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## Exploring the Social Media Marketing Landscape for Women Entrepreneurs

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### Abstract

Social media has become an essential marketing tool in the modern digital age, particularly for women entrepreneurs looking for low-cost business growth opportunities. This study examines the frequency and significance of social media marketing among women entrepreneurs in Guwahati, Assam. Understanding current usage trends and evaluating the impact of social media involvement on business sales are the goals of the study. A random sample of 215 female entrepreneurs was given a structured questionnaire; 143 of them actively utilise Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and other social media platforms for marketing. Quantitative data were analysed using ANOVA and chi-square tests to evaluate the relationship between hours and years of social media use and business sales, as well as the association between platform-specific frequency and sales performance. According to the findings, WhatsApp is the most popular app, with Instagram and Facebook coming in second and third. Sales promotion and customer engagement are the main activities on social media, where a sizable percentage of respondents spend 6 to 9 hours per day. The length and intensity of social media use are positively correlated with better sales results, according to statistical research. In a developing economy, the study offers important regional insights into how women entrepreneurs use digital tools to succeed in their businesses. The implications suggest that targeted support for social media tactics can improve the sustainability and performance of entrepreneurs. This study is important because it fills in big gaps in previous research about geography, gender-specific experiences, and platform-specific participation. It does this by combining data from the field with a thorough review of the literature. It offers a sophisticated comprehension of women entrepreneurs' digital marketing strategies, laying the groundwork for upcoming interventions and legislative initiatives.

**Keywords:** Business sales, digital entrepreneurship, Guwahati, social media marketing, women entrepreneurs

### Introduction

In the rapidly evolving digital landscape, social media platforms have transformed from mere communication tools into powerful marketing channels that are reshaping entrepreneurial practices worldwide. For women entrepreneurs specifically, platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, and LinkedIn represent not just marketing opportunities, but potential equalizers in a business environment historically dominated by gender disparities (Boon-Long & Wongsurawat, 2015) <sup>[2]</sup>. This critical literature review examines how frequently women entrepreneurs utilize social media marketing and evaluates its importance for their business development, growth, and sustainability.

The intersection of gender, entrepreneurship, and digital marketing presents a compelling area of study (Erdogan, 2023; Narayanan *et al.*, 2012; Yadav & Unni, 2016) <sup>[9, 25, 31]</sup>. While women's entrepreneurship has grown significantly with women owning approximately 31% of all privately held firms globally (World Bank, 2022) they continue to face unique challenges including limited access to capital, smaller professional networks, and persistent gender stereotypes (Mehtap *et al.*, 2017) <sup>[24]</sup>. Against this backdrop, social media marketing has emerged as a potentially transformative force, offering cost-effective marketing solutions and network-building opportunities that may be particularly valuable for women business owners. Research interest in this area has evolved substantially over the past decade (Harris *et al.*, 2019) <sup>[12]</sup>. Early studies focused primarily on adoption rates and basic usage patterns, typically treating women entrepreneurs as a homogeneous group. More recent scholarship has begun examining nuanced differences in platform preferences, posting frequencies, engagement strategies, and business outcomes across diverse segments of women entrepreneurs.

This evolution reflects both the maturing of social media as business tools and growing recognition of the need for intersectional approaches to entrepreneurship research.

To address this gap, primary research was conducted with 143 women entrepreneurs in Guwahati, Assam, using a structured questionnaire that examined their social media marketing practices and using frequency of different social media platforms. This sample represents diverse business sectors, sizes, and entrepreneurial experience levels, providing insight into how women entrepreneurs in this specific urban centre of Northeast India leverage digital platforms for business growth.

By critically analysing existing literature alongside primary data from Guwahati, this review aims to synthesize current knowledge while highlighting regional specificities that may influence social media marketing practices. The review is structured thematically, beginning with an examination of the theoretical frameworks that have shaped research in this field, particularly as they apply to the Indian entrepreneurial context. This is followed by an analysis of empirical findings regarding the frequency of social media marketing use across different platforms among women entrepreneurs in Guwahati, with attention to variations by industry, business size, and entrepreneurial experience. The subsequent section evaluates the importance of social media marketing for these entrepreneurs, considering both tangible business outcomes and less quantifiable benefits such as network development and work-life integration.

By synthesizing and critically evaluating the current state of knowledge on this topic alongside primary data from Guwahati, this review aims to provide insights into how women entrepreneurs in this region navigate social media marketing in developing their businesses, while also contributing to the broader scholarly conversation on gender and entrepreneurship in the digital age within diverse Indian contexts.

**2. Literature Review:** The digital transformation of business practices has fundamentally altered how entrepreneurs market their products and services, with social media platforms emerging as essential marketing channels. For women entrepreneurs specifically, social media marketing presents unique opportunities and challenges that have attracted increasing scholarly attention. This literature review critically examines research on the frequency of social media marketing usage by women entrepreneurs across key platforms—Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, and LinkedIn—and evaluates its importance for their business success. Research on this topic has evolved significantly over the past decade, shifting from general adoption studies to more nuanced examinations of platform-specific strategies and outcomes. Despite growing interest, several theoretical and methodological gaps remain in understanding how and why women entrepreneurs engage with social media marketing at varying frequencies. This review addresses two central questions: how frequently women entrepreneurs utilize social media marketing for their businesses, and how important these platforms are for their entrepreneurial success.

**Theoretical Frameworks in Social Media Marketing Research:** The literature on women entrepreneurs' social media usage is predominantly framed through several theoretical lenses, though the application of these

frameworks reveals certain limitations in capturing the full complexity of women's experiences.

