



## IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON PREFERENCES OF WOMEN FOR FASHION APPAREL BRANDS IN EAST GODAVARI DISTRICT OF ANDHRAPRADESH

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### Abstract

*Companies' awareness and society's dependence on technology drives them to believe in social media. It leads to highly connected organizations and provided opportunity to various fashion brands to present themselves. Due to this fashion brands has started using social media for advertising and promotion of their brands. such platforms helps them in creating contents, messages which attracts the attention the consumers and not only help them understand brands but also prompt them to share it with their friends and relatives. It helps the fashion brands to create awareness. Apparel retailers must use this powerful tool for promoting their product into market with proper planning and in systematic manner for increasing success of their product in market.*

**Keywords:** Facebook, Instagram, Apparel, EBay, Media Marketing,



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### Introduction:

**Social Media:** Social media uses mobile and web-based technologies to create contents, share it or even discuss with friends which are socially connected. It helps communities, organisations', groups and individuals to discuss, analyse and decide product to buy and not to buy, thus lead to more rational decision making. In 2019, the largest social network is reported as being Facebook. Other popular networks are Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, You Tube, Google+ etc. These sites also allow people to stay in contact, whether it is through pictures, writing or videos. In business, social media is used to market products, promote brands, and connect to current customers and foster new business.

### Social Media in the Fashion Industry:

Many Fashion brands traditionally believed that social networking would have adverse effects of their relationship with consumers, but for many it proved to be excellent platform to strengthen relationship and credibility of brands and companies as it helps the

Companies to capture large markets and customers their by increase their reach. Fashion brands are also using social media platform for marketing of their products without any cost. They offer discounts, Schemes, new products on such platforms and attract the attention of customers to buy the products.

EBay Deals study showed that fashion brands and companies are using this platform to know about fashion events such as fashion shows, exhibitions etc, fashion designers , new trends and new segments of consumers depending upon their likes, and try to create long lasting bond with them through tweets, chats, shares and feedback.

**How Organizations use Social Media:** Organizations are using social networking channels widely in advertising, creating brand awareness, launching of new products, offering schemes, discounts, announcements, events, contest to attract large customer base. This results in building brand loyalty, and equity of brands. So this research will help the companies in apparel industry to understand various factors of social media and thereby help them in developing an effective marketing plan. It will also help the companies to gain competitive advantage as compared to their competitors. Considering the need following objectives were set for research;

- 1) To study the impact of social media advertisements on preferences of women for fashion apparel brands.
- 2) To know which social media web site is frequently preferred and visited by women.
- 3) To study the how women use social media while buying apparel brands.
- 4) To find out whether social media is having positive or negative impact on women regarding their preferences for fashion apparel brands

#### **Review of related Literature:**

Ahmed and Zahid (2014) in their study titled “Role of social media marketing to enhance CRM and brand equity in terms of purchase intention” concluded that social media marketing helps the companies to understand consumer and engage them with brand. This results in increased loyalty, trust and satisfaction among the customers and thus lead to strong bonding which in turn to positive purchase intention.

Bilal.et.al (2014) in their research work titled “Role of Social Media and Social Networks in Consumer Decision Making: A Case of the Garment Sector” identified that how much time and space is usefully for garments manufacturing companies on social platform to gain insight of consumers and competitive advantage. They also concluded that companies should

hire specialists who continuously monitor, analyse and interpret consumers' feedback, decisions so that effective decision can be taken by companies to design products and gain competitive advantage as compared to competitors.

Chaturvedi.et.al (2014) in their study titled "An Effect of Social Media on the Youth Buyer Behaviour for Apparels in Jaipur city" remarked that Apparel retailers must use social media for promoting their product into market. They should Use social media with proper planning and in systematic manner for increasing success of their product in market. Apparel retailers should change their promotional strategies according to the time factor/ buying behaviour of youth, because mainly youth use the social networking sites mostly.

Divya and Regi (2014) in their research titled "An Empirical Study on Effectiveness of Social Media as a Marketing Tool" remarked that online medium provides strong association in association with social media. Social media helps individuals to convert themselves into experts and thus helps them in sharing knowledge. It also helps individuals to contribute in social discourse and reaching larger set of audiences. Ioană and Stoica (2014) in their study titled "Social Media and its Impact on Consumers Behavior" concluded that mostly young consumers prefer to use social media for their purchase decision. Study also highlighted that female consumers are more inclined to this platform and they refer forums, company's websites, reviews of products and brands before making any decision. The major reasons to buy the products online are convenience, product variety and availability. Schivinski and Dąbrowski (2013) in their study titled "The Impact of Brand Communication on Brand Equity Dimensions and Brand Purchase Intention through Facebook" remarked that face book is very active social media platform to design brand communication and to promote their products. Consumers like or dislike brands, make comments on posts and share their opinions. They concluded that social media advertisement has positive impact on consumer purchase intention and helps the companies to understand the psychology of consumer as well in designing their products

Vipeesh and shajan (2013) in their study titled "The Usage of Social Networking Sites among Students: concluded that students are using social media very actively for entertainment and socialising and less for academic purpose.

