highlight four themes related to the study- Artefacts, Targeted Audience, Behavioural Pattern, and the Companies. These themes include- Subversion of the Production Techniques by the businesses, adopting proactive approach of festive marketing, and incorporating behaviour change through education and awareness by the companies and the government. The findings of the study have theoretical implications around sustainability, including the SDGs and how festival marketing when combined with sustainability benefits both the businesses and the consumers. This manuscript presents original research that offers novel insights into how Festival Marketing can promote sustainability and fulfil sustainable development goals.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Sustainable Development Goals, Sustainability, Festival Marketing, Festivals.

1. Introduction

Festivals have been considered an integral part of human history (Duffy and Mair, 2018). In India, festivals are emotions of people. Before the beginning of festivals, companies indulge in festival marketing activities to form a new festive equation with their consumers. Festival marketing is the process by which businesses step up their efforts to draw in customers. The goal is to boost revenue and profit by giving customers worthwhile offers. Many companies are using many innovative strategies to attract the customers during festivals. They are touching the emotional nerves of consumers and boosting their sales (Buddha, 2023). It is an offering made to the customers which provides financial benefits with a hard-to-replace competitive advantage. Festival marketing influences customers' memories and allegiances. If a company wants to make its festive marketing successful, it has to provide great unforgettable experience to the customers. To satisfy the consumers, festival marketing is a special endeavour that needs careful planning and design. Companies use a variety of tactics to please and make their customers happy. One of them is following sustainability. It is the technique of drawing customers while supporting festive marketing in a sustainable manner. Here, requirements of the consumers are satisfied and organizational goals are reached through Festival Marketing in a way that is environmentally friendly.

Festivals are a symbol of culture. Festivals have been acknowledged and praised for their contributions in sustainability for the society (McClinchey, 2017), (Black, 2016), inculcating sustainability in the culture (Suntikul, 2018), sustainability in finance (O'Sullivan & Jackson, 2002), and sustainability for the betterment of the environment (Collins & Cooper, 2017), (Andersson et al., 2013). However, concentrating only on making specific events sustainable may ignore the larger potential of events to support sustainable development (Mair and Smith 2021). As per the Brundtland Commission report, Sustainable development concentrates on meeting the needs of the present, without compromising the opportunities of future generations. (World Commission on Environment and Development, page 43).

Sustainability should be deep-rooted in our society. It is imperative that sustainability be incorporated into our festivals' basic layout as well. Festivals are significant occasions to reinforce the message and practice of sustainability, and festivals play a significant role in attracting large audiences. These days, Indian customers consider sustainability. For this reason, especially during festivals, consumers are demanding products that contribute to less environmental harm. Festivals could encourage sustainable lives and increase awareness. However, because of their transient nature, (Mair and Smith, 2021) voice concerns regarding the long-term contribution of transient events to sustainable development. A "systemic perspective" that emphasizes the procedures involved in event generation rather than just the results of events is recommended in addition to bringing up this issue (Mair & Smith, 2021).

In India, between 50 and 60 percent of all sales occur during the festive season. 84% of Indians plan to increase their spending during the holiday season (The Drum, 2023) (Young, 2023). To enhance the precision of their occasion-based marketing tactics, advertisers ought to concentrate more on certain attributes and the extent to which they influence consumer behaviour during festivals.

Brands have an opportunity over the festive season. Customers are eager to spend during the festivals, both online and offline. Festive marketing offers a glimpse of optimism to firms that have struggled in the past several years. They see this as a chance for the market to turn around. Many categories do 30 to 50 percent of their annual business during this time. By going green, the businesses seize the chance to impact their customer base. The companies promote the products by studying the behavioural patterns of the targeted consumers. They are amalgaming sustainability and Culture Cleanly, and Carefully working for the Community by fulfilling their aims of Corporate governance. In this way, companies are working towards the 5 Cs of sustainability during the festivals by following Festive Marketing. This has been explained briefly in Table 1.

Table 1. Application of 5 Cs in Festival Marketing

Pillar (The 5 Cs)	Application in Festival Marketing
Clean	Adopting eco-friendly technologies, minimizing waste, and reducing carbon emissions during festive events and promotions.
Culture	Honouring festivals as symbols of tradition and heritage while seamlessly integrating modern Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) issues.
Community	Promoting social inclusion, supporting local artisans, and contributing to the collective well-being of the society celebrating the festival.