Research by (Cesaroni *et al.*, 2017) <sup>[4]</sup> applied the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to examine women entrepreneurs' adoption of social media platforms, finding that perceived usefulness strongly predicted frequency of use. However, as (Journal & Tlaiss, 2018) <sup>[15]</sup> argues, TAM fails to adequately account for gender-specific barriers that might influence adoption and frequency patterns. This theoretical limitation is significant given that standard entrepreneurship models often inadequately address women's unique contextual factors.

Social Capital Theory has provided another prominent framework. (Fischer & Reuber, 2014) <sup>[10]</sup> demonstrated how women entrepreneurs utilize social media to build different forms of capital, with frequency of engagement correlating with network development. Their longitudinal analysis showed that consistent, regular posting (defined as daily interactions) yielded significantly stronger relationship-building outcomes than sporadic activity. Yet, as (Pergelova *et al.*, 2019) <sup>[26]</sup> note, social capital frameworks often overlook how gender norms mediate these relationships, potentially leading to incomplete understandings of usage patterns.

More recently, Feminist Technology Theory has emerged as a valuable framework. (Duffy & Pruchniewska, 2017) <sup>[7]</sup> applied this perspective to analyse how women entrepreneurs navigate digital visibility, finding that women often engage in more frequent, relationship-focused interactions compared to their male counterparts. This approach addresses previous theoretical gaps by explicitly acknowledging how gendered expectations shape online marketing behaviours.

### Frequency of Social Media Marketing Use Platform-Specific Usage Patterns

Research consistently shows variation in how frequently women entrepreneurs engage across different platforms. Facebook remains the most widely and frequently used platform according to multiple studies. (Ahmad *et al.*, 2018) <sup>[1]</sup> found that 87% of women small business owners in their sample used Facebook daily for marketing purposes, compared to 63% for Instagram and 42% for Twitter. These findings align with (Yusuf *et al.*, 2018) <sup>[3]</sup>, who reported that women entrepreneurs spent an average of 7.3 hours weekly on Facebook marketing, significantly more than other platforms.

Instagram has shown the most substantial growth in frequent usage. (Mcadam, 2020) <sup>[23]</sup> documented a 43% increase in daily Instagram marketing activities among women entrepreneurs between 2017-2020, compared to only 12% growth for Facebook during the same period. Their mixed-methods approach revealed that women entrepreneurs perceived Instagram's visual orientation as particularly effective for product-based businesses, leading to more frequent posting behaviours.

LinkedIn usage demonstrates different patterns, with less frequent posting but more strategic engagement. (Welter *et al.*, 2018) <sup>[30]</sup> found that women entrepreneurs in professional services updated LinkedIn profiles an average of twice weekly, contrasting with nearly daily Facebook and Instagram activity. However, they noted that LinkedIn interactions often involved more substantial content development, despite lower frequency.

WhatsApp has emerged as a significant tool particularly for women entrepreneurs in developing economies. (Kapinga & Mbise, 2019) <sup>[16]</sup> documented that women business owners in East Africa used WhatsApp business features daily, integrating personal and business communications. This platform-specific behaviour has been less thoroughly documented in Western contexts, representing a geographical gap in the literature.

### Industry Wise Variation of Using Social Media

The frequency of social media marketing demonstrates significant variation by industry sector. Retail and service-oriented women entrepreneurs exhibit the highest frequency of social media marketing activities. (Pergelova *et al.*, 2019) <sup>[26]</sup> found that women in fashion and beauty sectors posted on Instagram and Facebook an average of 5.2 times weekly, compared to 2.7 times for those in business consulting. This sectoral variation remains incompletely explored, particularly for technical and manufacturing businesses led by women.

Business size also correlates with usage frequency (Lin *et al.*, 2023) <sup>[19]</sup>. (Dy, 2016) <sup>[8]</sup> reported that micro-businesses run by women showed more consistent daily social media marketing activities than larger enterprises, which tended to have more formalized, scheduled posting practices. This inverse relationship between business size and posting frequency highlights how resource constraints might actually drive more direct digital marketing engagement among smaller women-owned businesses.

### Importance of Social Media Marketing for Women Entrepreneurs

#### Business Outcomes and Performance Metrics

The literature demonstrates strong correlations between regular social media marketing activity and positive business outcomes for women entrepreneurs. (Javid *et al.*, 2019) <sup>[14]</sup> (Borges-Tiago *et al.*, 2019) <sup>[3]</sup> found that women entrepreneurs who posted at least four times weekly on Facebook reported 37% higher customer engagement rates than those posting less frequently. This engagement translated to measurable revenue increases, particularly for businesses less than three years old.

Similarly, (Cheraghi & Setti, 2014) <sup>[5]</sup> identified a significant relationship between posting frequency and follower growth across platforms. Their longitudinal analysis of 200 women-owned businesses showed that consistent daily posting on at least two platforms correlated with 28% higher annual revenue growth compared to those posting only weekly. However, the study acknowledged limitations in establishing direct causality.

Critically, several studies suggest diminishing returns beyond certain frequency thresholds. (Mack *et al.*, 2017) <sup>[20]</sup> found that engagement metrics declined when women entrepreneurs posted more than twice daily on the same platform, suggesting quality and strategic timing may matter more than maximum frequency. This nuance is often overlooked in prescriptive studies that suggest "more is better" without considering platform-specific audience behaviour.

The literature highlights several ways social media marketing may be particularly important for women entrepreneurs. (Gawer, 2022) <sup>[11]</sup> argue that social media platforms help women overcome traditional networking barriers, with frequency of engagement directly correlating

with network expansion. Their mixed-methods study showed women who engaged daily on professional platforms like LinkedIn reported 43% more new business connections quarterly than those with sporadic activity.

