



Role of Digital Marketing in Strengthening India's Participation in Sustainable Global Trade: An Empirical Study

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Abstract: This empirical study examines the role of digital marketing in strengthening India's participation in sustainable global trade through an integrated quantitative and qualitative analysis of 150 firms across India and other major economies. The findings indicate that digital marketing adoption significantly enhances sustainable trade performance ($\beta = 0.41, p < 0.001$), particularly by improving export efficiency, market reach, and customer engagement through sustainability-oriented campaigns. Indian enterprises, bolstered by national initiatives such as Digital India and the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), demonstrate higher green export growth and greater inclusion in global value chains. Regression, mediation, and ANOVA analyses further confirm that robust policy infrastructure and higher levels of digital readiness amplify the positive impact of digital marketing on eco-friendly and responsible trade practices. The study concludes that digital marketing functions not merely as a promotional mechanism but as a strategic enabler of inclusive, low-carbon, and sustainable global trade for India, in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 9 and 12). The study recommends enhanced policy support, targeted digital capacity building, and the integration of sustainability principles into global digital marketing strategies to strengthen India's position in sustainable global commerce.

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Introduction

In the rapidly evolving global economy, digital marketing has emerged as a transformative force reshaping international trade dynamics, consumer behaviour, and sustainability-driven business practices. The widespread adoption of digital platforms, artificial intelligence, data analytics, and e-commerce ecosystems has significantly altered how firms promote, communicate, and distribute products across borders. According to UNCTAD (2024), global digital trade exceeded US \$7.2 trillion, registering an annual growth rate of 12%. This rapid expansion highlights the growing importance of digitalization in strengthening countries' participation in global trade, particularly within sustainability-oriented markets.

Sustainability has become a central concern in international trade and development policy. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals emphasize responsible production, climate action, and global partnerships objectives that can be effectively advanced through digital technologies. Digital marketing, when strategically aligned with sustainability principles, enhances transparency, supports green branding, and promotes ethical sourcing practices. Through digital platforms, firms can communicate sustainability initiatives such as carbon neutrality, fair trade certification, and waste reduction to global consumers, thereby influencing purchasing behaviour and encouraging environmentally responsible consumption.

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From an Indian perspective, digital marketing plays a critical role in strengthening the country's participation in sustainable global trade. India's digital economy is among the fastest growing worldwide, contributing nearly 8% to GDP in 2024, according to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. National initiatives such as Digital India, along with the rapid expansion of e-commerce platforms like Amazon India and Flipkart, as well as niche sustainable marketplaces such as Gocoop and Qtrove, have transformed how Indian firms especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs) engage with international markets. These platforms enable producers from rural and semi-urban regions to access global consumers and promote sustainable products including organic textiles, handicrafts, and eco-friendly goods.



Figure 1: Flowchart of the Digital Marketing Strategy

Moreover, digital marketing strategies empower Indian exporters to identify sustainability-conscious consumer segments, reduce resource wastage through targeted campaigns, and optimize supply-chain logistics, thereby supporting India's broader commitment to carbon-neutral growth. Empirical evidence indicates that firms adopting sustainability-focused digital marketing practices experience improved export efficiency and enhanced customer loyalty (NITI Aayog, 2024). Initiatives such as the ONDC and Make in India 2.0 further reinforce a digital-first, sustainability-led trade ecosystem by democratizing access to online markets.

Thus, digital marketing stands at the intersection of technology, sustainability, and global trade. For India, effectively leveraging digital marketing strategies aligned with sustainability principles offers significant potential to promote inclusive growth, empower SMEs, and strengthen the country's position in sustainable global trade networks. This study aims to empirically examine the role of digital marketing in enhancing India's participation in sustainable global trade, drawing insights from data-driven analysis within the Indian context.

Review of Literature

The growing integration of digital technologies into global trade and marketing has significantly transformed how businesses interact with consumers and markets. Scholars have increasingly emphasized the role of digital marketing as a catalyst for achieving sustainability by promoting responsible consumption patterns, enhancing accessibility, and expanding global market reach. The literature highlights how digital transformation not only supports business growth but also aligns marketing practices with the principles of sustainable development and global inclusivity:

Kandilov et al. (2017) noted that digital technologies have also the potential to reduce input-sourcing costs by facilitating the search for suppliers, offering more competitive prices.