Corporate Governance	Ensuring that festival-related campaigns and operations fulfil both internal organizational standards and international sustainability goals.
Care	Demonstrating a genuine concern for consumer health, safety, and the long-term protection of the environment.

The study aims to get the answer for the question that how companies are making their festival marketing a success by promoting sustainability and sustainable development? For this, the festivals have been used as a case study to know how festival marketing when combined with sustainability and sustainable goals, benefits both the businesses and the consumers.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Festivals and Sustainability

Numerous disciplines share the study of festivals. There are many kinds of festivals, some are centered around power, class structure, and social roles, and some are religious, rural, and urban festivals (Falassi, 1987). It is important to note that festivals are the occasions when celebrations are done regularly by the people year on year basis, as opposite to special events, which are irregular or celebrated one time or rarely (Wilson et al., 2017). Festivals are the mirror of our communal and social understandings and represents our cultural practices (Quinn, 2003) (Turner, 1969). They represent the real richness of our existence, not merely show the capacity of expenditure and celebration (Pieper, 1965). The festivals have the beauty to foster our development (Wu et al., 2020). Festivals have the capacity to provide us various important educational and social benefits (Yolal et al., 2016). Festivals are capable enough to create social capital (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006), and can celebrate successes (Roy, 2005). Rituals are performed in festivals which gives a sense of oneness (Turner, 1969). It showcases the beautiful culture and the heritage (Cudny et al., 2012). Festivals foster the sense of collectiveness (Ozouf, 1975). Festivals maintain a sense of community which work for itself and the society (Derrett, 2003). It stimulates local creativity (Quinn, 2006).

Anthropologists claim that banqueting and rituals can be a part of festivals (Svoboda, 2010). Both play equally important roles. Rituals are defined as “a kind of symbolic, expressive activity made up of several behaviours that take place in a set, episodic order and are frequently repeated over time” (Rook, 1985). Important rituals are followed in the festivals. People attending the festivals can experience rituals to be cleansing and renewing them, which is not followed in their daily lives (Pike, 2011). People become part of a big population when they mix with the gathering of people celebrating the festivals (Bakhtin, 1984). Festivals teach us the law of freedom, where all are same without a distinction, and there is no difference between the audience and the members performing rituals. All are equal celebrating festivals. (Bakhtin, 1984).

In this study, the theme followed is how businesses go green during the festivals, while following their marketing strategies and promote sustainability. Sustainability is important in today’s era. It is being promoted in each and every corner to make our planet a better place. Sustainability is a concept that stands on three pillars: environment, economy, and society to (Holmes et al., 2015). The goal is to achieve a balance in consumption and regeneration of resource to guarantee the long-term and healthy existence of human life. While sustainability is usually linked to environmental issues, it mainly refers to the establishment of a sustainable society which can prosper (Mair & Smith, 2021).

If we see from the lens of social sustainability, festivals can work for social change (Picard, 2016), because they offer a great opportunity to spread knowledge of sustainable behaviour. (Mair & Laing, 2012). When sustainability is followed in celebrating festivals, they can develop sustainable economies (O'Sullivan & Jackson, 2002). Festivals can impact the local production and consumption patterns during the celebrations and can act as a platform for educating people and promoting social inclusion (Carlsen et al., 2007). These are the times when habits are built and awareness and knowledge can be inculcated, especially in the newer generations. So, festivals can help to take these generations in the path of sustainability. Not only in urban societies, today even in rural areas sustainability is supported during the festivals by making a balance between culture and the celebrations (Black, 2016).

2.2. Indian Context: Sustainability and Festival Marketing

India is regarded as the mother of civilization and the birthplace of four main world religions. For many years, it has been a popular destination for religious tourists worldwide. (Manhas & Bipithlal, 2020). Here festivals are occasions of joy and celebrations. India is a pot of cultures, where lots of festivals paints the calendar. Although Indian celebrations are diverse across regions and cultures, but there is a common love for shopping (Varadarajan, 2023), which is turning towards sustainability. Consumers are choosing brands that are working towards a sustainable future in form of sustainable packaging, reducing plastic use, implementation of water stewardship practices and optimisation of energy consumption (Bodas, 2024). Even after higher price, many consumers are willing to pay extra for the sustainable products. A Survey found that 40% of buyers are ready to pay more for eco-friendly items during the festival season, and 43% are willing to buy from businesses which practices sustainability (Morris, 2023).

