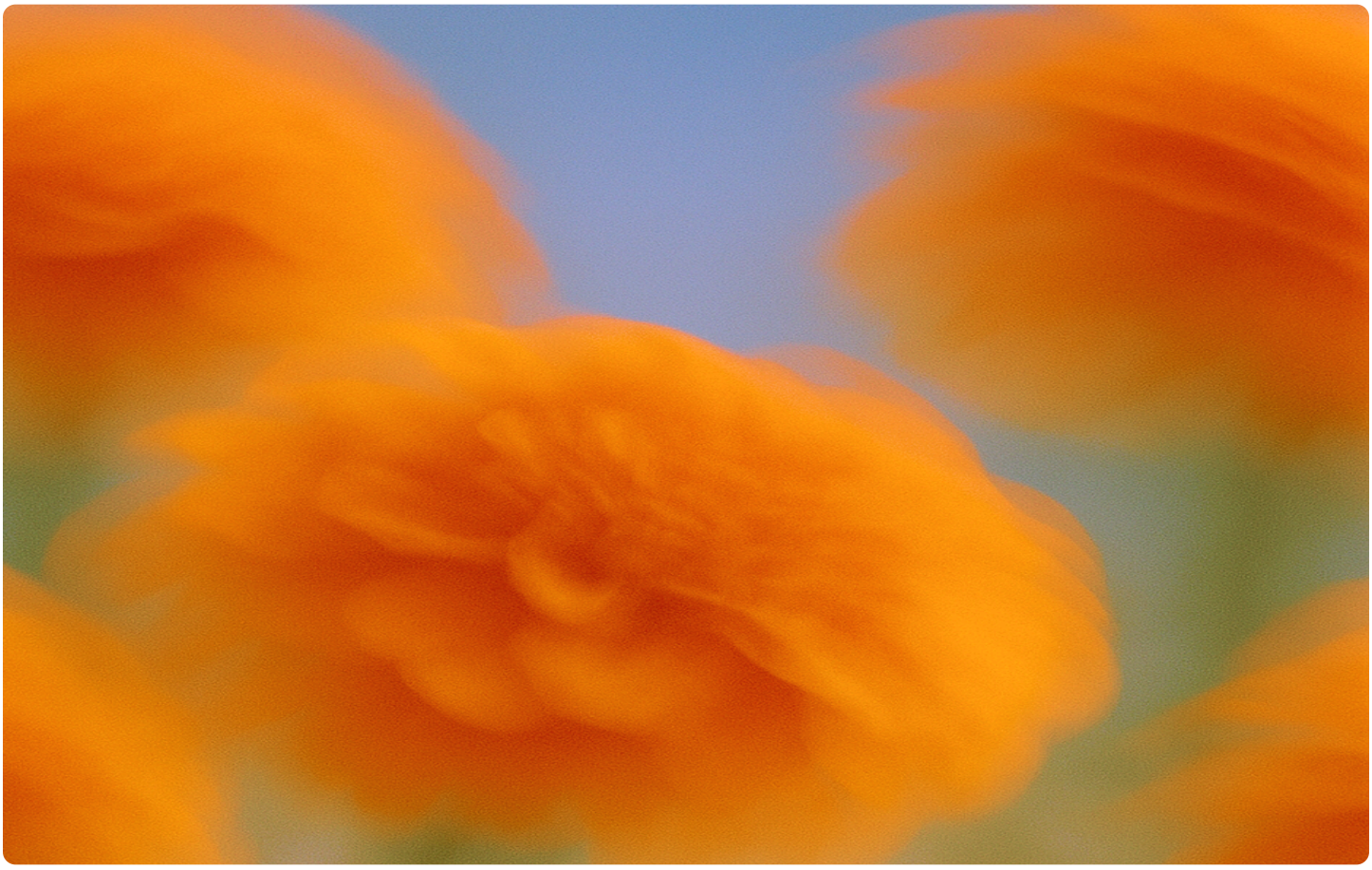
OpenAI

How India uses ChatGPT

Early evidence from OpenAI Signals



Global affairs

February 2026

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Foreword

AI is no longer a distant promise or a niche tool. It's becoming part of the day-to-day fabric of work, learning, and commerce. These changes bring with them a range of new challenges and opportunities. One of my priorities at OpenAI has been improving how policymakers and researchers measure an economy that is evolving faster than our existing statistical systems were built to track. That is why OpenAI is launching Signals: a public data-sharing effort intended to improve the shared fact base on AI diffusion. Signals is designed to complement surveys and official statistics by narrowing the timing gap between real-world adoption and when those shifts show up in traditional measures.

In past technology shifts, we often had years or even decades between early adoption and economy-wide effects becoming visible in official statistics. With AI, that gap is shrinking fast. New capabilities are being deployed continuously, and adoption can scale globally in months. As a result, data on AI diffusion is becoming a necessary input into policy decisions.

