

## Social Media as a Medium for Empowerment of Women

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### ABSTRACT

Women empowerment is very important for the development of a country. Women are offering their services in every sector of a economy. The role of social media has become very important in shaping present society. Social media educates the people about the current issues and influences the public opinion. The reach of media to common people has increased and undoubtedly social media has attained the role of a very powerful organ in all spears of life. It's a common belief that women are network savvy; entrepreneurs are able to reach the larger target customers in low cost. Social media entrepreneurship has definitely offered financial independence and sense of pride and purpose. Social media is helping the women to empower themselves by using different tools of media. They increase the participation and access of women to self expression and decision making through the media and new technologies of communication is empowering the women. On the other hand the influence of social media in buying decision of consumers has been very significant. The interface between producers / sellers and customers of goods and services increases and helps to strengthen the decision making power of customers.

The present study is wholly presented by women respondents who are engaged in online business as the study aims to find out their participation in social media for women entrepreneurial ventures. Present paper aimed to study the status of women, their demographic characteristics, businesses they have started, nature of their businesses and usage of social media in business and growth therein due to strong network. In the present study both primary and secondary data has been used.

**KEYWORDS:** Social Media, Women Entrepreneurs, Women empowerment

### INTRODUCTION

Social media is one of the powerful emerging tools across the globe. India is experiencing a rapid growth in the ICT sector since 1990's and expanded since 2000. The use of social networking sites like Face book Twitter, LinkedIn has become one of popular ways of socializing. These social networking sites not only pave a way for communicating across the globe but they have played a major role in empowering women. Out of the total population in India, women contribute 50% of it. In this modern Era, women in India are shining in many sectors of the economy. Many of the women are holding higher positions in the offices and positions of the president, Prime minister, speaker of Lok Sabha, as an entrepreneur. India as a nation is moving forward with great success and it can't ignore the women empowerment. The developing technology directly impacts women's development in every spear of the walk. Internet is empowering Indian women with easy access to information and helping them to access more and more updates and make decisions in their daily life. The use of social media is helping the women to start small businesses and expand their networking.

Communication is extremely important for marketing of goods and services. Growth of women education and their entry into employment has contributed to the growth of media. Social media has an important role to play-to create awakening in women to achieve their potential as the prime movers of change in society.

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### Objectives:

1. To examine the growing significance of social media and women empowerment in Sangli.
2. To determine the demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of age, marital status and level of education;
3. To study whether women are facing problems in using social media in their business?..
4. To give suggestions to improve their business through social media.

### Research Methodology

#### Research Design:

In this research, quantitative methodology was used to collect and analyze the data obtained from the respondents who have started their venture. The researchers developed the questionnaire and finalized it before being distributed to the selected respondents.

### Population and Sampling:

The overall total of respondents for this research was 50 women entrepreneurs from different areas of Sangli-Miraj-Kupwad corporation area in Sangli, Maharashtra. The questionnaire was randomly distributed to the respondents who are women entrepreneurs. They are connecting their customers through social media either selling their products online or rendering services in selected area.

**Instruments:**

A survey questionnaire includes different opinions regarding the usage of social media for marketing the products and services was used as the main instrument in this study to analyze the effectiveness of social media in widening the network and expanding the existing business. A total of 50 questionnaires were distributed where all respondents were asked to read the statements given and choose their answers based on 2 points scale ie Agree or Disagree. The questionnaires consisted demographic background of the selected respondents, respondents perception and the elements of effectiveness of usage of social media for effective venturing and marketing the products and services.

**Home Minister Website/ App:**

Zee Marathi has offered a networking platform for women entrepreneurs. It has launched website and mobile app with an annual subscription of Rs 500 for 3Ps like small home businesses, Rs 1000 for small scale businesses. This app is operated by Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd. The Home Minister website /app is web-based online service listing

portals which help the women to sell their products and services to widespread buyers. It has made available the services for small beginners for their personal use. Here the only condition is that the user must be major ie of the age 18 who is required to provide current, accurate identification, contact, other information that may be required as part of the registration process and continued use of service. The responsibility of maintaining confidentiality of the service, password and account lies on member himself/herself. The Company reserves the right to refuse Service to anyone at any time without notice for any reason. Once the member accepted the terms and conditions of the contract, the member have to follow website guidelines and comply with all local, state, national and international laws, rules and regulations. Violation of any of the foregoing may result in immediate termination of the Agreement and the member has to face state and federal penalties and other legal consequences. The member can cancel the use of the Services and/or terminate the Agreement with or without cause at any time by providing notice to Company.