Vieira, V. A., de Almeida, M. I. S., Agnihotri, R., da Silva, N. S. D. A. C., & Arunachalam, S. (2019) showed that social media boosts brand visibility and worldwide customer interaction. Customizing information for varied cultural audiences boosts digital marketing's reach and effect, meeting worldwide commerce needs.

UNCTAD (2022a) and **WTO (2019)** observed that ICTs have played a crucial role in overcoming the traditional need for physical proximity in many services activities. This has resulted in increasing tradability of many services across borders as well as a surge in "trade in tasks" within global value chains and the outsourcing of services, both domestically and internationally.

Kotler, M., Cao, T., Wang, S. & Qiao, C. (2020) stated that Alibaba and Amazon's cross-border e-commerce platforms have changed the global commercial scene. These platforms help firms trade internationally by lowering entrance barriers and simplifying procedures. Digital marketplaces facilitate cross-border transactions and market access for enterprises of all sizes.

Matthess & Kunkel (2020) stated that the services sector has been significantly impacted by the advent of new digital technologies, potentially more so than the agriculture and manufacturing sectors.

Mayo Fuster Morell et al. (2020) stated that the platform economy is rapidly expanding, with anticipated potential to contribute to sustainable development. While the SDGs are guiding the policy agenda, their effectiveness in promoting a sustainable platform economy remains uncertain.

Arie, H. A. & Fikry, A. M. (2021) stressed the necessity of knowing and optimizing for foreign search engines. This shows how complex digital marketing plans must be to account for regional search engine algorithms.

Selvam et al. (2021) indicated that the extent of awareness, understanding, and availability of information on SDGs among students and society indicates their level of consciousness, knowledge acquisition, and accessibility to general information regarding SDGs.

Banga (2022) updated these estimates, highlighting that potential foregone revenue for developing and least developed economies in 2020 would amount to US \$14.3 billion when calculated using bound tariffs and US \$5.5 billion when using applied duties.

Jevtić et al. (2023) asserted that digital marketing is an important tool that has a lot of potential in achieving business gain while achieving sustainability. It is especially suitable for valuing the younger generations' willingness to follow sustainability.

Rosário et al. (2023) found that digital marketing strategies play a pivotal role in advancing sustainable development by promoting patterns of consumption that prioritize sustainability.

WTO (2023b) reported that digital technologies have facilitated the direct cross-border trade of certain services, such as consulting, education and financial services. Global exports of digitally delivered services reached US \$3.82 trillion in 2022, marking an almost fourfold increase in value since 2005 and accounting for 54% of total global services exports. Between 2005 and 2022, these exports grew by an average of 8.1% annually, outpacing goods (5.6%) and other services exports (4.2%).

The reviewed literature collectively underscores that digital marketing serves as a powerful strategic tool for fostering sustainable global trade. By integrating innovative technologies, social media engagement, and cross-border e-commerce platforms, digital marketing enhances economic participation, transparency, and environmental responsibility. Ultimately, these studies affirm that digital marketing is not merely a commercial instrument but also a driver of sustainable globalization bridging markets, promoting ethical consumption, and advancing the SDGs through inclusive trade practices.

Research Gap

While substantial research has examined digital marketing and international trade as separate domains, limited studies have systematically explored their intersection with sustainability, particularly within the context of emerging economies like India. Existing literature highlights the role of digital technologies in enhancing trade efficiency and market accessibility (Matthess & Kunkel, 2020; WTO, 2023b), but few studies empirically measure how sustainability-focused digital marketing contributes to long-term trade competitiveness. Moreover, previous research largely centers on developed nations, leaving a significant gap in understanding the digital-sustainability nexus in developing economies. There is also a scarcity of comparative analyses that assess both Indian and global firms to determine the mediating role of sustainability-oriented marketing and the moderating influence of policy infrastructure. This study aims to fill these gaps by integrating empirical data, policy perspectives, and strategic insights to provide a holistic understanding of how digital marketing can drive sustainable global trade.

Research Objectives

- To analyse the impact of digital marketing strategies on the promotion of sustainable global trade.
- To examine the relationship between digital marketing adoption and sustainability performance among firms engaged in international trade.
- To evaluate the role of digital marketing in enhancing the competitiveness of Indian enterprises in the global sustainable trade ecosystem.
- To identify the key challenges and policy gaps that hinder the integration of digital marketing and sustainable trade in developing economies.
- To propose strategic recommendations for aligning digital marketing practices with SDGs in the Indian and global context.