Cost-effectiveness represents another critical advantage. (Lim, 2020) <sup>[18]</sup> found that women entrepreneurs, who typically launch businesses with less capital than men, reported social media marketing as their most cost-effective customer acquisition channel. Their survey of 345 women business owners showed that consistent, frequent engagement (defined as at least 4-5 times weekly) yielded customer acquisition costs 62% lower than traditional advertising methods (Rahayu *et al.*, 2021) <sup>[27]</sup>.

Work-life flexibility also emerges as a significant factor. (Duffy & Pruchniewska, 2017) <sup>[7]</sup> used qualitative methods to examine how social media marketing integrates into women entrepreneurs' daily routines. The study found that the ability to manage marketing in flexible time increments was particularly valuable for women balancing business and family responsibilities, though this flexibility sometimes led to pressure for constant connectivity.

### Critical Analysis and Research Gaps

#### Methodological Limitations

Despite valuable insights, methodological concerns limit our understanding of women entrepreneurs' social media marketing frequency. Self-reporting dominates the research methodology, with few studies incorporating objective platform analytics. As (Marlow & McAdam, 2013) <sup>[22]</sup> note, self-reported frequency often differs from actual posting patterns, particularly when respondents wish to appear successful or professionally engaged.

Sample sizes and composition present additional challenges. Many prominent studies rely on relatively small, convenience samples primarily drawn from Western contexts or urban environments. For instance, (Ahmad *et al.*, 2018) <sup>[1]</sup> based their widely-cited findings on just 134 participants, primarily from urban areas. This limitation raises questions about the generalizability of findings to diverse entrepreneurial populations.

Longitudinal research remains notably scarce. Most studies offer snapshot views of social media usage rather than tracking patterns over time. This limitation is significant given the rapidly evolving nature of social media platforms and shifting user behaviours. The few longitudinal studies that exist, such as (Fischer & Reuber, 2014) <sup>[10]</sup> three-year tracking study, provide more nuanced insights into how usage patterns evolve as businesses mature.

#### Theoretical and Conceptual Gaps

(Dy, 2016) <sup>[8]</sup> argues compellingly that gender, race, class, age, and geographical location significantly influence both access to and strategic use of social media platforms. This critique suggests that frequency patterns likely vary substantially across different segments of women entrepreneurs—a nuance current research inadequately addresses.

Additionally, the literature often assumes that higher frequency universally produces better outcomes. (Marlow & McAdam, 2013) <sup>[22]</sup> challenge this assumption, suggesting that context-specific strategic engagement may matter more than raw posting frequency. Their work highlights the need for more nuanced understanding of quality versus quantity in social media marketing activities.

Finally, evolving platform algorithms receive insufficient attention in current research (Thakur, 2024) <sup>[29]</sup>. As (Duffy & Hund, 2015) <sup>[6]</sup> note, changes to platform algorithms can dramatically impact the effectiveness of posting strategies, yet few studies account for these technical factors when analysing frequency patterns and their relationship to business outcomes.

This review has critically examined the literature on the frequency and importance of social media marketing for women entrepreneurs. Research consistently demonstrates that women entrepreneurs across various sectors engage regularly with social media platforms for marketing purposes, with Facebook and Instagram showing the highest usage frequencies. The importance of this marketing approach is well-established, with demonstrated benefits for network expansion, cost-effective customer acquisition, and work-life integration.

However, significant limitations in current research include overreliance on self-reported data, insufficient longitudinal studies, and inadequate attention to intersectional factors affecting women entrepreneurs' experiences. Future research would benefit from more methodologically robust approaches incorporating platform analytics, longer-term tracking studies, and more diverse, representative samples of women entrepreneurs across different contexts.

As social media platforms continue evolving and women's entrepreneurship expands globally, understanding the complex relationship between posting frequency, strategic engagement, and business outcomes becomes increasingly important for both scholarly understanding and practical application.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To study the present status of using social media by women entrepreneurs.
2. To study the effect of social media marketing on sales.

### Research Methodology

Total population of 467 active women entrepreneurs (Commissionerate of Industries and Commerce, Assam). An appropriate Sample size of 215 was calculated using Yemane's formula Yamane, Taro (1967) with 95% confidence level taking 5% margin of error (Isreal, 2003) <sup>[13]</sup>. Simple random sampling method was used to collect the data from the women entrepreneurs of Guwahati, Assam. Researcher personally visited the premises of women entrepreneurs for collecting data with the help of a printed questionnaire.

**Data Analysis:** In accordance with the main goals of the research, this section offers the data analysis carried out to investigate the social media marketing landscape for women entrepreneurs in Guwahati. The first objective is to evaluate the present usage patterns of social media platforms among women entrepreneurs and the second objective is to measure how social media marketing influences business sales. To achieve these objectives, trends and usage behavior were visualized using Microsoft Excel-generated frequency distribution charts. Furthermore, the study test five hypotheses to statistically investigate the association between social media marketing frequency and sales. Specifically, one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) in SPSS Version 26 was used to test hypotheses H1 and H2, which examines the effect of hours and years of social media use on sales. Chi-square tests were used to examine hypotheses H3, H4, and H5, which look at the relationship between sales performance and the use of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp. These methods were selected to provide robust insights into whether and how the intensity and duration of social media engagement correlate with sales among women entrepreneurs in the region.

### Users of Social media marketing



Source: Compiled by the Researcher

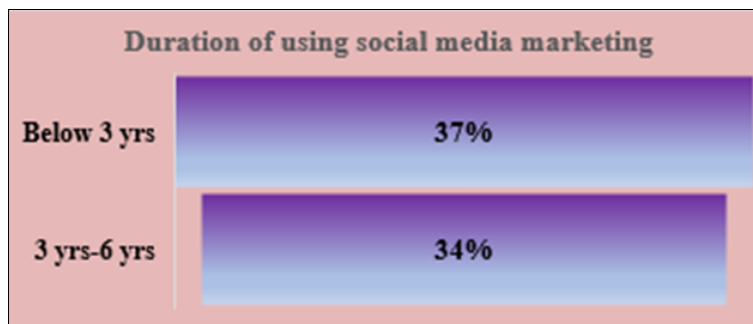
**Fig 1:** No. of Women Entrepreneurs Using Social Media Marketing

**Interpretation:** The above figure shows that 143 respondents out of 215 respondents are using social media marketing for their business.

