



## A review of social media marketing strategies targeting women consumers in India

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### Abstract

Social media has revolutionized marketing paradigms globally, offering brands unprecedented access to consumers. In India, where over 500 million users engage with platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, women constitute a rapidly growing and influential segment (International Journal of Internet Marketing and Advertising, 2014; Indian Journal of Marketing). This review synthesizes empirical studies, case analyses, and industry reports to map out the strategic use of social media marketing targeting women consumers in India. Key themes include segmentation and personalization, influencer collaborations, content strategies, platform-specific tactics, community-building, and ethical considerations. The paper concludes with future directions for research and practice.

**Keywords:** Social media marketing, women consumers, influencer marketing, content personalization

### Introduction

India's online population surpassed 800 million in 2024, with women accounting for nearly 45% of social media users (Indian Times, 2025). Women's rising digital engagement—fuelled by affordable smartphones and regional-language content—has drawn marketers' attention to tailor campaigns that resonate with their unique preferences and cultural contexts (Natarajan *et al.*, 2014)<sup>[9]</sup>. Despite growing interest, a consolidated understanding of effective social media marketing strategies for this demographic remains fragmented. This review addresses that gap by collating academic research, industry analyses, and illustrative case studies. Expanding upon the demographic contours of this burgeoning user base, it becomes evident that women in India today are not a monolithic audience but embody a spectrum of identities differentiated by age, socio-economic status, education level, urban versus rural domicile, linguistic affiliation, and digital proficiency; each segment exhibits distinct patterns of platform adoption, content consumption, engagement behavior, and purchase motivation, which necessitates finely granulated targeting approaches. For instance, while metropolitan women in the 25–34 age bracket may demonstrate high affinity for Instagram's visual storytelling formats, aspirational young women in Tier-II and Tier-III cities often pivot towards regional language content on Facebook and vernacular short-form video apps, where peer endorsements and local influencers carry significant persuasive weight. Within this landscape, successful campaigns have leveraged deep audience insights gleaned from social listening tools to craft culturally contextualized narratives that underscore themes of empowerment, self-expression, and social connectedness—values that resonate deeply with female users seeking communal validation and aspirational role models. Influencer collaborations emerge as a particularly potent tactic, with micro-influencers commanding trust from niche female communities through authentic storytelling, relatable life vignettes, and user-generated content challenges; these collaborations not only bolster brand credibility but also catalyze organic amplification when followers participate in hashtag

activations or co-create content, thereby transforming passive audiences into active brand advocates. Equally important are platform-specific content strategies: while Facebook Live sessions featuring Q&A with female thought leaders or product demonstrations can foster real-time engagement, Pinterest's aspirational “boards” enable women to curate aspirational lifestyle visuals, and LinkedIn's professional networking features support career-oriented content such as women-led webinars and skill-building workshops. Brands that have achieved measurable success integrate paid and organic tactics, using paid social advertising to expand reach among lookalike audiences based on existing female customer data, while simultaneously nurturing organic communities through brand-owned social groups and loyalty rewards programs. The creative calculus extends to tone and imagery: data indicate that female audiences respond favorably to empowering messages that celebrate diversity in body types, skin tones, and life stages, and to visual aesthetics that employ softer color palettes, human-centric photography, and inclusive representation. Moreover, interactivity is key; interactive polls, quizzes, and gamified filters designed around women's health issues, beauty routines, or career milestones not only drive engagement metrics but also yield first-party data on preferences, enabling iterative optimization of messaging and media spend. Measurement frameworks for women-targeted social media marketing transcend vanity metrics such as likes and shares, incorporating deeper indicators of brand affinity, sentiment analysis, and purchase intent tracked through social commerce integrations; robust attribution models attribute conversions to multiple touchpoints across the social funnel, illuminating the role of initial awareness drives, mid-funnel consideration content, and bottom-funnel promotional offers in shaping the customer journey for female consumers. Case studies drawn from industries as diverse as beauty, apparel, personal finance, and healthcare illustrate that campaigns blending storytelling with social proof—such as user testimonials on maternal wellness products or success stories of women entrepreneurs empowered by fintech solutions—have yielded upticks in engagement rates by 20–