Baruah (2012) in her study titled "Effectiveness of Social Media as a tool of communication and its potential for technology enabled connections: concluded that social media helps in collaborations, organising people, organising meetings, spreading messages and build opinions Nasiri.et.al (2012) in their study titled "Social Media and Buying Behavior of

Women in Pakistan toward Purchase of Textile Garments” concluded that Word of mouth has greater impact than Social networking sites. The reason found out is that people trust their friends/family’s opinion more than other marketing media. Although social networking sites have high reach but even then it is less effective than word of mouth. Moreover, there is a positive relationship between household income and monthly buying behavior. On the other hand, there is no co-relation between household income and preference to designer clothes. This means that household income does not play an important role in preferring designer clothes. It has been found out that people belonging to low income groups also prefer buying designer clothes.

Ranjitha and Sinnor (2012) in their study titled “Influence of Social Media Websites on Promotion of Products and Services among the Users” analysed that social media is very important platform for youth to connect with their friends and relatives. These sites also help professionals and business to build strong professional groups to generate business. These platforms provide excellent medium to to communicate, market products and identify latest fashion trends. It helps in understanding your consumer’s psychology, likes and dislikes reading your company’s products and brands. It helps the companies to take steps to improve in their market offering.

Jothi.et.al (2011) in their research titled “Analysis of social networking sites: A study on effective communication strategy in developing brand communication” analysed that success of a brand depends up to effective communication strategy and most of the brands now days use social networking sites as potent medium to communicate their brand message effectively. They concluded that this platforms full of young people who spend lot of time on these sites, for entertainment, watching commercials and for social gathering thus provides ample opportunity to companies to target and build their brand identity.

Pradiptarini (2011) in his research titled “Social Media Marketing: Measuring Its Effectiveness and Identifying the Target Market” concluded that success of marketing programme of social sites depends upon quality of content in message, involvement of company and its relationship with other marketing platforms and mediums.

### **Methodology:**

This paper aims to study the impact of social media on preferences of women for fashion apparel brands in East Godavari District of Andhrapradesh. The sample of 250respondents was taken and questionnaires were filled in by them. The data that is used in this survey is primary data which was collected through a well-structured questionnaire given to the

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respondents and they were even personally interviewed to fulfil the objectives of the study. The questionnaire comprises of close ended questions like ranking, liker's scale, checklist and multiple choice questions. Secondary data was also collected so as to have accurate results and the required data was collected from various magazines, newspapers, journals, previous researches and internet to gather relevant information.

### **Findings & Discussions:**

- Majority of the respondents i.e. 64.8 % shop for apparels once a month followed by 21.8% who shop once in a week. But none of the respondents shop only once in a year. Hence, majority of women shop for apparels more often.
- Style/variety is the most important factor influencing the buying decision of respondents with 0.38 average score while 0.01 average score depicts feel that reviews or ratings on social media are least important.
- Friend's recommendation has got the highest rank by respondents and is the most important source of information about new brand and 2<sup>nd</sup> rank is given to social media which indicates that social media has gained importance in terms of as a source of information for new trends.
- Majority of the respondents i.e. 92.8% agreed to that they have seen apparel advertisements on social media while 7.2% haven't. This indicates that advertising on social media is beneficial.
- Most of the respondents agree that social media is able to provide effective platforms to new apparel brands to draw customers attention.
- On an average score of 0.44 majority of respondents are frequently using Face book as compared to other social websites followed by YouTube& Instagram with average score of 0.23 and 0.22 respectively. Hence, Face book is most popular social media site among respondents.
- Majorly 1-3 hours per week is the time spent by majority of respondents on social media sites i.e. 43.2% while 24.8% of the respondents spend 4-6 hours per week hence, social media is being used more often on weekly basis by majority of respondents?
- Only sometimes respondents search for apparel related information on social media before going to purchase new apparel or try new brand.
- 63.2 % of the respondents said that they have never commented/reviewed/post related articles to peers via social media after purchase of branded apparels while 36.8 % have.