As purchasing trends have witnessed a shift in consumer mentality, so the businesses are also prioritising sustainability, even in their festival marketing. Big businesses and companies use a large part of resources of our planet, and this has a negative effect on our planet over the years. It is a high time that companies should start prioritizing sustainability, and source, manufacture/ produce, and distribute their products in such a way that our world becomes inhabitable for all (Datta, 2022). Festivals are the best time to follow such sustainable practices, as this is the time when sales in every sector boom in Indian market (Prakash, 2025), (Goreja, 2025).

3. Methodology

This study is based on more than 100 newspaper articles on Sustainable Festival Marketing published online on Economic Times, Times of India, Financial Express, Business Standard, Mint, ANI etc. between year 2019 to 2025. The four ritual components: (1) Artefacts (Products promoted), (2) Targeted Audience (the Consumers), (3) Behavioural Pattern, or behaviour episodes (of the consumers) and (4) The Performers (the Companies) are the subject of this study which are based on (Rook's, 1985) The Ritual Dimension of Consumer Behaviour (Structural Model of Rituals). The data relating to ritual alterations was analysed using a Theoretical Thematic Analysis Technique (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These themes include- (1) Subverting the Production Technique by the companies, (2) Adopting proactive approach of festive marketing, and (3) Incorporating behaviour change through education and awareness. Each theme has been explained thoroughly by considering all the ritual components in consideration with the sustainable festival marketing. The different steps involved in following festive marketing sustainably were identified, which shows the inclination of companies towards sustainability and sustainable development.

4. Findings and Discussions

Festivals put life into brands, as they enrich spirits of everyone. However, marketers also have a responsibility to make their marketing blend with the celebrations. Today the Indian festival marketplace has different types of shoppers. It is very important to identify their distinctive behaviour, when they perform their festival shopping. It is so because during festivals the sales splurges. In India, festivals account for large volume of sales in different categories. It boosts the revenue and the economy of India. In such scenario, if companies adopt sustainability in their Festival Marketing strategies, then it can convert the grand festivals of India into Grand Green and Sustainable Festivals. Businesses are working in the same direction, supported by the Government. This has been explained in this study with the help of Structural Model of Rituals by using Theoretical Thematic Analysis Technique.

The Structural Model of Rituals given by Rook captures Structural and Content elements of human experiences. It focuses on the ritual dimension of the consumer behaviour. It describes that the ritual behaviour occurs in a fixed sequence and gets repeated over time. This model differentiates between daily rituals performed and large public ritual activities. It describes four ritual components- (1) Artefacts, (2) Targeted Audience, (3) Behavioural Patterns, and, (4) The Performers. Artefacts are the products promoted during the ritual and the festival activities. The Targeted Audience are the Consumers attracted. The behavioural pattern is how the consumers are attracted and their needs are satisfied. Finally, the performers are the businesses that use rituals and festivals for promoting their products and services. As India is a country of festivals, so, the Structural Model of Rituals by Rook fits best.

Theoretical Thematic Analysis Technique given by Braun & Clarke has been used for the analysis of data. Three processual themes have been identified for the purpose: Subverting the production techniques by the companies, adopting proactive approach of festive marketing, and incorporating behaviour change through education and awareness. Subverting the production techniques by the companies can include the change in production methods to make the products sustainable, also it can be a start or increase in production of sustainable products and services for the sustainable development through festive marketing, or it can be both. Adopting the proactive approach of festive marketing includes sustainable festive loyalty that is how the businesses retain their customers by following sustainability in their festival marketing techniques. And how they satisfy their consumers by using value trumps pricing during the festivals, where the sustainability is also affordable. Incorporating Behaviour change through education and awareness includes the role played by the businesses as well as the Indian government where they try to inculcate the behaviour of sustainability in the consumers through laws, different programmes, rewards, etc, truly making the festivals “Green Dream Days.” Below is a detailed discussion of these.

4.1. Subverting the Production Techniques by the companies

Many companies in India have adopted the approach of subversion of production techniques to attract and retain the consumers during the festivals. They are truly in the line of following Sustainable Festival Marketing approach. There are many examples, like, Mahindra Group, IKEA, HCL, Nike, Dell etc working and gaining customers through the same technique. They are examples to be followed by other companies too. Their subversion techniques have been explained as under.