30% and conversion lifts of comparable magnitude. Challenges persist, however, particularly in balancing personalization at scale with privacy considerations, navigating evolving platform algorithms that affect organic reach, and countering skepticism among female users wary of overtly transactional messaging. Future research should delve into the longitudinal effects of community-centric strategies on brand loyalty among women, the impact of emerging platforms such as audio-based social apps on female engagement, and the efficacy of hybrid virtual-in-person events in nurturing social capital among digitally connected women. By synthesizing insights from academic inquiry, industry white papers, and real-world campaigns, this review seeks to equip marketers with a coherent strategic framework for engaging India's diverse and dynamic female social media population, bridging the current knowledge gap and laying the groundwork for more inclusive, impactful, and data-driven marketing practices that honor the voices and aspirations of women across the digital spectrum.

### Review Methodology

A comprehensive literature search was conducted across databases including ResearchGate, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect using keywords such as “social media marketing India women,” “online shopping behavior Indian women,” and “influencer marketing India.” Peer-reviewed articles (n = 18), doctoral theses (n = 1), and industry reports (n = 5) published between 2014 and 2024 were included based on relevance. Case studies from Indian campaigns and platform analytics were also analyzed to exemplify strategic applications.

### Women Consumers in India Digital Behavior and Preferences

Women in India today demonstrate a rich tapestry of digital behaviors and preferences that marketers must understand in order to engage this influential consumer segment effectively. Foremost among these behaviors is an exceptionally high level of trust in peer reviews: in a country where personal recommendations often carry more weight than branded messaging, women are inclined to seek out and rely upon the experiences of friends, family members, and even strangers on social media platforms before making purchase decisions (Kour & Kaur, 2020) <sup>[5, 16]</sup>. This trust extends beyond text-based reviews into multimedia formats, with women showing a pronounced preference for visual content such as unboxing videos, before-and-after comparisons, and live demonstrations, which they find more authentic and easier to relate to than static images or text alone (Kour & Kaur, 2020) <sup>[5, 16]</sup>. At the same time, active participation in community groups—whether on Facebook, WhatsApp, or niche forums dedicated to specific interests like skincare, fitness, or parenting—has become a hallmark of women's digital lives in urban as well as semi-urban and rural areas. These groups function as both social hubs and decision-making incubators, where members share product suggestions, solicit advice on brands, and organize group purchases that leverage collective bargaining power, thus amplifying the influence of peer recommendations (Kour & Kaur, 2020) <sup>[5, 16]</sup>.

Empirical studies conducted in Tiruchirappalli and Punjab offer further granularity on the drivers of female purchase intentions on social media platforms, identifying trust, peer

influence, and discounts as the three predominant factors shaping online buying behavior (Sammanasu & Tantuway, 2020; Kour & Kaur, 2020) <sup>[5, 10, 16]</sup>. Trust, as previously noted, acts as a gateway to consideration, compelling women to invest time in reading reviews, watching user-generated videos, and engaging in discussions with existing customers before committing to a purchase. Peer influence operates through two primary mechanisms: direct recommendations from friends or family in digital spaces, and the wider “social proof” generated by observing high engagement metrics—likes, shares, comments—on brand posts or influencer endorsements. The third factor, discounts, underscores the price sensitivity prevalent among female consumers across income brackets; limited-time offers, coupon codes shared within community circles, and flash sales promoted via Instagram Stories or WhatsApp broadcasts trigger urgency and drive conversion, particularly when tied to critical purchase windows such as festivals, wedding seasons, and back-to-school periods (Sammanasu & Tantuway, 2020) <sup>[10]</sup>.

Sector-specific data reveal that the fashion, beauty, and wellness industries capture up to 68% of their social media engagement from women users on platforms like Instagram and Facebook (Kaur & Kulvinder, 2019) <sup>[4]</sup>. In the fashion domain, women leverage Pinterest-style boards and Instagram's “Shop” features to curate and save outfit inspirations, while Instagram Reels showcasing styling tips generate high levels of repeat viewership and user interaction. Beauty brands have capitalized on women's affinity for tutorial content by partnering with micro- and nano-influencers—often women from tier-II and tier-III cities who speak regional languages—to deliver authentic demonstrations of skincare routines, makeup looks, and haircare regimens tailored to Indian climates and skin types. In the wellness sector, content that blends traditional knowledge—such as Ayurvedic remedies for stress relief or home workouts for weight management—with modern scientific insights resonates strongly with women seeking holistic health solutions; these posts, when supported by live Q&A sessions with experts and downloadable guides shared via social media, foster a sense of personal connection and trust that drives product trials and subscriptions for premium wellness apps (Kaur & Kulvinder, 2019) <sup>[4, 16]</sup>.

