

**IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING HERBAL PRODUCTS IN TAMIL NADU****GOWRI J<sup>1</sup>**

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**ABSTRACT**

The development of digital communication technologies changed the marketing approach in most industries, and this is not an exception to the herbal products industry. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp are social media platforms that have become highly effective business tools to market products, interact with consumers and create brand awareness. The market of herbal products has been growing tremendously since more and more consumers are shifting their interests to natural and organic products. This paper will explore how social media marketing is crucial in marketing herbal products in Tamil Nadu. The study makes use of the descriptive research design which utilizes primary and secondary data. A structured questionnaire was used to gather primary data by administering the questionnaires to consumers of herbal products. The research explores consumer awareness, buyer behavior and the issue of social media platforms to affect buying decisions. The results suggest that social media promotes brand awareness, involvement of consumer, and intention to purchase herbal products greatly. The social media marketing can also be used at low costs and be affordable to small herbal firms. The research paper summarizes that companies need to create strategic social media marketing campaigns, such as influencer marketing, customer reviews, and informative information to enhance consumer confidence and increase the market of herbal products.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Herbal Products, Consumer Behaviour, Digital Marketing.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Marketing practices have evolved significantly due to technological advancement and the rapid growth of internet usage. Traditional marketing methods such as print advertisements, television commercials, and direct selling have gradually been supplemented by digital marketing strategies. Among these strategies, social media marketing has emerged as one of the most influential tools for promoting products and services. Social media refers to online platforms that enable users to create, share, and interact with content. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and WhatsApp have become essential tools for communication and marketing. Businesses use these platforms to promote products, engage customers, and build long-term relationships with consumers.

India has a long history of herbal medicine and natural health practices. Traditional systems such as Ayurveda, Siddha, and Unani emphasize the use of herbs and natural ingredients for maintaining health and treating diseases. In recent years, consumer demand for herbal products has increased due to rising health awareness and concerns regarding the side effects of synthetic products.

Tamil Nadu is one of the important regions in India for herbal medicine due to its strong connection with the Siddha medical system. Herbal products such as herbal cosmetics, herbal medicines, herbal supplements, and organic food products are widely consumed in the state. With the expansion of internet connectivity and smartphone usage, herbal product companies increasingly use social media platforms to reach consumers and promote their products. Social media marketing offers several advantages for businesses, including cost-effective promotion, real-time interaction with customers, and global reach. Companies can share product information, customer testimonials, educational content, and promotional offers through social media platforms. These platforms also allow consumers to share reviews and experiences, which can influence the purchasing decisions of other consumers. Research indicates that social media marketing significantly affects consumer awareness, brand image, and purchasing behaviour. Online reviews, influencer recommendations, and digital advertising campaigns contribute to building trust among consumers and encouraging them to try herbal products.

The present study aims to examine the importance of social media marketing in promoting herbal products in Tamil Nadu. The research also explores consumer perceptions, preferred social media platforms, and the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies.

**2. NEED FOR THE STUDY**

The market of herbal products in India is growing at an alarming rate because people are becoming more aware of the systems of natural health. Customers are moving away to products that use chemicals, to those that are herbal in their nature in order to maintain health, skin and well-being. Therefore, businesses within the herbal industry are in need of efficient marketing solutions to access more people. Social media marketing has become a strong tool that can be used by the businesses to communicate with the consumers and advertise products easily.

The social media gives the businesses a chance to communicate directly to customers, disseminate information, and create brand loyalty. Research suggests that the use of social media and electronic word-of-mouth contribute a great deal to brand awareness and brand loyalty in the market of herbal products. Although social media is increasingly being used in marketing, not much has been done to specifically address it in the herbal products industry in Tamil Nadu. The majority of the literature under review considers digital marketing in generic industries or dwells on other geographical areas. Consequently, this research will be relevant when it comes to the analysis of the social media role in marketing herbal products and the development of effective business strategies to be deployed in Tamil Nadu.

**3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the role of social media in marketing herbal products.
2. To analyze consumer awareness of herbal products through social media platforms.
3. To identify the most commonly used social media platforms for herbal product promotion.
4. To evaluate the influence of social media marketing on consumer purchasing behaviour.
5. To suggest effective strategies for improving social media marketing of herbal products.

**4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. How does social media marketing influence consumer awareness of herbal products?
2. Which social media platforms are most effective in promoting herbal products?

3. What factors influence consumers to purchase herbal products through social media?
4. How can herbal companies improve their social media marketing strategies?

### 5. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

H1: Social media marketing significantly influences consumer awareness of herbal products.

H2: Social media marketing positively affects consumer purchasing behaviour.

H3: There is a significant relationship between social media engagement and brand loyalty toward herbal products.