The Mahindra Group effectively reduced emissions and met sustainability checkpoints by using eco-friendly technologies that reduced waste as part of the "Rise for Good" project. Eleven facilities have

done away with plastic in their offices as part of their "Cut the Crap" campaign, and they have certified themselves as zero waste by recycling, reusing, and composting their waste. These green initiatives of Mahindra have been shown in Figure 1. Cultural events like the Mahindra Kabira Festival as shown in Figure 2 are infused with environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues by the Mahindra Group. Raising public awareness of environmental issues, climate change, and the value of a greener future is its main objective (Mahindraadmin, 2019). During the festivals, the company promotes the use of sustainable products and employs eco-friendly ways. Customers view the company more credibly because of this. This resulted in Mahindra's 23% YoY growth. They have also understood the problem of cleaning water bodies and are trying to preserve them. They have recharged water bodies of 32 villages and have planted over 16.4 million trees in India. (Datta, 2022).



Fig 1. Rise for Good and Cut the Crap Initiative of Mahindra Group. (Generated by AI)

Source: Author's own work



Fig 2. The Kabira Festival of Mahindra. (Generated by AI)

Source: Author's own work

IKEA advocates for eco-friendly practices, solar energy, and regenerative environmental initiatives under its "People and Planet Positive" approach. In addition to producing 100% renewable energy for all energy used in its stores, IKEA wants to lower its already low waste proportion to less than 15%. (Estévez et al., 2022). In 2028, zero plastic will be used in the company. From year 2020, less than 10% of the company's packaging is made of plastic. IKEA has participated in "Better Air Now Initiative" and by using rice straws, has produced highly sought-after products like the FORANDRING range of bowls, carpets, and baskets. The collection seeks to reduce air pollution and encourage the use of more ecologically friendly farming techniques by rice producers. Some of the furniture have been shown in Figure 3. The company also debuted a zero-emission delivery service that was introduced during the festive period. As a result of these initiatives, IKEA India's sales increased by 61% (Ganguli, 2018), (Fernandes, 2019).



Fig 3. The FORANDRING range of furniture by IKEA. (Generated by AI)

Source: Author's own work

HCL Technologies has created an Environmental Management System Identification, Creation, and Maintenance Plan known as HCL's Ecosafe. Its main objective is to protect the environment by integrating environmental management techniques into its operational procedures. The primary goal is to carry out product lifecycle management as efficiently as possible to ensure that products are produced, purchased by customers, collected when their useful lives are over, and recycled in an ecologically responsible way thereafter. Thus, HCL Technologies may be seen as the representative of India's environmental efforts. (HCL Annual Report, 2009-10).

Nike is the first shoe company to promote itself as environmentally friendly by positioning its Air Jordan line as such. Nike assured that less dangerous glue adhesives are being used. To increase sales, these sneakers were introduced in India in September during the festive season. This demonstrates how businesses are utilizing festive marketing in sustainable way to attract the consumers and boost the sales. With the removal of dangerous heavy metals from their paints and the promotion of their lead-

free paints in India, particularly during the festivals, Nerolac Paints is positioning itself as environmentally friendly.

As part of its "Go Green with Dell" initiative, Dell focuses on producing IT products that are favourable to the environment. Furthermore, Dell devices are packaged with eco-friendly materials and include a system recycling kit. They have committed to assembling half of their products using recycled materials and to only utilizing eco-friendly packaging. The company declared during the most recent festival season that by 2030, they would recycle or reuse one comparable product for each item purchased by a customer. After enacting green regulations, Dell's business in India increased 64% year over year in FY22, particularly during the festivals (Dell Technologies, 2019).

The examples of sustainable festive marketing strategies used by Indian businesses by change in production methods are the recyclable dresses introduced by Zara for Diwali, the recyclable packets made from used plastic bottles by Thaley company in Haryana, and the shoes made from old tires by Paaduk.com to meet high demand during the festivals. The Bakul Foundation of Bhuvaneshwar produced Plantable Rakhis, an eco-friendly effort of celebration, which is fulfilling the environmental responsibility. Indian and environmentally friendly rakhis are preferred by consumers over Chinese ones. The Better India & Gram Art Project successfully sold 6,532 seed rakhis and generated over Rs. 5,03,171 in revenue in year 2025. The Plantable/ seed Rakhis of Bakul Foundation have been depicted in Figure 4. In Odisha, the Rural Development and Marketing Society (ORMAS) produced 70,000 seed rakhis in 2022, priced between Rs. 20 and Rs. 30 and supported livelihoods of local and rural women. In Chhattisgarh, eco-friendly bamboo rakhis were highly demanded, which generated sales of Rs. 1.6 million (16 lakh) in Dhamtari district alone (Gupta, 2021). This is the outcome of long-term festive marketing.