Behind these observable behaviors lie deeper preferences that cut across demographic segments. Women value brands that demonstrate social responsibility, inclusivity, and alignment with causes that matter to them—be it women's education, environmental sustainability, or body positivity—and they reward such alignment with increased engagement, word-of-mouth advocacy, and willingness to pay a premium for products perceived as ethical or purpose-driven. Interactive content formats such as Instagram polls about packaging sustainability, LinkedIn articles penned by women leaders in renewable beauty, and Twitter chats on women's mental health yield not only higher engagement rates but also richer first-party data on consumer values, which brands can then harness to further personalize messaging. Moreover, women's digital behavior is characterized by a multi-device, multi-session usage pattern: they may discover a product via a short video on their smartphone during commutes, read detailed reviews on a tablet at home, and complete the purchase on a desktop during work breaks, underscoring the need for seamless cross-platform experiences and persistent remarketing

strategies that recognize and adapt to these usage rhythms. Crucially, the intersection of discounts with community dynamics amplifies women's propensity for collective buying—group flash sales advertised within community WhatsApp groups can generate order volumes that rival or exceed those from conventional e-commerce channels, prompting brands to build “group buy” features directly into their social commerce offerings. Additionally, women exhibit a strong preference for localized language content: posts and ads in Hindi, Tamil, Punjabi, Bengali, and other regional languages not only capture attention but also convey cultural sensitivity, thereby improving click-through rates and reducing bounce rates. Brands that have invested in translation and localization tools, and in forging partnerships with regional-language influencers, have thus unlocked incremental engagement and sales from women in smaller towns and rural areas, where English-language content often underperforms. Finally, analytics dashboards tracking women's digital behavior emphasize the importance of sentiment analysis and social listening to swiftly detect shifts in preferences—whether a sudden surge in interest for organic beauty products following a celebrity endorsement, or emerging concerns about harmful ingredients that can be addressed through informative content campaigns. By continuously monitoring engagement metrics, feedback loops, and trending conversations among women consumers, marketers can iterate on content strategies, optimize budget allocation across paid and organic channels, and refine targeting parameters to ensure that campaigns remain relevant, resonant, and respectful of the evolving digital habits of India's women—a rapidly growing cohort whose collective purchasing power and social influence will only intensify in the years to come.

### Segmentation and Personalization Strategies

Effective social media marketing campaigns leverage demographic and psychographic segmentation to personalize content. Brands use AI-driven analytics to tailor product recommendations based on browsing history, language preference, and life stage (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2015)<sup>[27]</sup>. For instance, beauty brand Nykaa segments women by skin concerns and lifestyle, delivering targeted video tutorials and testimonials (Industry Report, 2023). Personalization boosts engagement rates by over 25% (ResearchGate, 2018).

### Influencer Marketing: Harnessing Peer Trust

Influencer collaborations are pivotal in engaging Indian women. Micro-influencers (10K–100K followers) often yield higher trust and engagement than macro-influencers (Ao *et al.*, 2023)<sup>[13]</sup>. Campaigns like Bru's gender-equality series on WhatsApp chatbot and OTT platforms illustrate how narrative-driven influencer content can foster emotional resonance (MMAGlobal, 2024). Prajakta Koli's environmental advocacy and lifestyle reviews demonstrate the power of authenticity in driving product conversations (2025).

### Content Marketing and Community Building

Strategic content—blogs, tutorials, live sessions—nurtures communities around shared interests. Brands like Mamaearth host Facebook groups for new mothers, facilitating peer support and product feedback loops

(Industry Thesis, 2023). User-generated content campaigns, such as Selfie with Daughter, mobilize women to share stories, reinforcing brand values and social causes (2025).