Leaders are being asked to make choices about how to invest in workforce training, how to support small businesses, how to educate their populations, and how to protect people from real risks without stymying innovation.

The quality of those choices will depend in part on whether we can answer basic empirical questions with confidence

Where is AI adoption accelerating, and where is it stalling?

Who is using AI tools—students, workers, entrepreneurs—and what are they doing with them?

How does adoption vary across regions and sectors?

Are we seeing early signals of productivity gains, new pathways to opportunity, or emerging points of strain?

OpenAI has the largest consumer user base of any AI tool in the world, with over 800 million users, so Signals provides a widespread and unique look into AI adoption. Most of our users do so for free. This makes Signals an important contribution to economic measurement since other existing views of AI adoption may skew toward enterprise deployments or paid tools, which are important lenses but not a complete picture of how AI is diffusing through the broader population. We believe Signals can be a powerful complement to the other sources currently available.

We are so pleased to be launching Signals in India, the world's largest democracy. India is an essential place to understand broad-based AI adoption and is one of the largest markets of ChatGPT weekly active users. It is also a top five country for API users. It has a vast and diverse population, a young workforce driving economic transformation, and a deep and growing digital ecosystem.

In other words, India is not just adopting AI, it is actively shaping how AI will interact with education systems, labor markets, and public services at scale. The difference between AI widening opportunity and AI reinforcing inequality will depend on decisions made early including around access, training, and trust.

Democratic AI needs democratic evidence

At OpenAI, we want to see AI built on democratic rails so the technology increases human agency rather than concentrating power. In practice, that means protecting people's freedom to choose how they use AI; building safeguards that prevent governments (or any institution) from using AI to amass control; and supporting a marketplace where open, fair competition helps keep power diffuse and benefits broadly shared. A democratic AI ecosystem also requires democratic evidence: timely, interpretable data about how AI is being used in practice.

Signals will be one step toward that. When adoption is moving quickly, the best way to reduce fear and speculation is not to promise certainty, but to publish evidence, track trends, and invite scrutiny. We plan to release Signals to inform public debate and better policy. It is a tool that can support better policy whether by surfacing geographic gaps, tracking whether access for certain groups is widening over time, or showing what topics training would be most useful for.

We hope you'll enjoy this report.

Ronnie Chatterji
Chief Economist

Executive summary

OpenAI Signals is a website with analysis of AI adoption and usage, as well as a public set of privacy-preserving indicators and downloadable, de-identified datasets that help track how AI is being adopted and used in the real world—starting with ChatGPT. It is designed to be a durable measurement layer for the AI era: something policymakers, researchers, and the public can return to regularly to understand what's changing, where, and how fast.

OpenAI Signals is built to answer a straightforward set of public-interest questions: who is using AI and what people are actually doing with it—especially in work and learning. The aim isn't to track individuals but to offer a consistent, aggregated view of how ChatGPT shows up across the economy and everyday life. Right now, this data set only includes consumer usage, not enterprise, so business use is likely understated.

All data is aggregated, released with a time lag, and protected with privacy safeguards including differential privacy techniques. Signals builds on earlier research into ChatGPT usage and extends it into an ongoing public measurement effort.

Looking at India, specifically, we notice a few main trends in the areas that Signals covers

01 India is one of the largest user bases for ChatGPT. Indian users excel in adopting many of OpenAI's more advanced capabilities, particularly in data analysis, coding, and education. This suggests that paying users in India have already closed much of the capability overhang, the gap we see in users getting the full value out of AI's capabilities.

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02 Work-related use of ChatGPT is concentrated in task-oriented categories such as technical help and writing. Users in India are also more likely to ask ChatGPT to do a task, such as draft a document or write code, at work than at home.

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03 India's large and youthful population means young people will disproportionately shape how AI is adopted and used there. ChatGPT usage in India is noticeably younger than the global average—users with declared ages 18–24 now send the largest share of messages—so trends among young Indians will be especially important for understanding AI's impact.

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04 There remains a measurable gender gap in ChatGPT usage in India—as inferred based on prevalence of typically masculine and feminine names—although it is beginning to narrow.

The rest of this report presents these patterns in more detail, starting with how Indians are using ChatGPT and then turning to who is using it.

How Indians are using ChatGPT to innovate

India is one of the largest markets of ChatGPT weekly active users and is a top five country for API users. As a result, understanding how Indians are using ChatGPT is especially important.

India and the capability overhang

Indian users excel in adopting many of OpenAI's more specialized tools and India is above the global median for all measured OpenAI tools except for Voice Mode. In particular, ChatGPT Pro and Plus users in India are about four times above the global median when it comes to using the data analysis tool and about three times above the global median when it comes to using Codex, OpenAI's coding platform.