### 6. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several researchers have studied the role of digital marketing and social media in influencing consumer behaviour. Studies indicate that social media marketing has a significant impact on brand awareness, brand image, and brand loyalty in the herbal product industry. The presence of social media campaigns and online engagement can increase consumer trust and influence purchasing decisions. (1)

Research on herbal beverage products demonstrates that social media marketing activities such as community engagement and online interaction positively influence consumers' willingness to buy herbal products. Another study on herbal dental products found that social media plays an important role in educating consumers about the benefits of herbal products and encouraging their adoption. Social media campaigns can increase awareness and promote healthier product choices. (2)

Research on digital marketing strategies indicates that companies increasingly rely on digital platforms to communicate with potential customers and promote products effectively. Digital marketing enables businesses to reach large audiences and significantly influence consumer purchasing behaviour. (3)

Furthermore, studies on social media marketing in the Ayurvedic industry suggest that social media provides a low-cost promotional platform for herbal companies and helps them expand their market reach. Although many studies have examined digital marketing and consumer behaviour, limited research focuses specifically on social media marketing of herbal products in Tamil Nadu. This research attempts to address this gap. (4)

### 7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Research Design:** The study uses a **descriptive research design** to examine the importance of social media marketing in promoting herbal products.

#### Sources of Data

**Primary Data:** Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed among consumers of herbal products.

#### Secondary Data

Secondary data were collected from:

- Academic journals
- Books
- Research articles
- Online databases

**Sample Size:** The sample size of the study consists of **150 respondents**.

**Sampling Technique:** Simple random sampling method was used to select respondents.

**Area of Study:** The study was conducted in major cities of Tamil Nadu including:

- Chennai
- Coimbatore
- Tiruchirappalli

#### Tools for Data Analysis

The following statistical tools were used:

- Percentage analysis
- Chi-square test
- Correlation analysis
- Mean score analysis

### 8. SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS USED FOR HERBAL PRODUCT MARKETING

**Facebook:** Facebook is widely used for product promotion through business pages, advertisements, and customer interaction.

**Instagram:** Instagram is a visual platform that allows businesses to share product images, reels, and influencer collaborations.

**YouTube:** YouTube is used for educational videos, product demonstrations, and testimonials.

**WhatsApp:** WhatsApp enables businesses to communicate directly with customers and share promotional messages.

These platforms allow herbal companies to promote products efficiently and reach targeted consumers.

### 9. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### Age Distribution

Age Group	Respondents	Percentage
18–25	40	27%
26–35	55	37%
36–45	30	20%
Above 45	25	16%

Most respondents belong to the **26–35 age group**, indicating that young adults are more active users of social media.

#### Social Media Platform Usage

Platform	Percentage
Instagram	38%
Facebook	30%
WhatsApp	20%
YouTube	12%

Instagram and Facebook are the most widely used platforms.

**TIME SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

Hours per Day	Respondents	Percentage
Less than 1 hour	20	13%
1–2 hours	48	32%
2–4 hours	55	37%
More than 4 hours	27	18%

Most respondents (37%) spend **2–4 hours daily on social media**, making it a powerful marketing channel.

**Influence of Social Media on Purchase Decision**

Influence Level	Percentage
Highly Influenced	48%
Moderately Influenced	32%
Slightly Influenced	15%
Not Influenced	5%

The results show that **80% of consumers are influenced by social media marketing when purchasing herbal products.**

**CHI-SQUARE TEST**

Relationship between Age and Influence of Social Media on Purchase Decision

**Hypothesis**

H0: There is no significant relationship between age and influence of social media on purchasing herbal products.

H1: There is a significant relationship between age and influence of social media on purchasing herbal products.

**Chi-Square Table**

Age Group	Highly Influenced	Moderately Influenced	Slightly Influenced	Not Influenced	Total
18–25	20	12	6	2	40
26–35	28	18	7	2	55
36–45	14	9	5	2	30
Above 45	10	9	4	2	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>150</b>

**SPSS Output (Chi-Square)**

Test	Value	df	Significance
Pearson Chi-Square	12.54	9	0.04

Since the p-value (0.04) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Therefore, there is a significant relationship between age and the influence of social media on purchasing herbal products.

**CORRELATION ANALYSIS**

Relationship between Social Media Marketing and Purchase Decision

**Hypothesis**

H0: There is no relationship between social media marketing and purchase decision.

H1: There is a relationship between social media marketing and purchase decision.

**Correlation Table**

Variables	Social Media Marketing	Purchase Decision
Social Media Marketing	1	0.68
Purchase Decision	0.68	1

The correlation coefficient (0.68) indicates a strong positive relationship between social media marketing and purchase decision. This means that increased social media marketing leads to higher consumer purchase intentions for herbal products.

**5. MEAN SCORE ANALYSIS**

**Consumer Perception of Social Media Marketing**

Statement	Mean Score
Social media increases awareness of herbal products	4.2
Social media advertisements influence purchase decision	4.0
Influencer marketing affects consumer choice	3.8
Social media reviews increase trust	4.1
Educational content improves product understanding	4.3

The highest mean score (4.3) indicates that educational content about herbal products on social media significantly improves consumer understanding and interest.