### Duration of Using Social Media Marketing

The number of years that the respondents are using social media marketing for their business.





Source: Compiled by the Researcher

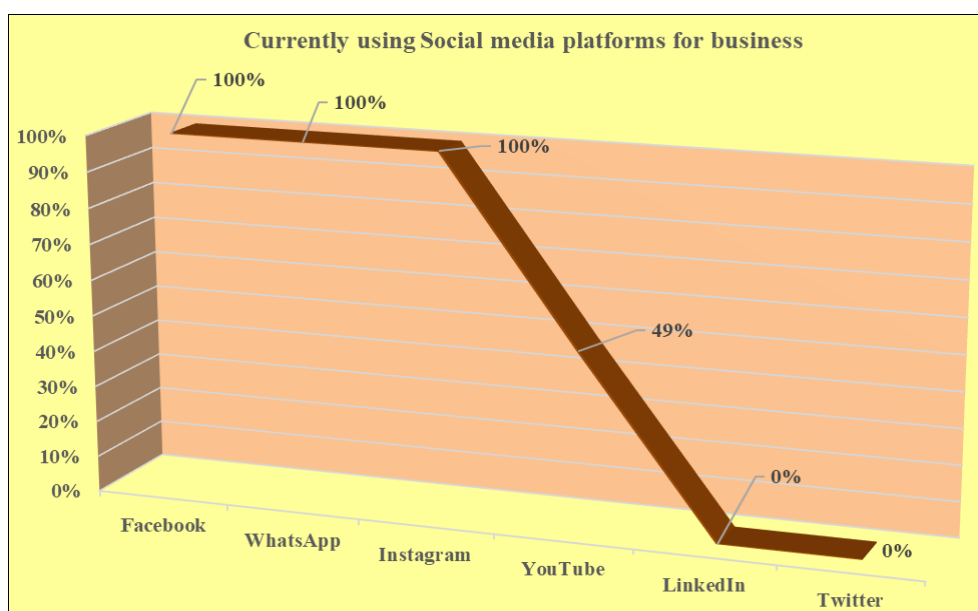
Fig 2: Duration of Using Social Media Marketing

### Interpretation

The above figure shows women entrepreneurs are actively using social media marketing in the recent years 58% of the respondents are using it for at least 1 to 6 yrs.

### Social Media Platforms Currently Used by Women Entrepreneurs

Respondents use single or multiple social media platforms for their social media marketing.



Source: Compiled by the Researcher

Fig 3: Social media platforms used by Women entrepreneurs

### Interpretation

The above figure shows that 143 respondents (100%) use Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp for their business but it is notable that YouTube is only used by 49% of the respondents for their business. Whereas, Twitter and LinkedIn have no users at all, highlighting a lack of engagement and reflecting their lower relevance for women entrepreneurs.

### Overall ranking of preferred social media platforms

Ranking of social media platforms given by the women entrepreneurs according to their preference.

### Interpretation

The ranking of different social media platforms may be summarised as under

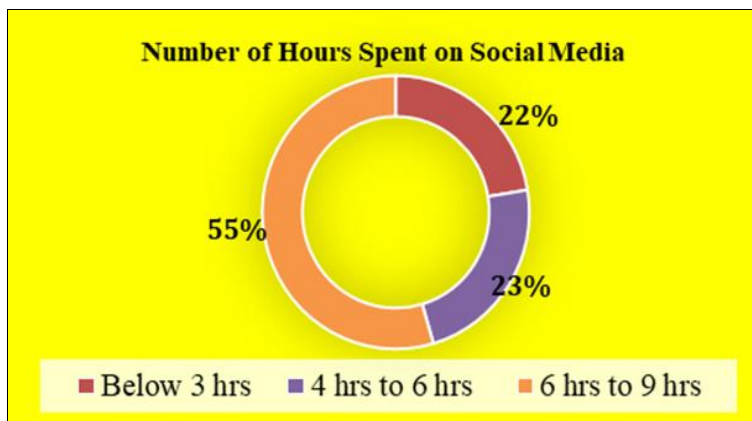
Table 1: Ranking of preferred social media platforms

Ranks given by the respondents	1 <sup>st</sup> Position	2 <sup>nd</sup> Position	3 <sup>rd</sup> Position	4 <sup>th</sup> Position
1	WhatsApp (44.8%)	Instagram (28.7%)	Facebook (27.3%)	
2	Facebook (40.6%)	WhatsApp (34.3%)	Instagram (22.4%)	YouTube (2.1%)
3	YouTube (35.0%)	Facebook (32.2%)	Instagram (17.5%)	WhatsApp (14.7%)
4	YouTube (58.0%)	Instagram (31.5%)	WhatsApp (6.3%)	
5	YouTube (4.9%)			

Overall WhatsApp is the most preferred platform (41.7% ranked it first). Facebook is a strong second choice (38.9% ranked it second). YouTube (37%) follows closely behind, with a more mixed ranking. YouTube ranked lowest, indicating their limited use for business purposes.

### Hours Spent on Social Media by the Women Entrepreneurs

Number of hours spent on social media by the respondents daily for their business purpose.