Similarly, Indian users are nearly 3x above the global median when it comes to asking ChatGPT questions about coding and nearly 2x above when it comes to questions about education and learning. Diving a bit deeper into coding specifically, the intensity of OpenAI tools for coding in India—as measured by how many ChatGPT messages sent by users on Go, Plus, or Pro plans relate to that topic—largely tracks the two hubs of the nation's technology industry. Telangana, home to the city of Hyderabad, and Karnataka, home to the city of Bangalore, rank #1 and #2 respectively in the country in terms of the highest use of OpenAI's coding capabilities. Tamil Nadu ranks third.

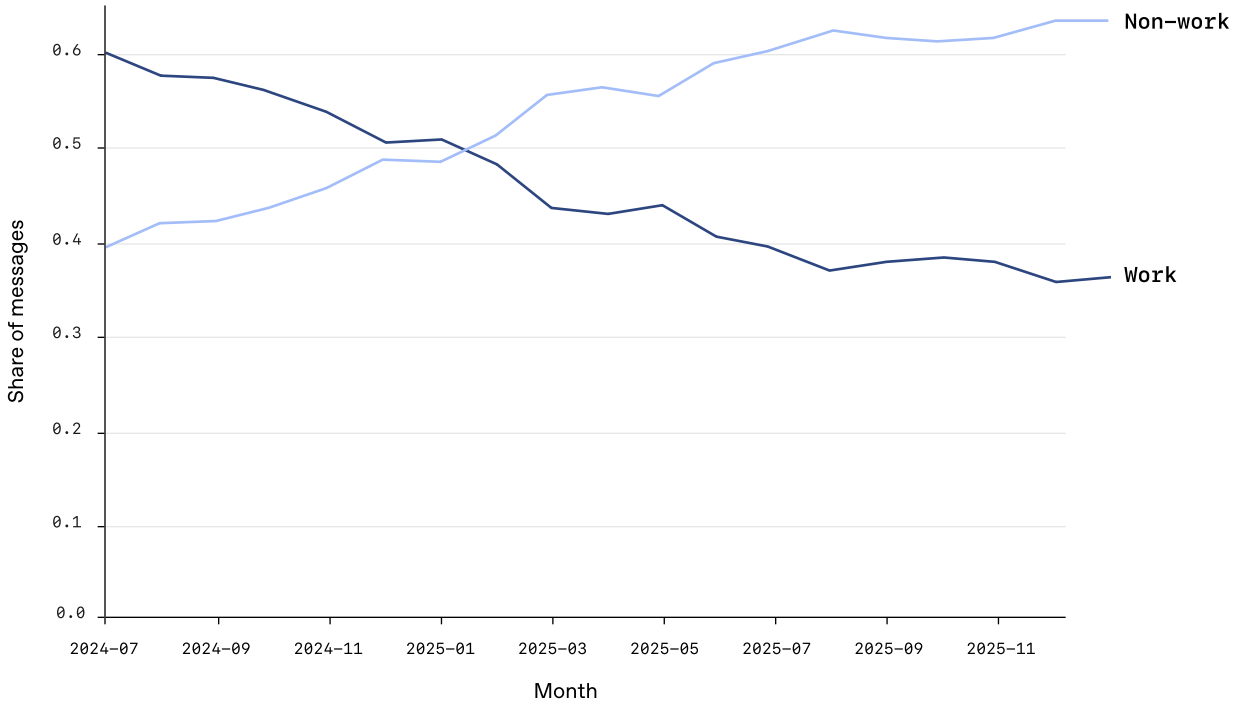
Taken together, these patterns suggest that India's most engaged users are pairing broad adoption with relatively sophisticated use of specialized capabilities—especially in coding- and analysis-adjacent workflows.

Personal and professional use of ChatGPT

Nearly two-thirds of consumer ChatGPT messages in India are classified as non-work related, while slightly more than one-third are related to work. This is a marked shift from how consumer use was distributed in earlier periods of ChatGPT use in India, when work was the dominant use case. It wasn't until early 2025 that there began to be more non-work related messages and that divergence continued throughout the year.

Still, India remains slightly above the global average in terms of the number of work-related messages sent on consumer ChatGPT (does not include enterprise plans). While around 30% of global messages are about work, around 35% of messages in India are.

