

SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND INVESTMENT BEHAVIOUR: RETAIL INVESTOR RESPONSE TO SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRODUCT CLAIMS IN INDIA**Ramiz Raza¹, Md Shamim Gaddi², Md. Mudassir Alam³, Ruba Fatima² and Ajhar Hussain^{4*}**¹Department of Business Administration, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, UP, India 202002²Department of Commerce, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, UP, India 202002³Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Central University of South Bihar, Gaya, Bihar, 824236^{4*}Department of Geology, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, UP, India 202002***Corresponding author E-mail:** glyazhar@gmail.com<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2315444>**ABSTRACT**

In recent times, sustainability has become a key determinant of consumer buying behavior as well as an important investment decision determinant. Firms are also showcasing their social and environmental responsibilities through product labels, such as "eco-friendly", "organic", "fair-trade", and "socially responsible sourcing". These indicators of sustainability have an impact on consumer trust, perception and corporate reputation which can even go beyond product markets and affect the investment decisions of investors. This research investigates the impact of the sustainable consumption behaviour of consumers and retail investor investment behaviour in the Indian context in response to social and environmental product claims. This paper presents the conceptual framework between the impact of social and environmental product claims of sustainability on consumer trust and sustainability perception of corporate reputation on investment decisions of retail investors. Quantitative research approach is used for the primary data collection, based on a questionnaire from the retail investors. Descriptive and causal statistical tools like factor analysis, Cronbach's alpha, Structural Equation modelling are used to analyze the data. The research findings suggest that a credible sustainability claim increases consumer trust and sustainability perception of corporate reputation which in turn influences socially responsible and sustainability committed investors to increase their investment in sustainability oriented or socially responsible firms. Combining the research areas of sustainable marketing and behavioral finance, this paper contributes to emergent literature on corporate socially responsible investing in developing economies like India.

Keywords: Sustainable consumption, ESG investing, retail investors, behavioural finance, environmental product claims, corporate sustainability

1. INTRODUCTION

In the past 20 years, sustainability has become an essential concept that underpins the world economy, business strategy and consumer choices. Climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, extraction of resources and rising carbon emissions drive an increasing call for different business practices from the government, companies and people. The implementation of the United Nations SDGs and the Paris agreement on climate change has pushed the world to shift towards a more sustainable development, creating a new way for businesses to consider corporate social responsibility more widely and substantively in the design of their operations (United Nations, 2015; Kotler et al., 2021). Sustainability communication signals To cater to the growing awareness of the environment and stakeholder demand, a company's disclosure of CSR and sustainability efforts can be made through social and environmental product claims. Examples of such claims include environmentally safe packaging, organic certified, recyclable packaging, carbon neutral, locally sourced, fair trade, cruelty-free, labour-friendly, and socially aware supply chains. Sustainability claims are thus informational signals which communicate a firm's identity, environmental stewardship, and social responsibility (Signalling Theory). Such sustainability disclosures help to reduce a firm's market information asymmetries with stakeholders by offering credible corporate values and the long-term business commitment to sustainability (Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibez, 2012; Delmas & Burbano, 2011). Consumers perceiving such claims as credible and sincere will thus have a more positive attitude and higher intention of purchase to the brands which they believe making such claims (Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibez, 2012).

The results of previous consumer behaviour studies consistently show that sustainability labels and certifications influence consumer's perception of quality, corporate and social credibility. Environmentally conscious consumers seek products that have lower environmental impact, are responsibly sourced, bring social benefits, and are generally willing to pay a price premium for such products. Sustainable marketing communication has positive effects on brand credibility, consumer satisfaction and loyalty when it is based on environmentally valid and verifiable information. Unfortunately, increased consumer concern of greenwashing

and false claims have led to skepticism towards sustainable products and have turned credibility and transparency into major factors of sustainable purchase behaviour. Consumer response to green marketing has been strongly correlated with dimensions such as trust, perceived authenticity, environmental concern, and the credibility of the claims. Alongside the unprecedented shift in consumer markets, the world financial sector has experienced an enormous wave of sustainable and responsible investment (SRI). Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) investments have emerged as a mainstream investment category that draws on non-financial sustainability parameters within investment analysis and portfolio selection. Investors are shifting their evaluative focus from profitability and historic financial data towards firms' commitment to and performance of environmental, social responsibility, governance standards, climate change risk and reportings and sustainability disclosure as a measure of long-term value creation and resilience (Friede et al., 2015). A review of the existing empirical research shows that the majority of studies reports a positive ESG-CFP relationship, reinforcing its potential to add value to investments and to limit downside risk (Friede et al., 2015). Latest writings have also pointed towards a rising demand for ESG investment products from retail investors, especially in emerging economies with rising awareness around sustainability and digital engagement in investments.