During last Diwali, West Bengal sold exclusively green crackers. These crackers lack harmful barium compounds that give them typical green colour. Due to extreme demand, only 40% of the real need could be satisfied (Ganguli, 2023). The SwitchON Foundation research team conducted a survey at licensed bazi bazaars of Jharkhand to see public perceptions of a Green and Clean Diwali. The study focused on potential buyers of green crackers, with flash surveys conducted between 7th to 9th November 2023, which included 160 randomly selected individuals. Over half of the surveyed people i.e. 53% identified green crackers by recognizing the QR Code and CSIR-NEERI logo on the packaging (Jaju, 2023). If there is knowledge, there will be demand. Crackers are priced between Rs 50 to Rs 9000. These crackers have a 15–25% lower cost than regular ones. The fireworks industry in India generates over 6000 crores in revenue annually, and directly or indirectly employs over 5 lakh families.

Sustainable efforts made by some businesses during the festivals have been summed up in Table 2. These sustainable initiatives have positively impacted their businesses.



Fig 1. Plantable and Seed Rakhis by Bakul Foundation. (Generated by AI)

Source: Author's own work

Table 2. Positive impact on the growth of businesses after taking sustainable initiatives.

Businesses	Sustainable Initiative	Business Impact
Mahindra Group	"Rise for Good" & "Cut the Crap" campaigns; zero-waste facilities.	23% YoY growth.
IKEA India	Zero-emission delivery; products from rice straws (FORANDRING range).	61% sales increase.
Dell India	"Go Green with Dell"; system recycling kits and recycled materials.	64% YoY growth (FY22).
Bakul Foundation	Production of Plantable Rakhis.	20% expansion.

Thus, Subverting the production techniques by the companies including the change in production methods and the production of sustainable products and services for the sustainable development through festive marketing is gaining popularity among the Indian companies. They are making sustainability a concept standing on three pillars of environmental, economic, and social benefits. They are also moving towards fulfilling one of the Sustainable Development goals: - SDG 11.7: "By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities" (UN, 2015, p. 22). This is the reason that many companies claim that they are following the Sustainable Development Goals while following the Festival Marketing.

4.2. Adopting Proactive Approach of Festive Marketing

As the world has become more environmentally conscious, people and businesses are looking ways to celebrate festivals sustainably (Chaturvedi, 2024). 86% of Indian consumers pick eco-friendly products over non-eco-friendly ones, while 44% are concerned about their health (Sangameshwaran, 2021). Many companies and groups see this as an opportunity to get an advantage over competitors who have not used green marketing techniques during the festivals. Several Indian businesses are doing a great job of merging festivals with eco-consciousness. The big example is Bombay Hemp Company (BOHECO). This brand is bringing change with its innovative use of the hemp plant. Their offerings, include wellness products organic apparels, and sustainable home decors, which provides a unique gifting option and contribute positively to the environment during festivals (Mitra, 2024). In response to growing customer concerns over the company's use of Ozone and polystyrene, McDonald's switched out its Clamshell packaging with waxed paper. This move alone reduced McDonald's solid waste by 300 million pounds over the following decade and cut the energy used in packaging production significantly.

The pandemic has led to a demand for the brands that create awareness about sustainability and environment (48%) and promote environmentally friendly products (47%). A new study says that 44% of the Indians want to see more brands implementing sustainable practices (Sangameshwaran, 2021). About 85% customers say that climate change is disrupting their lives, consumers are giving sustainability more weight when it comes to their festive purchasing habits. 46% of consumers accepted that they are buying more ecologically friendly products to reduce their impact on the environment (PwC, 2024).

A pan-India survey conducted by the Mahindra Group in 2019, published later in 2020 revealed that 4 out of 5 Indians are aware of the impact of their actions on nature and climate change, while 83% expressed their interest in making changes in their lifestyle such as carpooling, using electric vehicles or public transportation. 70% accepted that they are informed about the environmental issue of water conservation and want to work for it (Ghosh, 2020). Customers are becoming increasingly interested in and willing to pay for green items. Globally, the number of people searching online for sustainable products has increased by 71% in the last five years. In 2022, more than thirty percent of consumers said that they frequently made purchases of sustainable products, and more than thirty percent said that their purchasing habits had changed to become more environmentally conscious. According to a 2024 PwC survey, customers are willing to pay an average of 9.7% more for sustainable items. According to a poll, 90.1% of respondents said that consumers are becoming more aware of the environmental impact of their festive consumption (PwC, 2024).