Source: Compiled by the Researcher

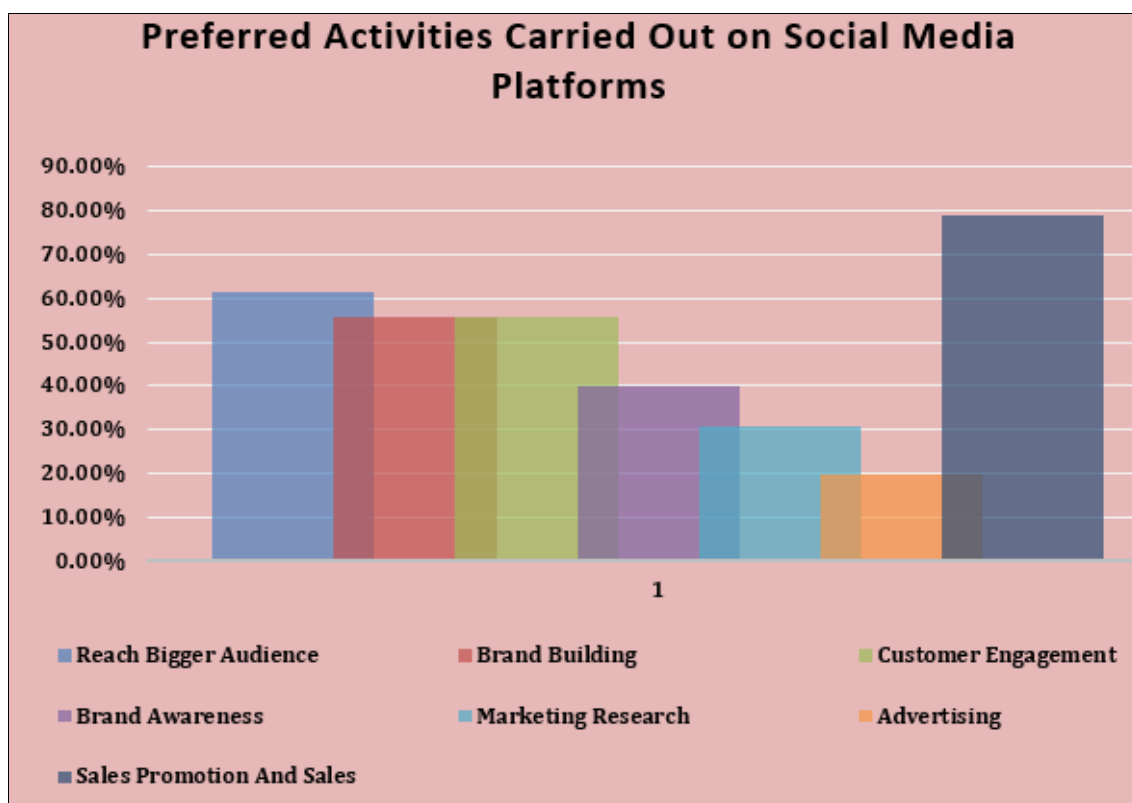
Fig 4: Number of Hours Spent on Social Media

#### Interpretation

The above figure 5 shows the majority of respondents spend between 4 hrs-6hrs (23.1%) daily on social media indicating a high level of engagement. A significant 54.5% spend 6 to 9 hours daily, showing considerable investment in social media engagement.

#### Most preferred activities carried out on social media platforms

The activities women entrepreneurs prefer to carry on the social media platforms. Women entrepreneurs carries out multiple business activities on their social media platforms.



Source: Compiled by the Researcher

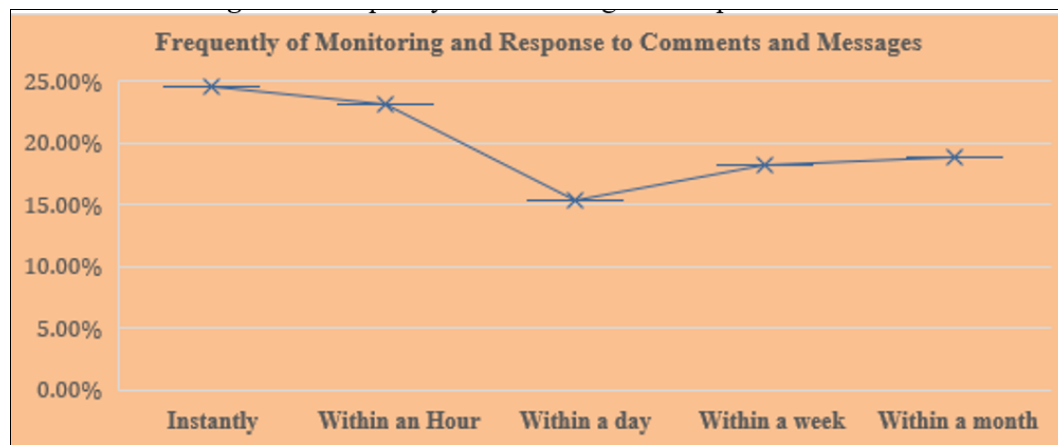
Fig 5: Most Preferred Activities Carried Out on Social Media Platforms

#### Interpretation

The above figure shows the women entrepreneur's primary activities include sales promotion and sales (79%), expanding audience reach (61.5%), and interacting with customers (55.9%), showcasing the role of social media in business growth. Brand building (55.9%) and brand

awareness (39.9%) are also notable, but they are not the primary focus.