Research Hypotheses

- H₁:** There is a significant positive relationship between the use of digital marketing and the growth of sustainable global trade.
- H₂:** Firms that adopt sustainability-focused digital marketing strategies achieve higher export efficiency and customer engagement than those using conventional marketing methods.
- H₃:** The adoption of digital marketing practices among Indian enterprises significantly enhances their participation in sustainable international trade.
- H₄:** Digital marketing mediates the relationship between firm-level digital readiness and sustainable trade performance.
- H₅:** Policy support and technological infrastructure positively moderate the impact of digital marketing on sustainable global trade in developing economies.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The present study follows an empirical and descriptive research design to analyse the strategic role of digital marketing in promoting sustainable global trade. The study employs both quantitative and qualitative approaches to understand the relationships between digital marketing practices, sustainability adoption, and trade performance. The design enables a comparative analysis between Indian firms and global trends to determine how digital marketing contributes to sustainable trade outcomes.

Nature and Sources of Data

The research is based on both primary and secondary data to ensure validity and depth.

- **Primary Data:** Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire and telephonic interviews targeting business managers, digital marketing professionals, and export entrepreneurs. The survey focused on assessing digital marketing tools used, sustainability practices adopted, and trade performance indicators.
 - Sample Size: 150 respondents (80 Indian firms and 70 international firms).
 - Sampling Technique: Purposive sampling targeting firms that actively use digital marketing for sustainable product promotion.
 - Survey Period: January 2024 – July 2024
 - Instrument: A 25-item questionnaire divided into four constructs digital marketing adoption, sustainability orientation, policy support, and trade performance measured using a five-point Likert scale.
- **Secondary Data:** Obtained from credible sources such as UNCTAD's *Digital Economy Report (2024)*, WTO's *Trade and Sustainability Database (2024)*, MeitY and NITI Aayog reports, and peer-reviewed academic journals. These sources provide macro-level insights into digital trade trends, sustainability practices, and policy frameworks.

Variables and Measures

- Independent Variable: Digital Marketing Adoption (measured through SEO, social media, email marketing, and online advertising intensity)

- Dependent Variable: Sustainable Global Trade Performance (measured through export growth, customer engagement, and sustainability index scores)
- Mediating Variable: Sustainability-Oriented Marketing Strategy
- Moderating Variable: Policy and Technological Infrastructure

Tools and Techniques of Analysis

Data were analysed using SPSS and Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize responses, while correlation and multivariate regression analyses tested the hypotheses.

- Regression Analysis determined the impact of digital marketing on sustainable trade performance.
- Mediation and Moderation Models evaluated the influence of sustainability orientation and policy support.
- ANOVA tested differences between Indian and international firms in digital marketing adoption. Qualitative data from interviews were coded thematically to identify common strategic challenges and best practices.

Scope and Limitations

The study focuses primarily on digital marketing and sustainable trade linkages across industries such as textiles, handicrafts, technology, and green manufacturing. While the findings are insightful, limitations include a moderate sample size, potential self-reporting bias, and limited longitudinal data due to the short observation period.

Ethical Considerations

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their responses were kept strictly confidential. Informed consent was obtained before data collection. The study adheres to ethical standards prescribed for social science research.

This mixed-method, data-driven methodology ensures the reliability of findings by combining empirical evidence and comparative analysis. The inclusion of Indian firms within a global sample adds regional depth, helping to evaluate how digital marketing serves as a strategic enabler of sustainable, inclusive, and eco-friendly global trade.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Overview of Respondents

This empirical study surveyed 150 firms, including 80 Indian enterprises and 70 international firms from the United States, Germany, Japan, and Singapore. These firms represented key sectors such as textiles, green technology, handicrafts, IT services, and sustainable consumer goods. The respondent profile revealed that 78% of firms actively employed digital marketing, while 22% still relied on traditional promotional methods. Among Indian firms, 60% were SMEs a reflection of India's growing MSME engagement in global trade.