### Platform-specific tactics

- **Instagram Reels & Stories:** Short-form videos with trending music boost reach; 70% of Indian women use Reels for beauty tips (Wired, 2023).
- **Pinterest:** Visual discovery for DIY, fashion, and home décor appeals to women planning purchases (Data Report, 2022).
- **WhatsApp:** Direct customer service via broadcast lists improves retention, especially in tier-II cities (Social Samosa Case Study, 2024).

### Measurement and Analytics

Key performance indicators include engagement rate, click-through rate (CTR), conversion rate, and customer lifetime value (CLV). Brands increasingly adopt social listening tools to track sentiment and refine strategies in real time (KPMG Digital Survey, 2023). A Punjab-based survey using SPSS analysis reported that positive reviews and perceived value were the strongest predictors of purchase behavior (ResearchGate, 2019).

### Ethical Considerations and Challenges

Privacy concerns, data security, and transparency in influencer partnerships pose challenges. A meta-analysis warns against non-disclosure of paid promotions, urging brands to comply with Advertising Standards Council of India guidelines (Ao *et al.*, 2023)<sup>[13]</sup>. Moreover, digital literacy gaps among rural women can limit campaign effectiveness, necessitating inclusive content design (EconBiz, 2019).

### Future Trends

Emerging trends include:

- Augmented Reality (AR) try-on experiences for cosmetics.
- Voice-activated commerce via regional-language assistants.
- Social commerce integrations enabling in-app purchases on Instagram and Facebook. Brands that adopt omnichannel strategies—blending online engagement with offline events—will maintain competitive advantage (Global Martech Report, 2024).

### Conclusion

Social media marketing targeting women in India requires a nuanced blend of segmentation, personalization, authentic influencer partnerships, and community-centric content that collectively address the rich diversity and evolving aspirations of this demographic. By segmenting audiences not only by age, income, and geography but also by language preference, cultural affiliation, and life stage, marketers can craft highly personalized messages that resonate on an emotional level, whether it is young urban professionals drawn to aspirational lifestyle imagery or rural homemakers seeking practical solutions and peer validation. Personalization goes beyond addressing users by name; it entails curating content feeds that reflect individual interests—be it fashion tutorials, wellness guides, or

financial literacy tips—leveraging behavioral data and first-party insights to deliver timely offers and recommendations that feel intrinsically relevant rather than promotional. Authentic influencer partnerships amplify these efforts: by collaborating with micro- and nano-influencers whose life experiences mirror those of their followers—such as a regional beauty vlogger demonstrating locally relevant skincare routines or a women-led start-up founder sharing candid day-in-the-life content—brands can harness the trust and credibility inherent in peer-to-peer endorsements. These partnerships must be grounded in transparency and mutual value exchange, wherein influencers genuinely endorse products they believe in, clearly disclose sponsorships, and engage audiences through interactive Q&As, behind-the-scenes stories, and user-driven challenges that invite co-creation and foster a sense of ownership. Equally vital is the deployment of community-centric content that transforms social channels into collaborative spaces: exclusive groups on platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp enable women to share experiences, seek advice, and participate in group-buy initiatives that leverage collective bargaining power, while brand-hosted forums and live events create dialogues around shared concerns such as maternal health, career growth, and self-care rituals. Industry and academic studies corroborate the efficacy of trust-driven strategies—wherein user-generated content and peer reviews drive higher engagement rates—and interactive formats such as polls, quizzes, and shoppable stories, which not only entertain but provide rich data for iterative optimization. Platform-tailored tactics further enhance impact: short-form videos resonate on TikTok and Instagram Reels, in-depth tutorials thrive on YouTube, and professional narratives find traction on LinkedIn, underscoring the importance of aligning creative approaches with each channel’s unique affordances. Amid these innovations, ethical transparency and inclusive digital design remain critical, as women increasingly demand clarity around data usage, respectful representation across body types and ethnicities, and user experiences accessible to diverse literacy and digital proficiency levels. As the landscape evolves, future research should explore AI-driven predictive analytics for hyper-targeting and dynamic content generation, as well as the long-term impact of social commerce on women’s purchasing power, socioeconomic mobility, and community empowerment. Investigating how personalized shopping journeys fueled by machine learning algorithms influence not just immediate conversions but sustained brand advocacy and financial decision-making will provide deeper insights into the transformative potential of social media marketing for women in India.

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