Many automakers in India use the festivals to launch their newest models. To make such purchases, people eagerly await Durga Puja and Dhanteras. Customers are now gravitating toward electric vehicles as they become more environmentally conscious and accountable. During Holi, businesses are making natural colours and people use them. Diyas and earthen pots are being used again and have taken on new significance in celebrations. Reputed business companies like Mitti Cool Earthen Pots, Suraj Potteries, Moolchand Potteries, Shree Ram Earthen Pots are making earthen pots today. Some are comparatively new and some were established 40 to 100 years back. Plantable rakhis are popular today. Bakul Foundation, Bombay Greens, 21 Fools, Gram Art Project, Indigifts, Seed Paper India etc are various leading brands that produce Plantable and seed rakhis. These contains seeds like Tulsi, Amaranthus, Basil etc and can be grown into plants after use. They are not only environment friendly but also supports women and local artisans. People use them to plant trees following the Rakhi festival.

Thus, it is eminent that the customers are showing their sustainable festive loyalty. It is the duty of the companies to value this sustainable loyalty of consumers during the festivals and satisfy them.

Indian consumers want value, but it does not mean they people are always looking for the rock bottom price or discounting. They want quality, effective functionality and durability in the product they buy. They are looking for a balance between affordability and perceived value which is “bang for the buck” theory of the consumers (Sangameshwaran, 2025). This is value trump pricing. Even if the consumers are going for sustainability during the festivals, they follow value trump policy. So, the companies should be careful and keep the pricing of the products which can be affordable for a large population.

4.3. Incorporating Behaviour change through education and awareness

The change of behaviour is a process, which takes time. Here, businesses as well as Government plays very important and effective role. In the modern retail landscape, businesses have transitioned from being mere providers of festival goods and services to becoming pivotal agents of environmental change. By integrating sustainable green marketing strategies, brands are redefining the festival shopping season as a series of “dream days” that integrates people celebration with ecological responsibility. This transformation is driven by a multiple approach that combines change in narratives, hands-on education, and product innovation.

Central theme is the sustainable marketing campaigns. Through “green storytelling,” brands move beyond simple advertisements to the meaningful narratives, such as “plastic-free festivals” or “green Diwali,” like Otla (Otlas, 2025). These campaigns, often boosted by local influencers who emphasize “responsible joy,” and define eco-conscious celebrations as the new motivated standard. By using eco-labelling, businesses further highlight environmentally friendly features, providing the choice to go green to the modern consumers.

Parallel to these narratives is a deep commitment to consumer education through engagement. Businesses invite customers to participate in the sustainability journey through interactive workshops and mall events that teach waste segregation, and upcycling while celebrating festivals. To make sure that these lessons last, many brands employ gamification, and launch reward-based challenges. Additionally, the inclusion of QR codes on packaging provides an educational content, which turns a product into a portal for learning sustainability practices.

Furthermore, businesses like “Earthen Wonders” are revolutionizing the marketplace through product and supply chain interventions. By offering specialized products, such as natural dyes for Holi, clay idols, terracotta lighting, and biodegradable tableware, they provide the necessary tools for a greener lifestyle (Zachariah, 2020). The efforts of businesses are reinforced by take-back programs also, that encourage the return of used old clothes, newspapers, utensils, and packaging for recycling, as done by Reliance SMART Bazar, Zara etc. (Cernansky, 2023) alongside strategic collaborations with NGOs to lead community-wide green drives.

Through these comprehensive awareness campaigns, companies are not only selling products, they are shaping a culture of mindfulness. By merging commerce with sustainability, they ensure that the Festive season becomes a collective step toward a more sustainable future, proving that the most fulfilling “dream days” can also protect the environment.

The government plays a foundational role in navigating society towards ecological responsibility by implementing regulatory frameworks. Through awareness and education campaigns, the Government uses public information drives like “Celebrate with Care” to encourage eco-conscious festivities. By incorporating sustainability chapters into school curriculum and directing local bodies for post-festival

clean-up drives, the government ensures that the ethics of “Green Festivals” is inculcated from a young age and practiced at the community level.