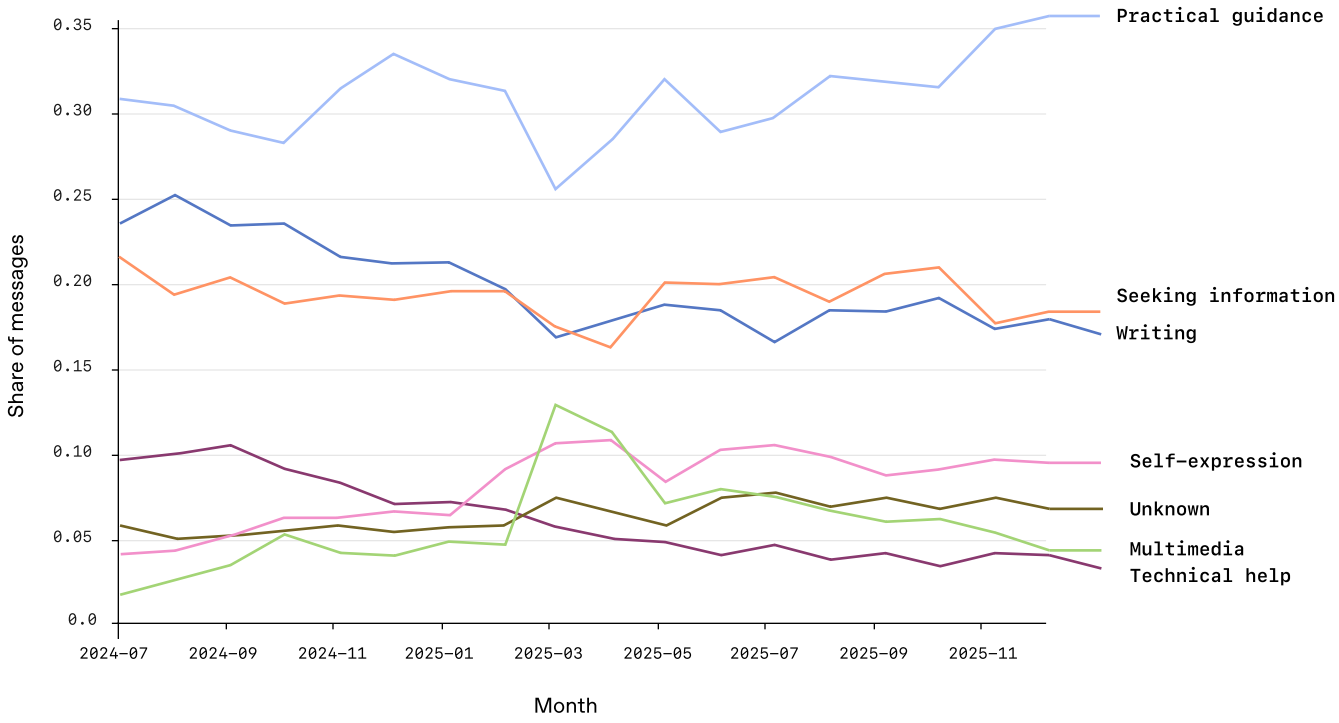
Share of work-related and non-work related consumer ChatGPT messages (India)



How Indians are using ChatGPT to innovate

Within non-work related messages, Indian users are most focused on topics related to learning and getting advice. A little over thirty-five percent of messages relate to practical guidance and roughly twenty percent relate to seeking information. Another substantial share of messages—nearly one-fifth of all non-work messages—are about writing, whether that is drafting, editing, or other similar tasks.

Share of messages by topic (non-work-related, India)

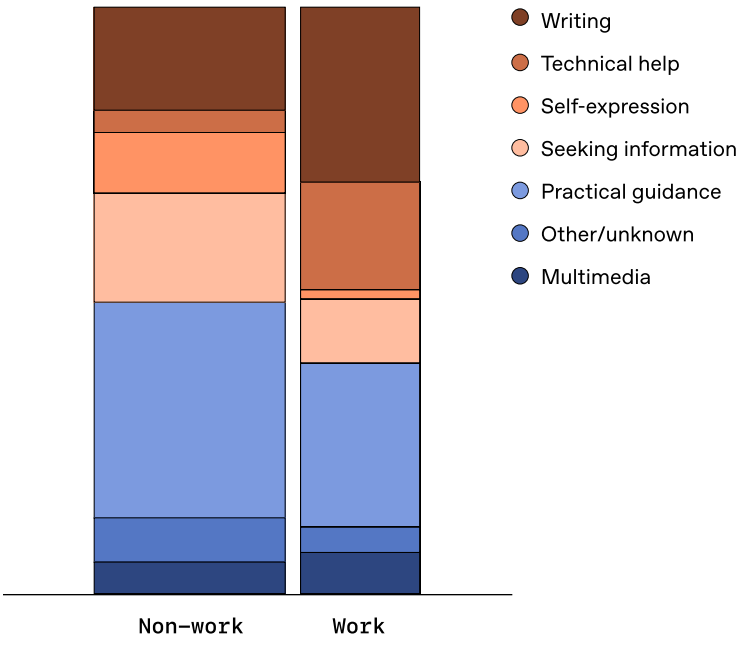


Use of ChatGPT at work

Use of AI at work in India is particularly concentrated around assistance in completing tasks, whether that be writing or technical help. This suggests that Indian workers are turning to AI to help them with drafting and editing, as well as as a copilot for debugging, tooling, and getting unstuck fast.