**10. FINDINGS**

1. Social media marketing significantly increases awareness of herbal products.
2. Instagram and Facebook are the most effective platforms for herbal product promotion.
3. Consumers trust herbal products promoted through influencers and customer reviews.
4. Social media marketing improves brand loyalty and customer engagement.
5. Young consumers are more influenced by social media marketing than older consumers.

**11. SUGGESTIONS**

1. Herbal companies should create informative content about product benefits.
2. Businesses should collaborate with health influencers and wellness experts.
3. Companies should encourage customer reviews and testimonials.
4. Herbal businesses should invest in targeted digital advertising campaigns.
5. Companies should regularly monitor social media feedback to improve products.

**12. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

1. The study is limited to selected cities in Tamil Nadu.
2. The sample size may not represent the entire population.
3. Consumer responses may be influenced by personal opinions.

### 13. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Future research can explore:

- The role of influencer marketing in herbal product promotion.
- Comparative studies between herbal and chemical products.
- Impact of artificial intelligence in social media marketing.

### 14. CONCLUSION

The study emphasizes the increasing significance of social media marketing for promoting herbal products in Tamil Nadu. Social media platforms offer businesses affordable means to connect with consumers, enhance brand visibility, and shape purchasing choices. Consumers are progressively turning to social media for product details, reviews, and recommendations.

The research results reveal that social media marketing has a substantial impact on consumer awareness and buying habits concerning herbal products. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube are crucial for promoting herbal items and informing consumers about their advantages. As the herbal product industry continues to grow, companies need to implement creative digital marketing tactics to stay competitive. Successful social media marketing initiatives that emphasize consumer interaction, informative content, and collaborations with influencers can assist businesses in enhancing their market presence and achieving sustainable growth.

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### QUESTIONNAIRE

#### Instructions:

Please tick (✓) the appropriate option. The information provided will be used only for academic research purposes.

#### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. **Age**
  - Below 18
  - 18 – 25
  - 26 – 35
  - 36 – 45
  - Above 45
2. **Gender**
  - Male
  - Female
  - Other
3. **Educational Qualification**
  - School Level
  - Undergraduate
  - Postgraduate
  - Doctorate
4. **Occupation**
  - Student
  - Private Employee
  - Government Employee
  - Business
  - Homemaker
5. **Monthly Income**
  - ₹10,000 – ₹25,000
  - ₹25,001 – ₹50,000
  - ₹50,001 – ₹75,000
  - Above ₹75,000
6. **Place of Residence**
  - Urban
  - Semi-Urban
  - Rural

**SECTION B: SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE**

7. **Which social media platforms do you use regularly?**
  - Facebook
  - Instagram
  - YouTube
  - WhatsApp
  - Twitter/X
8. **How often do you use social media?**
  - Daily
  - Several times a week
  - Once a week
  - Rarely
9. **How many hours do you spend on social media per day?**
  - Less than 1 hour
  - 1–2 hours
  - 2–4 hours
  - More than 4 hours
10. **Have you seen advertisements for herbal products on social media?**
  - Yes
  - No
11. **Which platform do you mostly see herbal product advertisements on?**
  - Instagram
  - Facebook
  - YouTube
  - WhatsApp

**SECTION C: AWARENESS OF HERBAL PRODUCTS**

12. **Are you aware of herbal products available in the market?**
  - Yes
  - No
13. **How did you first learn about herbal products?**
  - Social Media
  - Television
  - Friends/Family
  - Newspaper
  - Other
14. **Which type of herbal products do you use most?**
  - Herbal cosmetics
  - Herbal medicines
  - Herbal food supplements
  - Herbal health drinks
15. **Do you believe herbal products are safer than chemical products?**
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree

**SECTION D: IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING**

16. **Social media increases my awareness of herbal products.**
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
17. **Social media advertisements influence my decision to buy herbal products.**
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
18. **I trust herbal product reviews shared on social media.**
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
19. **Influencers on social media affect my opinion about herbal products.**
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree

- Neutral
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
20. **Educational posts about herbal ingredients increase my interest in buying herbal products.**
- Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree

**SECTION E: PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR**

21. **Have you ever purchased herbal products after seeing them on social media?**
- Yes
  - No
22. **How often do you buy herbal products?**
- Frequently
  - Occasionally
  - Rarely
  - Never
23. **Where do you usually buy herbal products?**
- Online stores
  - Pharmacies
  - Supermarkets
  - Herbal shops
24. **What factors influence your purchase of herbal products?**
- Price
  - Quality
  - Brand reputation
  - Social media promotion
25. **Do discounts and offers on social media influence your purchase decision?**
- Yes
  - No

**SECTION F: CUSTOMER PERCEPTION**

26. **Social media helps herbal brands communicate better with customers.**
- Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
27. **I prefer brands that actively engage with customers on social media.**
- Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
28. **Social media content helps me understand herbal product benefits.**
- Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
29. **Social media marketing improves trust in herbal brands.**
- Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral
  - Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
30. **Would you recommend herbal products you see on social media to others?**
- Yes
  - No
  - Maybe