To move beyond mere encouragement and promotion, the government implements policy and incentives designed to shift the behaviour. This includes “Green Certifications” or “Energy Saving Certificates” for retailers and “tax subsidies” for businesses producing biodegradable or energy-efficient goods (Shah, 2025). In India, certifications come through various bodies like the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC), GreenPro Ecolabel, and ISO 14001:2015 for Environmental Management Systems. Sustainability claims are very easy to make, but certifications make them credible. For buyers like institutional clients and export partners verification matters. Certification is a trust for sustainable manufacturers in India by proving that the green promise made is backed by a verified system. Contrariwise, strict regulations and even bans on non-biodegradable festivity products and harmful dyes ensure that environmental standards are non-negotiable. These micro-level efforts are strengthened by broader national strategies, such as the Green Industrial Policy (GIP) and the Green Sectoral Policy Plan which aims to decarbonize the economy. These initiatives aim to transform major sectors including e-waste, energy, etc. into a unified green economy.

The government acts as a bridge through collaboration with media and civil society. By partnering with religious institutions, the state ensures that sustainability feels like a natural evolution of tradition rather than an external imposition. Under the National Manufacturing Policy, mandatory environmental audits for entities in National Investment and Manufacturing Zones (NIMZs) further enforce this transition.

Ultimately, these governmental actions aim to fulfil the global commitment to the enforcement of carbon laws to achieve the 1.5°C target of the Paris Agreement. As the administration enforces carbon laws and recycling mandates for plastics and e-waste, businesses are increasingly adopting Sustainable Festive Marketing. And these businesses entities are claiming that they are helping the government to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, which government cannot deny. For these entities, “going green” is no longer just a trend or an obligation, it is a means of complying with evolving national standards and contribution to the circular economy.

By integrating behavioural nudges with education and policy, both businesses and the government can transform festivals from high-waste periods into platforms for collective sustainable action. In this line, both businesses and the government can adopt the “ABCDE” model of behaviour change. The ABCDE framework serves as a deliberate roadmap for both businesses and governments to bring a change to the traditional festive consumption and make it a sustainable “green” model. This step-by-step emotional and operational journey ensures that sustainability is not just a word, but a living experience for the consumers.

The first step is “A” means “Awareness,” which is the foundation of change. It focuses on education. Before a consumer can change their behaviour, they must understand the environmental consequences. By highlighting the impacts, brands and governments create a “need for change.” The second step is “B” i.e. “Belief,” which helps in empowering the individual. The Belief stage builds the conviction that individual actions truly matter. The focus shifts from the “problem” to the “power of one.” This connects a small personal choice to a big environmental win. The third step is “C” that is “Commitment” which is securing the intent. Once a consumer believes that they can make a difference, the aim is to lock in that intention. This is possible through commitment mechanisms, such as inviting shoppers to “Take the Green Festival Pledge” on social media or any online portals, as the Indian Government do for water conservation and provides certificates for the same. The fourth step is “D” which is “Design,” intent for removing the barriers. This is where the supply chain meets the consumer. Design ensures that

sustainable choices are easy, affordable, and accessible. If eco-friendly clay idols are more expensive or harder to find than plaster and plastic ones, the commitment may fade. Companies fulfil this by ensuring a wide availability of eco-products across every price range, making the “green” choice the “easy” and “affordable” choice. The same has been seen when Indian LED lights captured the market during festivals, they were preferred by the people over other lights and even over the Chinese ones. The last and the fifth step “E” which stands for “Experience,” explains reinforcing the cycle. To ensure that the consumer repeats the green behaviour, the sustainable choices made should be rewarded. This can be done through rewards like “Recycle & Win,” loyalty points for sustainable shopping, or by simply using high-quality natural products in the production (Kvamme, 2025). A positive experience of consumers can turn their one-time “green” choices into a lifelong sustainable joy. The complete format of ABCDE framework has been explained in the table below.

Table 3. “ABCDE” Model of Behaviour Change.