#### Frequency of Monitoring and Response to Comments and Messages on Social Media Account



Source: Compiled by the Researcher

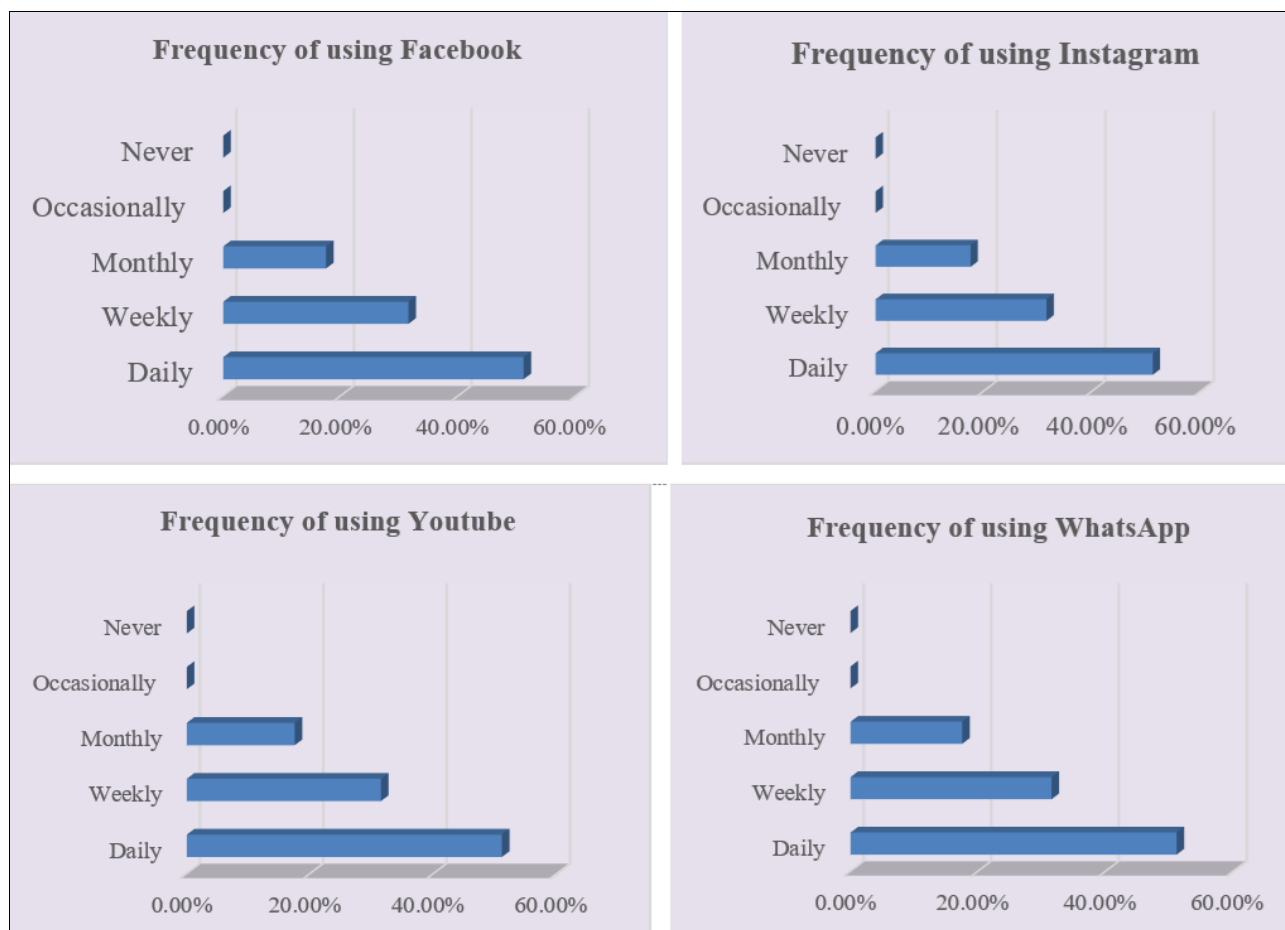
**Fig 6:** Frequency of Monitoring and Responses on Social Media Platforms

### Interpretation

The figure shows women entrepreneurs prefer to respond to customer comments and messages within an hour (24.5%), ensuring timely engagement. while 24.5% respond instantly.

Only 18.9% respond within a month, indicating that most women entrepreneurs prioritize customer engagement.

### Frequency of using social media platforms



**Fig 7:** Frequency of using social media platforms

**Table 2:** Ranking of daily used platforms

Frequency of using social media platforms	1 <sup>st</sup> Position	2 <sup>nd</sup> Position	3 <sup>rd</sup> Position	4 <sup>th</sup> Position
Daily	WhatsApp (51.1%)	Instagram (40.5%)	Facebook (34.2%)	YouTube (10.5%)
Weekly	Facebook (32.2%)	Instagram (35.0%)	WhatsApp (31.5%)	YouTube (12.6%)
Monthly	Facebook (33.6%)	Instagram (24.5%)	WhatsApp (17.5%)	YouTube (11.8%)
Occasionally	Facebook (23.8%)	YouTube (13.9%)		
Never	YouTube (51.0%)			