A major observation was that firms integrating digital marketing with sustainability principles showed better trade growth, higher customer engagement, and improved global visibility. This indicates that digital marketing is evolving beyond a promotional tool to a strategic enabler of sustainability-driven trade expansion.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Sector and Region

| Sector / Industry | Indian Firms (n = 80) | Global Firms (n = 70) | Total (%) |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Textiles & Apparel | 22 (27.5%) | 10 (14.3%) | 21% |
| Handicrafts & Organic Goods | 18 (22.5%) | 6 (8.6%) | 16% |
| Green Technology | 12 (15%) | 20 (28.6%) | 21% |
| Consumer Goods (FMCG) | 15 (18.8%) | 18 (25.7%) | 22% |
| Digital Services & IT | 13 (16.2%) | 16 (22.8%) | 20% |
| Total | 80 (100%) | 70 (100%) | 100% |

Source: Based on Primary Data

The distribution shows that Indian firms dominate traditional sectors like textiles and handicrafts, which are now embracing digital tools to enter international markets. In contrast, global firms have a stronger presence in technology-driven and sustainability-focused industries.

Adoption of Digital Marketing Tools

The study found that SEO, content marketing, and social media campaigns were the most widely used digital tools. Firms employing content marketing reported an average 16.1% increase in exports, while SEO contributed to 15.6% growth. Regression analysis confirmed that digital marketing adoption significantly influences sustainable trade performance ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$). In India, platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp Business have become the most effective marketing channels due to affordability and customer reach. Global firms, however, rely heavily on LinkedIn and Google Ads for professional targeting and B2B transactions.

Table 2: Digital Marketing Tools Used and Their Effectiveness

| Tool / Platform | Adoption Rate (%) | Avg. Export Growth (%) | Effectiveness (1-5 Scale) |
|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Social Media Marketing | 82% | 14.2% | 4.3 |
| Search Engine Optimization | 79% | 15.6% | 4.4 |
| Email Marketing | 74% | 11.8% | 3.8 |
| Content Marketing | 87% | 16.1% | 4.5 |
| Online Advertising | 65% | 12.4% | 3.9 |
| Average | 77.4% | 14.0% | 4.2 |

Source: Based on Primary Data

The data confirm that content marketing and SEO are the strongest predictors of trade performance improvement, validating Hypothesis H1.

Sustainable Marketing Orientation

Globally, 64% of firms integrate sustainability messages into their digital marketing, while 58% of Indian firms highlight eco-labels, fair-trade certification, and renewable sourcing. Regression analysis showed that a Sustainability-Oriented Marketing Strategy mediates the relationship between digital marketing and trade performance ($\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$).

This supports Hypothesis H2, proving that sustainability-driven marketing enhances consumer trust and global competitiveness. Firms that emphasized ethical branding recorded higher customer loyalty ($r = 0.68$) and export efficiency ($r = 0.61$).

Table 3: Regression Model Summary

| Relationship Tested | β Coefficient | Significance (p-value) | Result |
|---|---------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Digital Marketing → Sustainable Trade Performance | 0.41 | 0.001 | Significant |
| Digital Readiness → Digital Marketing Adoption | 0.47 | 0.001 | Significant |
| Sustainability Orientation (Mediator) | 0.32 | 0.01 | Significant |
| Policy & Tech Infrastructure (Moderator) | 0.29 | 0.05 | Significant |

Source: Based on Primary Data

These findings confirm that organizational readiness and supportive policies significantly strengthen digital marketing's effect on sustainable global trade.

Comparative Analysis: India vs. Global Firms

The ANOVA test revealed significant differences between Indian and global firms ($F = 4.89$, $p < 0.05$) in the level of digital marketing maturity and sustainability integration.

- Indian firms are progressing rapidly due to affordable technology, increased smartphone usage, and government initiatives such as Digital India and ONDC.
- Global firms, however, benefit from superior infrastructure, stronger policy frameworks, and higher awareness of sustainability standards.

Table 4: Comparative Indicators of Digital Marketing Impact

| Indicator | Indian Firms | Global Firms | Overall Trend |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| Digital Marketing Adoption | 78% | 85% | Increasing rapidly |
| Firms Using Sustainability Marketing | 58% | 64% | Growing adoption |
| Avg. Export Growth (2023–24) | 13.5% | 15.2% | Positive correlation |
| Customer Engagement Index | 0.69 | 0.73 | Moderate–High |
| Marketing Cost Reduction | 20% | 17% | Cost efficiency improving |

Source: Based on Primary Data

These results support Hypothesis H3, establishing that Indian enterprises have leveraged digital marketing to significantly improve sustainable trade performance.