In contrast, non-work related messages center mainly around self-expression, seeking information, and practical guidance are mostly non-work related, suggesting that in their personal lives, Indians turn to AI to help with learning, everyday Q&A, search, and life logistics among other topics.

Share of topics by work-related status in consumer ChatGPT data (India, November 2025)



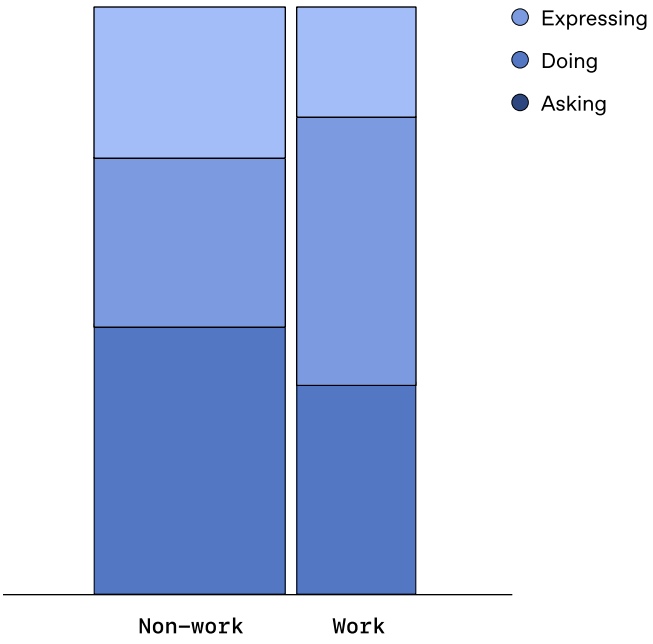
How Indians are using ChatGPT to innovate

Like other users around the world, ChatGPT users in India are more likely to prompt ChatGPT to do something for them rather than ask a question when they are using AI for work-related tasks.

Work-related conversations contain a higher share of “doing” behavior such as drafting, transforming, or completing tasks—around 45% of all conversations—than non-work conversations. Non-work conversations, in contrast, include a larger “expressing” component making up around 25% of conversations.

This suggests that at the office more than at home, users want help automating or executing tasks, rather than augmenting their learning or using AI for exploration, personal expression, and open-ended dialogue. When work use shifts from “asking” to “doing,” new policy and workforce training questions arise about capabilities and the effect of AI on the labor market.

Share of asking/doing/expressing messages by work-related status in consumer ChatGPT data (India, November 2025)



Who is using ChatGPT

Looking at demographic data on *who* is using AI can help illuminate how different groups are adopting and using AI, and where its impact may be most concentrated. Looking at the demographics of ChatGPT users in India reveals meaningful differences in who is engaging with the product and how they are using it.