In addition, behavioural finance implies that retail investors do not only consider financial information while investing but also other personal motivational factors such as trust, self-interest, morality, social norms, environmental concern, organisational reputation and perceived risk. Sustainability-oriented product claims consequently can impact investment behaviour only indirectly by improving credibility of companies and their sustainability performance and through improving investor perception of the firms' long-term sustainability performance. On the other hand, concerns about greenwashing and different quality of ESG disclosures can impact investor trust negatively highlighting the importance of credible sustainability communication. Examining these mechanisms provides an explanation of impact of sustainability information on investment intentions in India. Against this backdrop, this research explores the impact of social and environmental product claims on the investment decision making of Indian retail investors. In particular, the study explores the moderating effects of sustainability claims on consumer trust, corporate sustainability reputation, and the investment decision of environmentally and socially responsible companies. Drawing from the literature on sustainable marketing, consumer behaviour, ESG investing and behavioural finance, this paper conceptualizes and theorizes the sustainable decision-making process of Indian retail investors. The findings from this research will contribute to the emerging literature on sustainable consumption and responsible investment in developing countries and offer insights for corporate branding, policy-making, financial institutions, ESG fund managers and investors keen on driving transparent sustainability communication and long-term sustainable growth in the country.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Sustainable Consumption Behaviour

Sustainable consumption behaviour This is defined as the purchase, use and disposal of goods and services in ways that do not have a negative impact on the environment and societal well-being, and which, in the long term, do not threaten the viability of the economy. It represents the product preferences of customers who are increasingly willing to take into account environmental, ethical and social attributes (rather than only traditional criteria such as price, quality, and convenience (Griskevicius et al., 2010). As customers have become more sensitive to the environment, they now demand that products mirror their own beliefs including organic, recyclable, eco-friendly, and ethically sourced products. Sustainable product labels and certification on environment aspects help to convey information on green properties of products, reduce information gap between firm and consumers (Tanner & Wölfling, 2014). Knowledge on sustainability aspects helps consumers to compare green products with non-green equivalent, and to construct positive attitude, trust as well as intention to purchase (Cheah & Phau, 2011). In addition, the promotion of green products is heavily relied on credibility, transparency and sincerity of environmental claims and green marketing communication (Delmas & Burbano, 2011). Consumers tend to support organizations that carry true environmental and social responsibility; in contrast, unrighteous green marketing claims may lead to cynicism.

2.2 Social and Environmental Product Claims

Claims in the context of products and production refer to corporate messages conveying the social, environmental, and moral aspects of products and production techniques. These include: carbon neutral, sustainable/ethical sourcing, recyclable/compostable packaging, fair-trade, decent working condition, and investment in communities. In terms of a signalling perspective, these claims can signal to stakeholders a firm's degree of sustainability orientation and can serve to lower information asymmetry between organizations and consumers/investors (Spence, 1973; Hartmann and Apaolaza-Ibez, 2012).

Claims that are specific and clear and, where possible, have third-party certification or evidential support, have the potential to increase perceived corporate social responsibility and build consumer trust and organizational reputation. However, greenwashing has increased skepticism towards sustainability claims and information uncertainty, especially when environmental claims are misleading, vague or overstated and not substantiated by evidence and this may result in consumers losing confidence in organizations' sustainability initiatives (Delmas and Burbano, 2011).

2.3 Behavioural Finance and Retail Investor Behaviour

It is worth noting that in traditional finance, investors are believed to be rational decision makers based on information processing to optimize the expected value (Hirshleifer, 2001). In behavioural finance, it is believed that financial decisions made by investors are affected by personal, psychological, emotional, and cognitive factors (Hirshleifer, 2001). Retail investors' decision making can be prompted by heuristic factors, their own experiences, emotion, social factors, and market signals (Barberis and Thaler, 2003). Thereby, decision making of investors can be influenced by factors beyond financial values of the investment such as its profitability, risk and return, and non-financial factors can play a role such as corporate image, value, social responsibility, environment performance and sustainability management (Statman, 2004). The non-financial factors mentioned above play important roles in investor's decision making for those who prefer to align personal value with social outcomes of their investments, and consequently it is the construct for theorizing the influence of sustainability information on retail investor's choice.