**Data Analysis and interpretation:****Table 1. Demographic background of respondents**

Factors	Frequency	(%)
<b>Age Groups</b>		
18-25 years	32	64%
26 – 35 years	10	20%
Above 35 years	08	16%
<b>Business Experience</b>		
<1 year	20	40 %
1-2 years	12	24%
2-5 ears	15	30%
>5 years	3	6%
<b>Academic Qualification</b>		
Up to 10 <sup>th</sup> standard	4	8%
12 <sup>th</sup> Pass	5	10%
Diploma	6	12%
Degree	28	56%
Master	7	14%
<b>Nature of Business</b>		
Classes , workshops, Academics	9	18%
Event Management and wedding services	3	6%
Health and Nutrition	4	8%
Women accessories and dresses	14	28%
Food items, pickles, powders,	13	26%
Other products & services	7	14%

From the overall population (n=50), 64% respondents are leing in the age group of 18-25, flowed by 20% in the age category of 26-35 and only few respondents are aging above 35 with 8% . Social media has brought the age criteria down as technology learning starts happening at a very early age among the generation.

Among all the selected respondents based on business experience, most of the respondents have less than one year business experience with 40% followed by 2-5 years of experience with 30%. There are only 6% respondents who are running their business more than 5 years. From the overall population based on academic qualification, most of the respondents come with degree qualification with 56%, followed by master degree with 14%), then diploma qualification with 12% and respondents with education up to 12<sup>th</sup> standard are with 18%.

From the overall population based on their ventures and nature of business, most of the respondents are dealing with women accessories and women ethnic garments, dresses etc. They are posting the pictures of new arrivals on face book page or whats app groups. Followed by women accessories, 26% respondents are dealing with food items, pickles and masala powders etc. 18% respondents are advertising about their classes, workshops and skill development training programmes through face book and whatsapp.

**Table 2: Opinion of respondents about social media as a medium of development**

Particulars		Frequency	%
1.	I use to market my products through social media	50	100 %
2.	I have face book page for interaction with customers	28	56%
3.	I have my own webpage/ website	03	06%
4.	I use to form what's app groups for marketing the products	40	80%
5.	I have registered my business on Home Minister	10	20%
6.	I use to update the information, sharing the links	18	36%
7.	I get motivated from my family members	28	56%
8.	My business transactions have speeded up	40	80%
9.	I am willing to develop my business	43	86%
10.	I face technical difficulties in online venturing	18	36%
11.	I keep aware about my online business to my family members	30	60%
12.	I would not achieve the present status of business without the use of social media	32	64%

All the selected respondents are using social media to market their products and services Considering the usage of different social media in their business, most of the respondents are using whats app groups to increase the network of the customers with 80%, 56% respondents responded that creating a face book page and interacting with their clients, helping them to expand their customer base. 6% respondents have web page or a blog as a space for their online business.

Out of the total respondents, only 20% respondents have registered their businesses on Home Minister app. Many of the respondents have not registered because they feel that social media is working well to market their products and they don't need to register online. The reason might be the membership fees of registering their business and abiding with rules and regulations of the online registration. It shows that whats App is the popular social media to post their new arrivals, new products for their customers without incurring any cost.

The presence of social media is helping the women entrepreneurs in strengthening their network. In absence of social media, these women would wait for any exhibition to sell their products. Social media is helping them to reach their customers without much cost. 64% respondents are sure that they would not progress or ventured into online business in the absence of social media. It should be appreciated that 56% of respondents have been encouraged by their family members to carry on such entrepreneurial venture. It is encouraging to note that 86% of the women online users are willing to develop and expand their existing business. 36% respondents have faced technical difficulties which they overcome with the help of their family members.

#### Conclusion:

Social media is becoming an integral part of many people's life. Today's modern women entrepreneurs are productively using social media in their venture. Social media has become a boon for women who are unable to pursue a fulltime career. Due to their family responsibilities, they can't seek the full time job as a career. But they can do their business in a leisure time apart from their homely chores. Creative and career oriented women with business mind have started exploring business avenues through social media. The present research made it clear that social media has begun

as a very strong platform. It is the most widely used tool to market their products and services It is also clear that business transactions of these women have become speeded up ad are more cost effective. Technological advancement has really given them an edge over their other counterparts who might possess the skills but are not able to bring effectiveness due to lack of technological expertise. Through the social media, women entrepreneurs are updating their events/exhibitions, information about new products and services, sharing the links and facilitating their customers in many ways. Finally it can be concluded that with the help of social media, women entrepreneurs can better manage their work life balance and handle their family business more effectively.

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