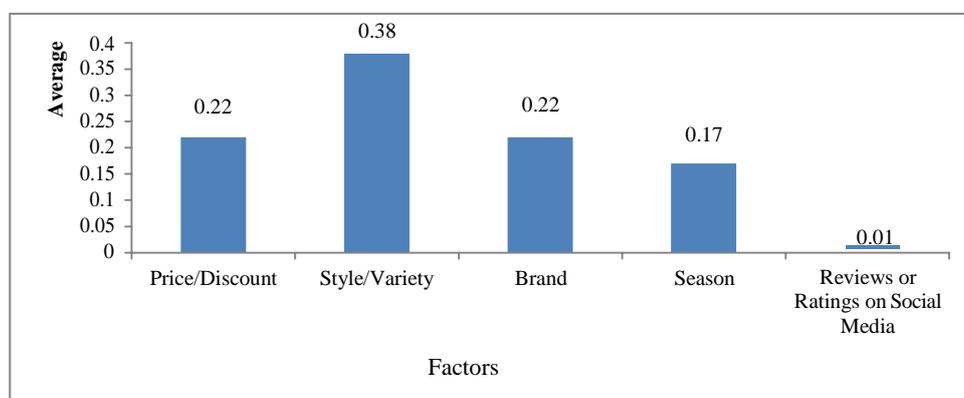
This indicates that post purchase respondents don't like to discuss much about their purchases on social media.

- 36.8% respondents believe that the major role of social media in their decision to buy apparels is for comparing products followed by 24.8% who believe that preliminary search is the major role. While 17.6 % believe that it speeds up the buying process. This indicates social media is majorly used for preliminary search and comparing products in buying process.
- Overall rarely are social media triggering respondents to purchase any new apparel or try new brand.
- Majority of respondents rarely change their initial preference after searching information via social media.

### Conclusions:

This study has given a clear indication that consumer buying behavior is changing & marketers need to change their strategies according to the scenario. Social media is being used by majority of women in East Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh. The study concludes that social media is an important source from where women get to know about new brand or designer collection and they use social media as a tool for preliminary search and comparing their products. Hence, the companies need to focus on their promotional strategies. Fashion apparel brands must use social media for promoting their product into market. Thus, they should utilize social media to influence the decision of its consumers in buying their product, making their product known or for acting as a catalyst to positively influence its audience.

**Figure 1: Showing factors influencing buying decision of respondents regarding apparels.**



**Table 1: Showing factors influencing buying decision of respondents regarding apparels.**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>No. of Responses</b>	<b>Average</b>
Price / Discount	56	0.22
Style / Variety	96	0.38
Brand	55	0.22
Season	44	0.17
Reviews or Ratings on social media	3	0.01
<b>Total</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>1</b>

**Table 2: Showing how respondents get to know about a new brand / designer collection**

<b>Sources</b>	<b>Total Score</b>	<b>Ranks</b>
Online advertisement	449	4
Social media	394	2
Fashion magazines / newspaper	404	3
Friend's recommendations	388	1
Window displays	462	5
Television / cinema	528	6

**Table 3: Showing as per respondents whether social media is able to provide effective platforms to new apparel brands to draw customer's attention than mass media**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Scale Rate</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>
Strongly Agree	2	58	0.46
Agree	1	140	0.56
Neutral	0	46	0
Disagree	-1	0	0
Strongly disagree	-2	6	-0.05
<b>Total – 250</b>			<b>Net Mean Score – 0.97</b>

**Table 4: Showing social media sites being used by respondents on daily basis**

Social Media Sites	No. of responses	Average
Facebook	112	0.44
Twitter	1	0.003
Google+	24	0.1
You Tube	59	0.23
Instagram	57	0.22
LinkedIn	2	0.01
<b>Total</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>1</b>

**Table 5: Showing time spent by respondents on social media sites per week**

Time ( in hours )	No. of respondents	Percentage ( % )
0	5	4
1-3	54	43.2
4-6	31	24.8
7-9	15	12
10 or more	20	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 6: showing how often do respondents search for apparel related information or offerings by fashion apparel brands on social media platforms before purchase**

Options	Scale Rate	No. of respondents	Mean Score
Always	2	22	0.18
Often	1	52	0.21
Sometimes	0	96	0
Rarely	-1	64	-0.26
Never	-2	16	-0.13
<b>Total</b>		<b>Total = 250</b>	<b>Net Mean Score = 0</b>

**Table 7: Showing the role of social media in the respondents' decision to buy apparels**

Role	No. of respondents	Percentage ( % )
No role	36	14.4
Preliminary search	62	24.8
Comparing products	92	36.8
Speeding up buying process	44	17.6
All aspects	16	6.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 8: Showing how often social media triggers respondents to purchase any apparel or try new brand**

Options	Scale Rate	No. of respondents	Mean Score
Never	-2	8	-0.06
Rarely	-1	54	-0.22
Sometimes	0	128	0
Often	1	52	0.21
Always	2	8	0.06
<b>Total –250</b>			<b>Net Mean Score = - 0.01</b>

**Table 9: Showing whether respondents change their initial preference of apparels after searching relevant information via social media**

Options	Scale Rate	No. of respondents	Mean Score
Always	2	10	0.08
Often	1	44	0.18
Sometimes	0	90	0
Rarely	-1	84	-0.34
Never	-2	22	-0.18
<b>Total = 250</b>			<b>Net Mean Score= - 0.26</b>