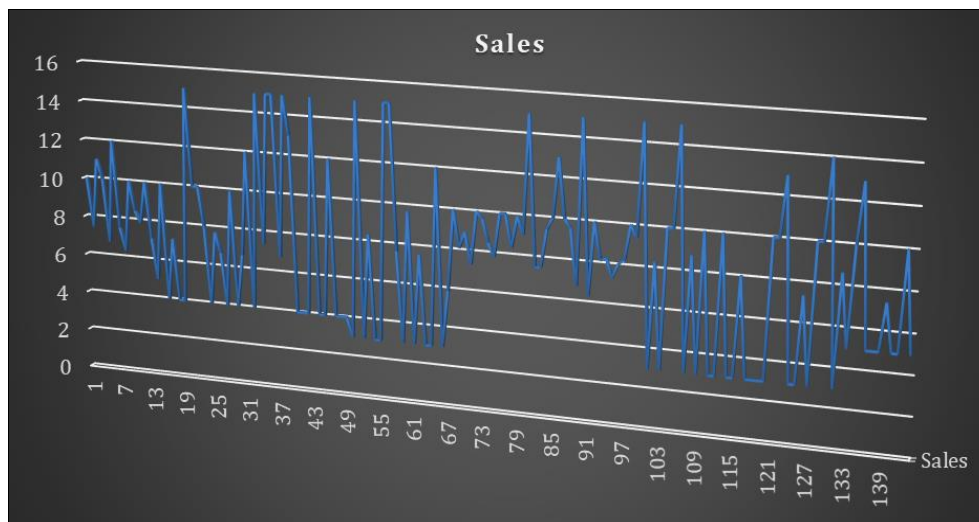
Source: Compiled by the Researcher

### Interpretation

Overall ranking of daily used platforms showed that 51.1% of the respondents use WhatsApp daily followed by Instagram 40.5% and Facebook with 34.2%. And YouTube with only 10.5% Facebook is used by 32.2% of the respondents weekly followed by Instagram with 35.0% and

WhatsApp with 31.5% and YouTube with 12.6%. Facebook is used by 33.6% of the respondents monthly followed by Instagram with 24.5% and WhatsApp with 17.5% and YouTube with 11.8%.

### Increased Sales



**Fig 8:** Visualisation of respondents agreeing to increased sales

### Number of hours using social media for business and sales

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant difference in the in the sales with respect to hours using social media for business.

**Table 3:** ANOVA

Sales*Number of business hours					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1562.818	2	781.409	296.909	.000
Within Groups	368.454	140	2.632		
Total	1931.273	142			

**Source:** Compiled by the Researcher

### Interpretation

There is a significant difference in the in the sales with respect to hours using social media for business.

### Number of years using social media marketing and sales

**H<sub>2</sub>:** There is a significant difference in the in the sales with respect to years of using social media marketing.

**Table 4:** ANOVA

Sales*Number of years					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1535.148	2	767.574	271.279	.000
Within Groups	396.125	140	2.829		
Total	1931.273	142			

**Source:** Compiled by the Researcher

### Interpretation

There is a significant difference in the in the sales with respect to hours using social media for business.

### Sales and its Relation to using Frequency of Facebook

**H<sub>3</sub>:** There is an association between frequency of using Facebook and sales.

**Table 5:** Pearson Correlations of sales and frequency of using Facebook

Pearson Correlations			
Sales	Pearson Correlation	Sales	Facebook
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1	-.918**
	N	143	143
Facebook	Pearson Correlation	-.918**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	143	143

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Source:** Compiled by the Researcher



**Interpretation:** There is an association of frequency of using Facebook with sales.

**Sales and its Relation to using Frequency of Instagram**  
**H4:** There is an association between frequency of using Instagram and sales.

**Table 6:** Pearson Correlations of sales and frequency of using Instagram

Pearson Correlations			
		Sales	Instagram
Sales	Pearson Correlation	1	-.708**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	143	143
Instagram	Pearson Correlation	-.708**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	143	143
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

**Source:** Compiled by the Researcher

**Interpretation:** There is an association of frequency of using Instagram with sales.

**Sales and Its Relation to Using Frequency of WhatsApp**  
**H5:** There is an association between frequency of using Instagram and sales.

**Table 7:** Pearson Correlations of sales and frequency of using WhatsApp

Pearson Correlations			
		Sales	WhatsApp
Sales	Pearson Correlation	1	-.402**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	143	143
WhatsApp	Pearson Correlation	-.402**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	143	143
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

**Source:** Compiled by the Researcher

**Interpretation:** There is an association of frequency of using WhatsApp with sales.

prioritized, with 24.5% responding to comments and messages instantly and another 24.5% within an hour.

## Findings and Discussion

The data analysis provides comprehensive insights into the social media marketing landscape among women entrepreneurs in Guwahati, aligning with the research objectives of examining the current status of social media usage and its effect on sales. Below are the key findings based on the analysis of 215 respondents, of which 143 actively use social media marketing for their businesses.

### Findings of objective 1: Present Status of Social Media Usage by Women Entrepreneurs

The study reveals that 66.5% (143 out of 215) of women entrepreneurs in Guwahati utilize social media marketing for their businesses, indicating a substantial adoption of social media platforms for entrepreneurial activities. Among these users, 58% have been employing social media marketing for 1 to 6 years, suggesting a relatively recent but growing trend in its application. WhatsApp emerges as the most preferred platform, with 51.1% of respondents using it daily and 41.7% ranking it first, followed by Instagram (40.5% daily usage) and Facebook (34.2% daily usage). On the contrary, YouTube is notably underutilized, with 51% of respondents never using it for business purposes, and platforms like Twitter and LinkedIn show no engagement at all. The majority of respondents (54.5%) dedicate 6 to 9 hours daily to social media, reflecting a high level of commitment, while primary activities include sales promotion and sales (79%), audience expansion (61.5%), and customer interaction (55.9%). Timely engagement is

### Findings of objective 2: Effect of Social Media Marketing on Sales

The analysis confirms a significant effect of social media marketing on sales, supporting all proposed hypotheses under Objective 2. For H<sub>1</sub>, ANOVA results ( $F = 296.909$ ,  $\text{Sig.} = .000$ ) indicate a significant difference in sales based on the number of hours spent on social media daily, suggesting that increased time investment increases sales outcomes. Similarly, H<sub>2</sub> is supported ( $F = 271.279$ ,  $\text{Sig.} = .000$ ), showing that the duration (in years) of using social media marketing have significant effect on sales, with longer usage correlating with improved sales. Hypotheses H<sub>3</sub>, H<sub>4</sub>, and H<sub>5</sub>, which explore associations between the frequency of using specific platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp) and sales, are also validated through Pearson correlation analyses. Strong correlations are observed: Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp ( $p = .000$ ), indicating that higher usage frequency on these platforms is associated with sales.