2.4 ESG Investing and Sustainable Finance

ESG Investing and Sustainable Finance Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) investing represents an important trend within the broad spectrum of sustainable finance, reflecting an investment approach that seeks to take into consideration the ecological, social, and corporate governance impacts of financial investment decisions and portfolios, supplementing traditional investment criteria based on financial analysis. In contrast to traditional investing that relies on financial variables only, ESG-investing investigates non-financial factors that could have long-term implications on the risk profile and stability of a firm, as well as its reputation and overall value. A synthesis of literature by Friede et al. (2015) that pooled over 2,000 empirical studies found that in general, ESG-investing was associated with better firm performance, although the finding was more mixed depending on the country, industry, and scholarly methodology. As sustainability becomes a central concern among investors, it has prompted them to also factor societal and ethical dimensions into investment decision-making. In this regard, socially responsible investment (SRI) is defined as a style of investment that enables investors to incorporate issues they deem important within their portfolios.

2.5 Consumer-Investor Behaviour Link

Further, if individuals are both consumers and investors, it is likely that the value structures underlying sustainability attitudes would influence individuals' attitudes and behaviour in both spheres (Nofsinger & Varma, 2014). Existing research on socially responsible investment indicates that investors' attitudes can be influenced by their personal values and ethical orientations along with their perceptions of corporate social responsibility (Nofsinger & Varma, 2014). Specifically, individuals with higher levels of preferences for environmentally sound and socially responsible products and behaviour would then have a greater predisposition to prefer socially responsible firms and investment products. The hypothetical relationship can be explained through the theoretical lens of value congruence, which refers to the tendency for people to seek to reconcile and conform their personal values and behaviour in other areas, such as consumption and investment. This potential for value concordance could increase the trust and willingness of responsible consumers to support and patronize responsible firms financially. This phenomenon between sustainable consumption preferences and retail investment does not seem to have been systematically studied thus far, especially in high-growth markets like India.

3. RESEARCH GAP

Although numerous studies have examined sustainable consumption and responsible investment separately, few studies have explored the connection between product-level sustainability claims and investor behaviour. Furthermore, most research has focused on developed markets, leaving a gap in understanding sustainability-driven investment behaviour in emerging economies such as India.

The present study addresses this gap by examining how social and environmental product claims influence retail investors' investment decisions through trust and corporate reputation perceptions.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine retail investors' awareness of social and environmental product claims.

2. To evaluate the influence of sustainability claims on consumer trust.
3. To analyze the relationship between corporate sustainability reputation and investment behaviour.
4. To investigate the influence of sustainable consumption attitudes on retail investment decisions.

5. HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

H1: Social product claims positively influence consumer trust.

Social claims such as fair labour practices and ethical sourcing demonstrate corporate responsibility toward stakeholders. Such initiatives may enhance consumer trust in companies.

H2: Environmental product claims positively influence consumer trust.

Environmental claims related to eco-friendly production and sustainability practices can strengthen consumer confidence in a company's environmental commitment.

H3: Consumer trust positively influences corporate reputation.

Trust in sustainability communication enhances perceptions of corporate credibility and ethical responsibility.

H4: Corporate sustainability reputation positively influences retail investor investment decisions.

Companies perceived as socially responsible and environmentally sustainable are more attractive to investors seeking long-term value.

H5: Sustainable consumption attitudes positively influence responsible investment behaviour.

Consumers who prioritize sustainability in purchasing decisions may also prefer investing in socially responsible companies.

6. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual model proposes that **sustainability claims influence retail investor investment behaviour through consumer trust and corporate reputation.**

Independent Variables

- Social Product Claims
- Environmental Product Claims

Mediating Variables

- Consumer Trust
- Corporate Sustainability Reputation

Dependent Variable

- Retail Investor Investment Behaviour

The framework articulates the impact of social and environmental product claims on investor investment behaviour of retail investors through consumer trust and corporate sustainability reputation for Indian context. The conceptual framework incorporates the ideas from several streams of marketing literature including sustainable marketing, signalling theory and behavioural finance for understanding of how sustainability information communicated by companies can impact not just consumer decisions but also financial decisions. The model treats social product claims and environmental product claims as the main independent variables. Social product claims are the statements related to corporate efforts concerning social responsibility, including the usage of ethically-sourced materials, fairer working conditions, community well-being, employees' wellbeing, social inclusion and responsible manufacturing. Environmental product claims are the statements in respect of eco-friendly production, recycled material, renewable resources, lower carbon emissions, organic materials and other environmentally sustainable practices. Such claims, if deemed to be specific, reliable and transparent, can signal a firm's general sustainability approach to consumers and investors. Consumer trust and corporate sustainability reputation are suggested as mediators. Consumer trust is defined as consumer confidence that sustainability claims made by firms are trustworthy, genuine, and substantiated by real action. Corporate sustainability reputation refers to how well stakeholders hold a firm's sustainability efforts in terms of the environment and society. Sustainability information from corporations can enhance these constructs by mitigating information asymmetry. The final dependant variable is retail investor investment behaviour, i.e. willingness of consumers to consider, choose, buy or hold financial investments in companies with a perceived positive ESG reputation. It is assumed that favourable perceptions generated in the consumption environment might have the potential to spill over from the consumers' investment environment.

Accordingly, the proposed relationships can be expressed as follows:

Social Product Claims → Consumer Trust → Retail Investor Investment Behaviour

Environmental Product Claims → Consumer Trust → Retail Investor Investment Behaviour

Social Product Claims → Corporate Sustainability Reputation → Retail Investor Investment Behaviour

Environmental Product Claims → Corporate Sustainability Reputation → Retail Investor Investment Behaviour

The framework therefore provides a basis for empirically examining whether consumer trust and corporate sustainability reputation mediate the relationship between sustainability claims and retail investor investment behaviour in India.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The anticipated results will show that the social and environmental product claims lead to consumer trust in the product and corporate sustainability reputation, which, in turn, will affect the investment behavior of retail investors. These findings will reaffirm the hypothesis that sustainability-related messages conveyed at the product level can impact financial preferences in addition to consumption. In particular, convincing claims of social issues, such as fair wage and labour, safe environmental conditions, recyclable packaging, and responsible production should contribute to the perception of corporate responsibility among stakeholders. A positive association between social product claims and trust (H1) can be argued conceptually because social claims with a high level of transparency can tell consumers how ethical a firm is and how committed it is to stakeholders. Also, environmental product claims should have a positive impact on trust (H2), particularly if these are specific, verifiable, and fact-based claims with clear proof. These results seem to be in line with signalling theory which shows that credible sustainability disclosures can deal with the asymmetry of information problem between firms and stakeholders. Also, the consideration of greenwashing is still vital as exaggerated or unsupported claims could undermine trust and raise scepticism (Delmas & Burbano, 2011).

It is also expected that consumer trust will positively influence corporate sustainability reputation (H3). If consumers consider the sustainability claims as true and aligned with the company's actions, consumers may hold a positive view of the firm's overall sustainability performance. This explanation would be especially applicable in India where Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI)'s Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report (BRSR) framework has heightened the disclosure of standardized ESG disclosure and enabled investors to access sustainability information. The hypothesized positive association of corporate sustainability reputation and retail investment behaviour (H4) was consistent with the recent finding that retail investors' portfolio choices can be influenced by ESG information and that trust in ESG information influences sustainable investment willingness. H5 proposes that attitudes towards sustainable consumption may spill over into investment behaviour, implying behavioural consistency between consumption and investments. Altogether, the findings favour an integrated perspective in which sustainability claims, trust, reputation and personal sustainability values have impact on responsible investment behaviour of Indian retail investors.

8. PREVIOUS WORK: PREVIOUS WORK PUBLICATION BY DIFFERENT AUTHORS:

Author(s) & Year	Title	Key Finding	Methodology	Reference
Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibáñez (2012)	<i>Consumer attitude and purchase intention toward green energy brands</i>	Green marketing and perceived environmental benefits can strengthen positive consumer attitudes and purchase intentions; emotional and perceived-value mechanisms are important.	Consumer survey; structural modelling	Hartmann, P., & Apaolaza-Ibáñez, V. (2012). Consumer attitude and purchase intention toward green energy brands. <i>Industrial Marketing Management</i> , 41(1), 125–134.
Delmas & Burbano (2011)	<i>The drivers of greenwashing</i>	Greenwashing is influenced by organizational, external-market, and regulatory factors and can undermine the credibility of genuine sustainability	Conceptual literature review	Delmas, M. A., & Burbano, V. C. (2011). The drivers of greenwashing. <i>California Management Review</i> , 54(1), 64–87.