Usage by age

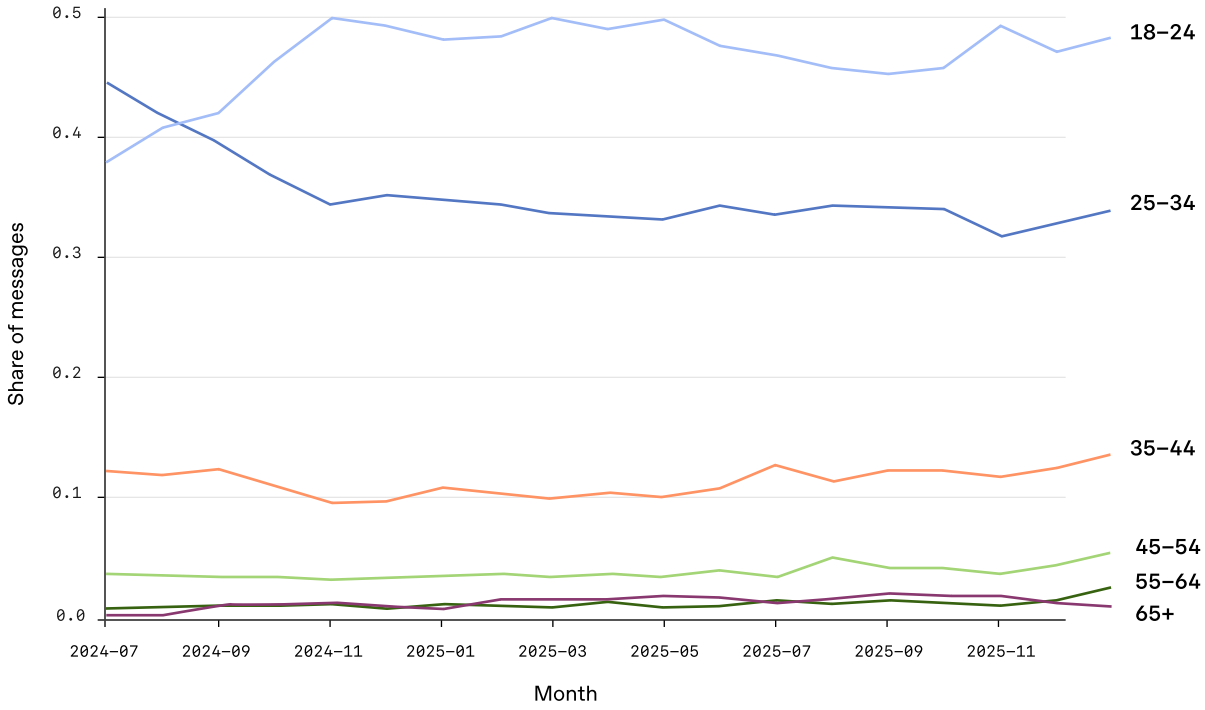
As part of the largest youth population in the world, young Indian ChatGPT users will play an outsized role in shaping the future of AI and understanding their behavior is especially important. ChatGPT usage in India skews toward younger users. In mid-2024, users with declared ages between the ages of 18 and 24 surpassed users with declared ages 25-34 as the group sending the largest share of messages on ChatGPT [1]. And they have maintained that position ever since. Currently, messages sent by users aged 18-24 make up just under half of all messages on ChatGPT in the country. This significantly exceeds the global share of messages sent by users 18-24 (about one-third), but is broadly consistent with those under the age of 25 making up 40% of India's population.

Combined, messages sent by users aged 18-34 represent about 80% of the total consumer ChatGPT messages currently sent in India. A youth-skewed user base amplifies the importance of education-related and early-career use cases and may also reflect that younger cohorts adopt new digital tools earlier. Understanding who is using AI first helps target training, guidance, and safe-use norms where they will have the largest near-term impact.

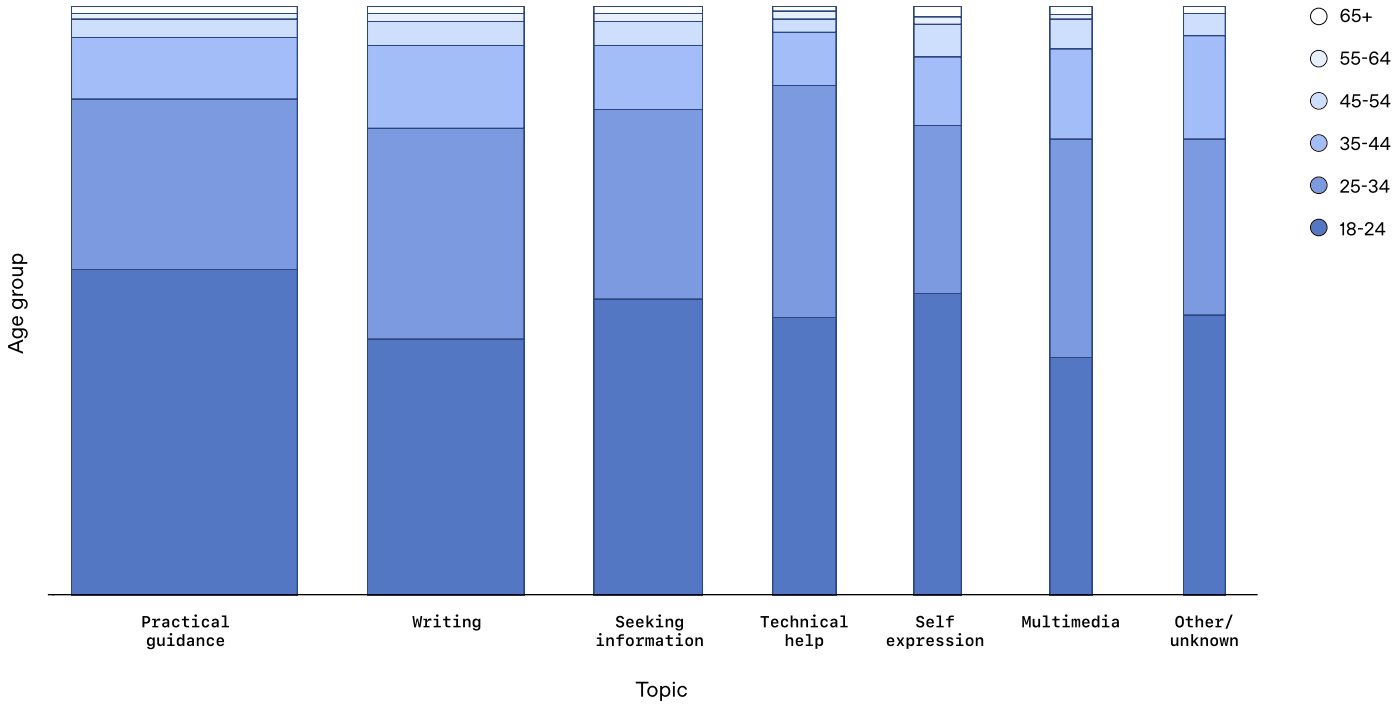
Users of different ages also use ChatGPT differently in India. Users with declared ages between 18-24 make up close to a majority of all messages related to asking for practical guidance, seeking technical help, and self-expression. Meanwhile, users with declared ages between 24-34 send a slightly larger share of messages related to multimedia and technical help than their share among overall usage would suggest.