The findings underscore the role of social media marketing in the entrepreneurial ecosystem of women in Guwahati, reflecting both its widespread usage and its effect on business outcomes. The high penetration rate of 66.5% aligns with global trends of digital transformation among small-scale entrepreneurs, particularly women, who leverage accessible and cost-effective platforms to overcome traditional barriers such as limited capital and market reach. The preference for WhatsApp as the leading platform can be attributed to its ease of use, and widespread

adoption in India for both personal and business communication. Its dominance over Instagram and Facebook, which are also widely used, highlights a localized adaptation of social media strategies, possibly driven by WhatsApp's ability to facilitate direct, instant customer interactions—one of the most preferred activities identified in the study (55.9%).

The limited use of YouTube and the complete absence of Twitter and LinkedIn engagement suggest a strategic focus on platforms that offer immediate, tangible benefits like sales and customer outreach, rather than long-term brand-building tools requiring higher investment in content creation or professional networking. This selective adoption may reflect resource constraints or a lack of awareness about the potential of these platforms, warranting further investigation into training and awareness initiatives for women entrepreneurs in Guwahati.

Regarding the effect on sales, the significant influence of time spent ( $H_1$ ) and years of usage ( $H_2$ ) corroborates existing literature that consistent and prolonged engagement with social media enhances market visibility and customer trust, thereby boosting sales. However, the negative correlations found in  $H_3$ ,  $H_4$ , and  $H_5$  present an intriguing paradox. While frequent use of Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp is associated with sales, the inverse relationship suggests that excessive frequency might lead to inefficiencies, such as over-saturation of content or customer fatigue, reducing the effectiveness of marketing efforts. This finding contrasts with studies that often assume a linear positive relationship between usage frequency and sales, indicating a need for an optimal usage threshold specific to this demographic and region.

The substantial daily time investment (6-9 hours for 54.5% of respondents) reflects the labour-intensive nature of social media marketing for these entrepreneurs, who likely manage these activities themselves. This commitment, paired with a focus on sales promotion (79%), underscores the platforms' role as a lifeline for increasing sales, particularly in a competitive urban market like Guwahati. However, the emphasis on immediate sales over brand building (55.9%) or awareness (39.9%) suggests a short-term orientation, which could limit long-term business sustainability a potential area for future intervention.

### Conclusion and Recommendation

Social media marketing is a transformative tool for women entrepreneurs in Guwahati, significantly shaping their business strategies and sales outcomes. This study highlights the pivotal role of social media as a catalyst for women-led businesses, with 66.5% of the 215 respondents embracing it as a core strategy. The reliance on WhatsApp, coupled with high engagement levels and a clear sales impact, highlights its efficacy in this context. Yet, the underutilization of certain platforms and the complex dynamics of usage frequency call for tailored support to maximize the potential of digital marketing, ensuring both immediate gains and long-term growth. The substantial daily investment of 6 to 9 hours by 54.5% of respondent's fuels activities like sales promotion (79%), audience growth (61.5%), and customer engagement (55.9%), mirroring (Sharma & Kumar, 2018)<sup>[28]</sup> observations on social media's power to amplify small business visibility. Statistical evidence further solidifies its sales impact: hours spent ( $H_1$ :  $F = 296.909$ ,  $p = .000$ ) and years of usage ( $H_2$ :  $F = 271.279$ ,

$p = .000$ ) significantly enhance revenue, resonating with (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)<sup>[17]</sup> findings on the benefits of persistent digital engagement. Yet, the negative correlations between usage frequency and sales (Facebook:  $r = -.918$ , Instagram:  $r = -.708$ , WhatsApp:  $r = -.402$ , all  $p = .000$ ) signal a potential drawback of over-reliance, a caution also raised by (Mangold & Faulds, 2009)<sup>[21]</sup> regarding audience saturation. Thus, while social media emerges as a vital enabler for these entrepreneurs, its effectiveness hinges on balancing engagement to optimize both reach and returns, offering a compelling snapshot of digital empowerment tempered by strategic challenges. These insights contribute to understanding the evolving digital landscape for women-led businesses in urban India, offering a foundation for policy and educational initiatives to further empower this group.

To optimize the social media marketing efforts of women entrepreneurs in Guwahati, a multifaceted approach is recommended. First, tailored training programs should be introduced to expand platform usage beyond WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook, focusing on YouTube for visual marketing and LinkedIn for networking, building on (Sharma & Kumar, 2018)<sup>[28]</sup> advocacy for diversified digital strategies. Second, addressing the negative correlation between usage frequency and sales requires workshops to establish optimal posting schedules, preventing inefficiencies noted by (Mangold & Faulds, 2009)<sup>[21]</sup>. Third, given the intensive 6-9-hour daily commitment, affordable automation tools or part-time support should be provided to enhance efficiency, a practical solution supported by (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)<sup>[17]</sup> for resource-constrained entrepreneurs. Fourth, encouraging a shift from short-term sales focus (79%) to long-term brand building, as suggested by the lower emphasis on brand awareness (39.9%), could be facilitated through mentorship on narrative-driven content, aligning with best practices from (Sharma & Kumar, 2018)<sup>[28]</sup>. Finally, local stakeholders, such as government bodies or women's business networks, should create subsidized digital resource centres offering analytics and peer learning, reinforcing community-driven growth as seen in successful models elsewhere (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Further research into the tipping point of usage frequency and its sales impact could refine these strategies, ensuring these entrepreneurs maximize both immediate and sustained benefits from social media.

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