

Why India's most companies are rethinking diversity, inclusion and equity

The article offers a perspective on why inclusion is increasingly becoming a business and growth imperative for the consumer goods sector in India. Overall, it attempts to highlight how inclusive workplaces and diverse representation are no longer just cultural priorities, but strategic business drivers enabling FMCG brands to better decode India's evolving consumer landscape and build long-term relevance in an increasingly diverse and aspiration-led market.

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Highlights

- Inclusion is becoming a key business strategy for India's consumer goods sector.
- Women-led businesses are reshaping the consumer journey across India.
- Brands are moving towards diverse representations beyond traditional stereotypes.



A few years ago, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in India was largely viewed as a "good-to-have" people initiative linked to workplace culture and employer branding. For decades, marketing across categories often relied on broad stereotypes around gender, beauty, family roles and purchasing behaviour.

Today, especially in the consumer goods sector, that thinking is rapidly becoming outdated.

In an industry built around understanding people, aspirations and behaviour, inclusion is an integral long-term business strategy.

India's consumer economy is becoming more fragmented, regional and experience-driven than ever before. The next wave of growth is being driven not just by metro consumers, but by smaller towns, Gen Z buyers, women-led purchasing decisions and increasingly diverse lifestyle preferences across India.

As India aspires to become a \$5,000 per capita economy, significantly higher labour participation, especially among women, will be critical to sustaining growth. For consumer goods companies, this demographic dividend can deliver long-term business and economic value only when complemented

by a strong representation where voices across genders and socio-economic backgrounds meaningfully shape products, marketing and workplace policies.