1. Throughout this report, all analysis of age uses only users' self-declared ages.

Share of messages by age group (India)



Share of messages by age group and topic (India, November 2025)

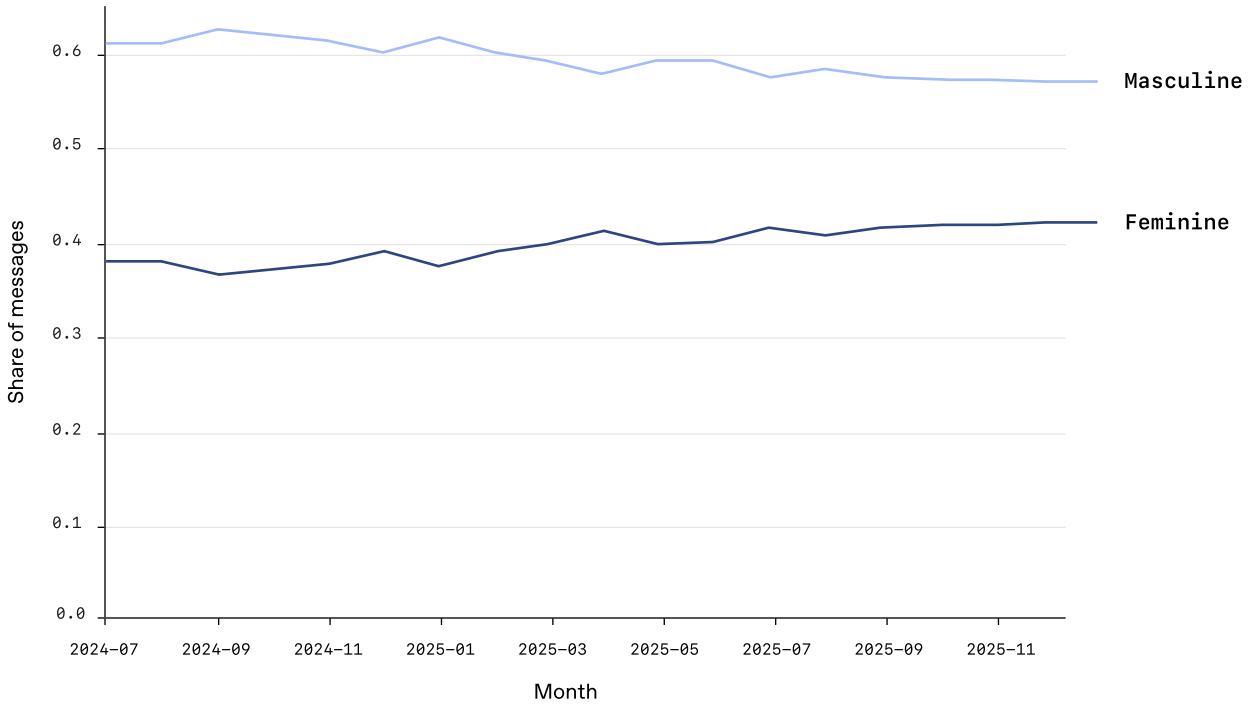


Adoption from users with typically feminine and masculine names

Adoption in India skews more towards users with typically masculine names than usage globally. OpenAI does not collect users' genders, but we seek to infer likely patterns of gender use based on whether users' names are typically feminine or masculine [2]. In India, we see that a little less than 60% of users have a typically masculine name and a little over 40% have a typically feminine name. That gap, however, has been closing over the past year.

In contrast, among OpenAI users around the world, users with typically feminine names make up a little more than half of all messages. This is a fairly recent transition, however, as it was only in the summer of 2025 that messages from users with typically masculine names began to outpace those from users with typically masculine names.