Step	Description	Example (Festival Context)
A – Awareness	Educate consumers about environmental impacts	Ads showing effects of plastic waste after festivals.
B – Belief	Build belief that individual action matters	“Every diya you light in clay saves marine life”
C – Commitment	Encourage personal pledges	“Take the Green Festival Pledge” online
D – Design	Make sustainable choices easy and accessible	Availability of eco-products in every price range
E – Experience	Reinforce with positive experience	Reward customers for sustainable shopping

So, the Businesses and Government are working hard through their programmes and policies to inculcate a behaviour change in the citizens during the festival celebrations. The Indian government plays an important role in boosting businesses while promoting sustainability across industries. India is home to several manufacturers that are recognising their crucial role for sustainability in the production processes. In today’s era, sustainability is no longer an option, rather it has become essential. This is the reason that the manufacturing sector in India is going through a major shift. Today, a big size of consumers, global buyers, and even the regulatory bodies want to work with partners who prioritize the planet. So, the production and consumption should be green and sustainable. This is the reason that the incorporation of behaviour change is very essential.

It is very clear from the above explanation that the thematic analysis includes all the four ritual components of sustainable festivals in one or the other way. This has been summed up below in Table 4.

Table 4. The Thematic Analysis includes 4 Ritual Components of Sustainable Festivals.

Component	Description	Festival Marketing Example
Performers	The catalysts or mediators who trigger the ritual.	Brands/Companies that initiate green campaigns and provide eco-alternatives.
Audience	The specific group the ritual is designed for.	Eco-conscious consumers who prioritize low environmental impact.
Artefacts	Physical objects required to perform the ritual.	Sustainable goods like seed-embedded idols, solar lanterns, or upcycled fashion.
Behavioural Patterns	The scripted sequence of actions and psychological states.	Habits like "Sustainable Loyalty," change of choices and adopting more sustainable products.

5. Implications

Sustainability has become a major concern in the field of events and festivals, which has been the focus of many research. However, rather than discussing how particular events may contribute to the “wider sustainability agenda,” a large part of the present conversation concentrates on just making the events more sustainable (Mair & Smith, 2021). The current study fills this gap by addressing the following research question and adhering to Mair and Smith's (2021) demand for a process-oriented approach that how companies are making their festival marketing a success by promoting sustainability and sustainable development?

Festivals and their role in sustainability are not frequently studied (Black, 2016; McClinchey, 2017; Laing & Mair, 2015). The religious festivals which last for longer time as compare to the onetime events, can fulfil larger sustainable agenda (Holmes et al., 2015). This change starts right from the initiation of Sustainable Festival Marketing by the Businesses. When a Company promotes its products following sustainable goals during the festivals, it follows all the 5 Cs of sustainability.

The study reveals that Indian companies are increasingly integrating sustainability into their festival marketing strategies, balancing profitability with social and environmental responsibility. Through green advertising, eco-friendly product offerings, and responsible packaging, many brands have begun shifting from conventional sales-driven campaigns to value-driven marketing. Examples include the use of biodegradable materials, limited-edition eco-products, and campaigns encouraging minimal waste celebrations. After following sustainability in their festival marketing campaigns and making their production techniques more sustainable, they are actually reaping profits. They have created a responsible image in the eyes of the consumers and are gaining loyal customers. This is the power of Sustainable Festival Marketing.

However, the level of adoption varies across industries and firm sizes. Large corporations with established CSR frameworks (like Tata, ITC, or Hindustan Unilever) have institutionalized sustainability practices, while smaller firms often engage in one-time or symbolic initiatives. Consumer response has been positive when sustainability aligns with emotional, cultural, and aspirational values of festivals. Yet, gaps remain in consumer education, consistent communication, and measurable

outcomes of such initiatives. Although, these gaps can be filled by continuous efforts of businesses and government. Strong sustainable business marketing plans and focused sustainable government policies can definitely pave a way for Green Dreamy Festival Days.

Sustainable festival marketing is not just about "looking green," it is about shifting the consumer experience from passive consumption to active, value-driven participation. When festival marketing prioritizes sustainability, the benefits to the consumer often manifest in higher-quality environments and a stronger sense of community. There is also a sense of responsibility. When numerous companies follow sustainability in their marketing during festivals, the consumer have the choice to grasp the best offer even by going green. Such initiatives of the businesses benefit the consumers and help India in becoming a Circular Economy.

Sustainable festival marketing can influence mass behaviour change, encouraging citizens to celebrate responsibly. It can contribute in fulfilling the national and international goals. On one side it can help India to become a Green Sustainable Economy and on the other hand it can contribute in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and SDG 13 (Climate Action). So, the study highlights that sustainability during festivals is not only a moral obligation but also an emerging market differentiator, enabling companies to strengthen brand image and customer loyalty. Thus, the study is bringing together the Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Management for Sustainable Development through Festival Marketing.

6. Declarations

Conflict of Interest- No potential conflict of interest.

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