Mediation and Moderation Effects

Policy infrastructure and digital readiness were found to strengthen the relationship between digital marketing and trade performance ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.05$). This finding validates H4 and H5, showing that a robust ecosystem—comprising digital literacy, broadband access, and green policy incentives—magnifies the benefits of digital marketing in promoting eco-friendly trade. India's Digital India, Startup India, and National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) initiatives exemplify how government-driven digitalization has improved transparency, inclusivity, and efficiency in trade processes.

Qualitative Insights

Interviews with marketing managers and exporters revealed several important insights:

- **Transparency as a Competitive Edge:** Firms communicating sustainability efforts through digital media enhanced consumer trust and brand image.
- **Consumer Awareness:** Digital campaigns have educated consumers about sustainable consumption, especially in metro cities and export markets.
- **Barriers for Indian SMEs:** Challenges include limited access to advanced analytics tools, high advertisement costs, and lack of formal digital training.
- **Policy Suggestions:** Respondents emphasized the need for government incentives, online sustainability certifications, and digital skills training to strengthen India's sustainable trade ecosystem.

Interpretation

The combined results highlight that digital marketing serves as a powerful catalyst for sustainable global trade. It bridges the gap between commerce and environmental responsibility by enabling ethical branding, eco-conscious consumption, and fair-trade visibility.

For India, digital marketing has emerged as an equalizing force empowering MSMEs to participate in global markets and align with the UN SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure; SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production).

Globally, digital transformation has redefined trade by integrating profitability with sustainability. This empirical evidence underscores that sustainable digital marketing strategies are essential for achieving inclusive and environmentally responsible global trade growth.

Table 5: Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

| Hypothesis Code | Statement | Statistical Test Used | Result (β / F / r value) | p-value | Decision |
|-----------------|--|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---------|-----------------|
| H1 | Digital marketing positively influences sustainable global trade growth. | Regression Analysis | $\beta = 0.41$ | 0.001 | Accepted |
| H2 | Sustainability-focused digital marketing improves export efficiency and engagement. | Correlation & Regression | $r = 0.68$, $\beta = 0.32$ | 0.01 | Accepted |
| H3 | Indian enterprises benefit significantly from digital marketing in global sustainable trade. | ANOVA | $F = 4.89$ | 0.05 | Accepted |

| | | | | | |
|-----------|--|---------------------|----------------|------|-----------------|
| H4 | Digital marketing mediates the link between digital readiness and trade performance. | Mediation Model | $\beta = 0.32$ | 0.01 | Accepted |
| H5 | Policy and technology infrastructure moderate digital marketing's impact on sustainable trade. | Moderation Analysis | $\beta = 0.29$ | 0.05 | Accepted |

Source: Compiled from statistical analysis using SPSS

All five hypotheses were empirically supported, validating that digital marketing significantly contributes to sustainable global trade expansion. Firms adopting eco-conscious digital strategies achieve measurable benefits in export performance, customer engagement, and cost efficiency.

The analysis confirms that digital marketing acts both as a direct driver and a mediating mechanism, enhancing trade sustainability when supported by technological readiness and favourable policy environments. Indian enterprises, backed by strong digital initiatives, demonstrate growing potential in sustainable trade markets indicating that digital innovation and sustainability are now interdependent pillars of modern global commerce.

Findings

The empirical investigation revealed that digital marketing has emerged as a strategic enabler of sustainable global trade, creating new avenues for growth, transparency, and inclusion. Based on both quantitative and qualitative analyses, the following key findings were drawn:

- **Digital Marketing Positively Impacts Sustainable Trade Growth:** The regression results ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$) confirmed a strong and positive relationship between digital marketing adoption and sustainable trade performance. Firms utilizing SEO, content marketing, and social media achieved higher export growth and brand visibility, validating Hypothesis H1.
- **Sustainability-Oriented Digital Marketing Enhances Efficiency:** Firms that integrated eco-friendly narratives and sustainability labels into their marketing reported greater export efficiency, customer engagement, and global recognition. The mediating effect ($\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$) indicated that digital marketing serves as a key bridge between sustainability orientation and trade competitiveness (H2 supported).
- **India's Digital Transformation Strengthens Trade Participation:** Indian enterprises, especially MSMEs, showed rapid digital adoption supported by Digital India, ONDC, and Startup India initiatives. Comparative analysis ($F = 4.89$, $p < 0.05$) demonstrated that Indian firms using digital platforms recorded up to 13–15% export growth, supporting H3.
- **Digital Readiness and Infrastructure Are Crucial:** The mediation and moderation models proved that firm-level digital readiness ($\beta = 0.47$) and national infrastructure ($\beta = 0.29$) significantly enhance digital marketing's impact on sustainable trade (H4 and H5 accepted). Countries with better digital ecosystems exhibited stronger trade outcomes.
- **Sectoral Differences Exist:** Traditional sectors like textiles and handicrafts in India are catching up through digital platforms such as IndiaMART, ONDC, and Amazon Global Selling, while technology and FMCG sectors lead in sustainability integration.
- **Consumer Awareness and Transparency Drive Change:** Qualitative interviews revealed that transparency in digital storytelling such as showcasing eco-friendly production, ethical sourcing, and fair-trade certifications has become a powerful competitive advantage. Consumers increasingly prefer brands that reflect environmental and social responsibility.

Discussion

The empirical evidence highlights a strong and positive relationship between digital marketing adoption and sustainable trade growth. The study aligns with previous findings by Feroz et al. (2021) and Rosário et al. (2023), who emphasize that digital transformation enhances environmental and economic sustainability. The results reveal that digital marketing acts both as a direct driver and a mediating mechanism linking digital readiness to trade performance.

In the Indian context, digital marketing has become a catalyst for global competitiveness, particularly among MSMEs that previously lacked access to international markets. Platforms like ONDC and IndiaMART have democratized trade participation, promoting inclusivity and transparency.

Furthermore, policy support and infrastructure such as broadband expansion and digital literacy programs serve as key moderators that enhance the overall impact. The integration of sustainability messaging within digital campaigns improves brand reputation, consumer trust, and global recognition.

Thus, digital marketing not only accelerates economic growth but also reshapes consumer consciousness, fostering responsible consumption and production patterns. The study contributes to both theory and practice by providing an empirical model that links marketing innovation, policy environment, and sustainable global trade.

Conclusion

This study concludes that digital marketing plays a pivotal role in strengthening India's participation in sustainable global trade. Empirical evidence indicates that sustainability-driven digital marketing strategies enhance export performance, operational efficiency, and brand equity, particularly among Indian firms. Government initiatives such as Digital India, Startup India, and ONDC have enabled MSMEs to access global markets through cost-effective digital platforms and improved visibility. The findings further reveal that digital readiness and supportive policy frameworks significantly amplify the impact of digital marketing on sustainable trade outcomes. Globally, the integration of digital technologies with sustainability-oriented marketing contributes to inclusive, low-carbon, and ethical trade aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Overall, digital marketing is reshaping global commerce by linking competitiveness with sustainability, positioning India for long-term, responsible participation in global trade.

Suggestions

Based on the empirical findings, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen India's participation in sustainable global trade through digital marketing:

- **Integrate Sustainability in Digital Marketing:** Indian firms should embed sustainability themes such as eco-labels, ethical sourcing, and carbon-neutral production into digital marketing strategies to enhance global competitiveness and align with UN SDGs 9 and 12.
- **Digital Capacity Building for SMEs:** Government and trade bodies should promote digital marketing training for export-oriented SMEs, focusing on low-cost tools and sustainability communication to improve their participation in global trade.
- **Strengthen Digital Infrastructure and Policy Support:** Investment in digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, and green technology-friendly trade policies is essential to support sustainable growth in India's global digital trade ecosystem.
- **Promote Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborations among government, technology firms, and institutions should be encouraged to build inclusive and sustainable e-commerce platforms, expanding initiatives like ONDC to rural producers.
- **Incentivize Sustainable Digital Branding:** Export incentives and tax benefits should reward firms that adopt verified sustainable digital marketing practices and green certifications.
- **Enhance International Trade Collaboration:** India should work with global institutions such as UNCTAD and the WTO to develop uniform sustainability standards in digital trade.
- **Use Data Analytics for Sustainable Trade Decisions:** Firms should leverage data analytics to track environmental impacts and align digital marketing campaigns with sustainability-driven global consumers.

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