		communication.		
Nofsinger & Varma (2014)	<i>Socially responsible funds and market crises</i>	Socially responsible mutual funds demonstrate distinctive behaviour during market crises, highlighting the importance of socially responsible preferences in investment decisions.	Empirical analysis of socially responsible mutual funds	Nofsinger, J., & Varma, A. (2014). Socially responsible funds and market crises. <i>Journal of Banking & Finance</i> , 48, 180–193.
Friede, Busch & Bassen (2015)	<i>ESG and financial performance: Aggregated evidence from more than 2,000 empirical studies</i>	The large body of evidence generally indicates a non-negative relationship between ESG factors and corporate financial performance.	Review of more than 2,000 empirical studies	Friede, G., Busch, T., & Bassen, A. (2015). ESG and financial performance: Aggregated evidence from more than 2,000 empirical studies. <i>Journal of Sustainable Finance & Investment</i> , 5(4), 210–233.
Jog & Singhal (2024)	<i>Greenwashing understanding among Indian consumers and its impact on their green consumption</i>	Greenwashing understanding moderates the relationship between receptivity to green advertising and green purchase behaviour; environmental consciousness and income also matter.	Survey; Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)	Jog, D., & Singhal, D. (2024). Greenwashing understanding among Indian consumers and its impact on their green consumption. <i>Global Business Review</i> , 25(2). (Sage Journals)
Aulia et al. (2024)	<i>Consumers' sustainable investing: A systematic literature review and research agenda</i>	The review of 70 empirical studies identifies multiple antecedents of sustainable investment decisions and highlights the need to integrate consumer-behaviour perspectives into sustainable investing research.	Systematic Literature Review; ADO-TCM framework	Aulia, M., Afiff, A. Z., Hati, S. R. H., & Gayatri, G. (2024). Consumers' sustainable investing: A systematic literature review and research agenda. <i>Cleaner and Responsible Consumption</i> , 14, 100215.
Kumar & Sikka (2026)	<i>ESG Reporting and Retail Equity Investment Decisions in India: A Literature-Based Conceptual Framework Linking Disclosure,</i>	ESG reporting may influence retail equity decisions directly and indirectly through financial performance and investor trust; investor awareness may moderate these relationships.	Literature review; conceptual framework	Kumar, A., & Sikka, V. (2026). <i>ESG Reporting and Retail Equity Investment Decisions in India. Accounting Accountability and Performance.</i>

	<i>Financial Performance and Investor Behaviour</i>			
Vijayananth & Saravanabhan (2026)	<i>Risk return perception and trust in ESG information shape sustainable investment decisions among middle-income retail investors</i>	Attitudes toward ESG investing influence willingness to invest sustainably, with risk–return perception acting as a mediator and trust in ESG information strengthening the relationship.	Quantitative survey; PLS-SEM; 496 Indian middle-income retail investors	Vijayananth, M., & Saravanabhavan, N. (2026). Risk return perception and trust in ESG information shape sustainable investment decisions among middle-income retail investors. <i>Discover Sustainability</i> . https://doi.org/10.1007/s43621-026-04339-7 (Springer)
Philip & Shetty (2026)	<i>Beyond greenwashing: The quality of ESG disclosure on Millennial and Gen-Z investor investment decisions</i>	Perceived ESG disclosure quality influences investment decisions, with investor trust serving as an important mechanism and financial literacy and sustainability orientation playing moderating roles.	Quantitative survey; 426 Indian Millennial and Gen-Z retail investors; SEM	Philip, B., & Shetty, L. (2026). Beyond greenwashing: The quality of ESG disclosure on Millennial and Gen-Z investor investment decisions. <i>SN Social Sciences</i> , 6, 267. https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-026-01554-x
Rani et al. (2026)	<i>Unveiling the motivational drivers of ESG investment : Evidence from Indian retail investors</i>	Ethical and motivational factors are examined as drivers of ESG investment intention, with green investment efficacy considered as a behavioural mechanism.	Quantitative behavioural research; Self-Determination Theory	Rani, R., Bhatia, R., Vasishta, P., & Tanwar, N. (2026). Unveiling the motivational drivers of ESG investment: Evidence from Indian retail investors. <i>Journal of Financial Services Marketing</i> .
Chandrasekaran et al. (2026)	<i>Greenwashing perception and its impact on sustainable investment decision-making among retail investors in Maharashtra: A post-</i>	Greenwashing perceptions are examined as a potential psychological barrier to retail ESG investment, while BRSR awareness is considered as a possible moderating factor.	Retail-investor survey; post-BRSR empirical analysis	Chandrasekaran, L., Dingankar, S., Vishwakarma, P., & Tiwari, P. (2026). <i>Greenwashing perception and its impact on sustainable investment decision-making among retail investors in Maharashtra</i> .