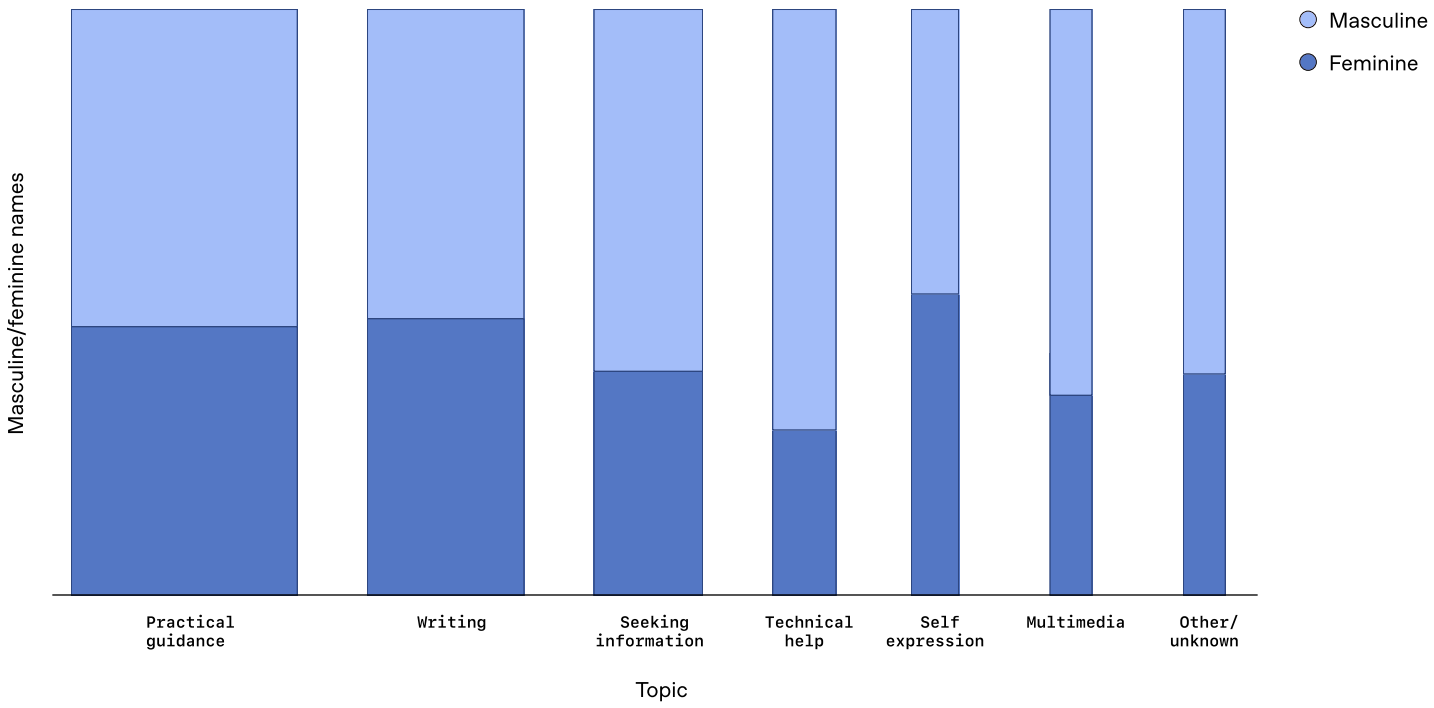
Share of messages by likely masculine/feminine names (India)



2. We analyze weekly active users by typically masculine and typically feminine first names. First names are classified as typically masculine or typically feminine using public aggregated datasets of name-gender associations. In particular, in India we use the naampy dataset. The chart below excludes instances where the gender is unknown or uncertain.

There are also some differences in the topics that different types of users search for in India. In particular, users with typically feminine names are most likely to send messages in the categories of self-expression, practical guidance, and writing. In contrast, users with typically masculine names are more likely to send messages regarding seeking information or technical help.

Share of messages by likely masculine/feminine names (India, November 2025)



How this fits into India's overall AI innovation

The strong use of ChatGPT in India is consistent with the country's overall strength in AI. India has been an especially large adopter of AI in enterprises. In particular, India ranks second globally in AI skills penetration and has experienced one of the fastest AI talent growth rates globally. AI use in the country has also continued to grow.

India has also been a contributor to AI research, playing an important role in open-source AI development and accounting for 9.2% of global AI publications in computer science in 2023. As the country continues to invest in AI data centers and building out digital public infrastructure to integrate data-sets and resources from across the nation, there will be new opportunities for advances in AI.

Conclusion

AI is reshaping how the Indian population works, learns, and explores. Policy and public debate about AI's impact in the world's largest democracy should be grounded in credible, easily available evidence. OpenAI Signals will help support that goal with regular updates, transparent methods, and strong privacy protections including differential privacy. We hope you will use Signals and find it a valuable tool to inform your work and understanding of AI.