	<i>BRSR analysis</i>			
Meena & Sharma (2026)	<i>AI-driven detection of greenwashing: Impact on retail investors' trust and investment behavior in Rajasthan</i>	The study investigates whether perceptions of greenwashing affect trust in ESG reporting and whether stronger detection mechanisms can influence investor confidence and investment behaviour.	Survey of 246 retail investors in Rajasthan; quantitative analysis	Meena, D., & Sharma, R. (2026). AI-driven detection of greenwashing: Impact on retail investors' trust and investment behavior in Rajasthan. <i>Indian Journal of Accounting</i> .
Bhasin (2026)	<i>Greenwashing as a business risk: How ESG claims influence trust and purchase decisions of Indian consumers</i>	ESG claims can increase perceived trust and purchase intention, while perceived greenwashing reduces consumer trust and willingness to support brands.	Primary survey; 51 Indian respondents	Bhasin, H. (2026). Greenwashing as a business risk: How ESG claims influence trust and purchase decisions of Indian consumers. <i>International Journal of Web of Multidisciplinary Studies</i> , 3(1), 704–723.
Dhar & Imran (2026)	<i>Safeguarding environmental human rights by eradicating greenwashing through genuine corporate sustainability in India</i>	The study highlights the importance of regulatory enforcement, transparent reporting, and third-party verification in reducing greenwashing risks and strengthening corporate accountability.	Mixed methods; legal analysis, data review, case evidence and mathematical modelling	Dhar, S. D., & Imran, M. (2026). Safeguarding environmental human rights by eradicating greenwashing through genuine corporate sustainability in India. <i>Frontiers in Sustainability</i> , 7. https://doi.org/10.3389/frsus.2026.1801063

9. FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the study have certain managerial implications for the main stakeholders of the sustainable consumption and investment market: (a) For companies, providing credible, specific and verifiable sustainability information can build consumer and investor confidence and corporate sustainability reputation. Hence, companies should communicate only reliable environmental and social claims (that are free from subjective, vague and unsubstantiated language) and substantiate such claims with valid evidence of their sustainability performance. (b) For retail investors, indicators of sustainability can complement traditional financial and valuation indicators when making investment decisions. Greater concern towards ESG performance, corporate disclosures and credible sustainability claims may help to make a well-informed investment decision. (c) For policymakers and regulators, there needs to be better verification of environmental and social claims by strengthening standardization of sustainability labels, disclosure practices and strength of verification processes. Better monitoring of sustainability claims made in advertisements will also help mitigate the problem of greenwashing and information asymmetry in India's developing sustainable finance industry ecosystem.

10. CONCLUSION

Sustainability is gaining recognition as an important criterion for current day marketing activities which has the potential to impact consumer behaviour as well as investor behaviour. This paper attempts to investigate the link between sustainable consumption and retail investment behaviour in the Indian setting with a focus on social and environmental product claims. The paper suggests a conceptual framework which demonstrates that positive credence as well as verifiability of sustainability claims can boost consumer trust as well as the reputation of corporate sustainability and influence the relative importance of different characteristics which consumers considered to be relevant while making investment decisions. Social claims like ethically sourcing, working conditions, community wellbeing and sustainable production can influence stakeholders' perception of corporate responsibility, if clear and credible; on the contrary green washing, unclear claims and inadequate disclosure can undermine stakeholder's trust and sustainable investment intention. Incorporating concepts of sustainable marketing, signalling theory and behavioural finance, this paper describes the consumer-investor link in the Indian environment. Future studies could empirically test this conceptual framework on diversified samples and analyze other investor characteristics like financial literacy, risk tolerance, awareness and prior experience of sustainability.

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