

The Role of Social Media in Shaping Women's Entrepreneurial Success

Discipline: Commerce

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Abstract

Social media has emerged as a transformative tool in fostering women's empowerment and entrepreneurship. For women entrepreneurs, these social media platforms offer unique opportunities to overcome traditional barriers to entry, enhance visibility, and build strong networks. This research article explores the interplay between social media and women empowerment, focusing on how social media platforms can enhance entrepreneurial skills among women. Through a review of existing literature and case studies, the paper investigates how social media can be leveraged to support women entrepreneurs, identify best practices, and address the challenges they face. This research aims to explore the intersection of social media and women entrepreneurship, assessing the impact of social media tools on business outcomes and identifying strategies that have proven effective for female entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Social media Networks, Women Entrepreneurs, Women empowerment

Introduction

Social media's ascent has changed the face of enterprise, presenting entrepreneurs with both new opportunities and difficulties. Social media can be a very useful tool for female entrepreneurs to connect with clients, increase awareness, and develop a brand. Even while social media is becoming more widely acknowledged as a potent instrument for business expansion, women-owned enterprises continue to face considerable obstacles when it comes to efficiently utilizing these channels. Even while social media marketing can greatly help women entrepreneurs by giving them access to international markets, encouraging community involvement, and increasing brand awareness, gender-specific obstacles like time limits, resource limitations, and gender biases still exist. Kerala, a state renowned for its advanced socioeconomic indices and

high educational attainment, has seen a rise in the number of women pursuing entrepreneurial endeavours. These entrepreneurs now use social media as a vital tool that helps them break through conventional barriers and succeed in their businesses. With an emphasis on how social media platforms have changed their business methods and results, this study explores the effects of social media on women entrepreneurs in Kerala.

Objectives

- To understand how social media enhances or limits the visibility of women-led businesses and the potential for reaching broader audiences.
- To examine how social media networks contribute to the growth of women-owned businesses.
- To identify the barriers and challenges women entrepreneurs when using social media.

Review of Literature

- Menon, R., & Varma, A. (2018). Digital empowerment of women entrepreneurs: A case study from Kerala. *Asian Journal of Business and Management*, 6(1), 45-60. <https://doi.org/10.36941/ajbm-2018-0013>. This study demonstrates how social media in particular has given women entrepreneurs in Kerala more influence thanks to digital tools. It emphasizes how important digital platforms are for increasing awareness, expanding markets, and offering training in entrepreneurship.
- Kumar, M., & Jose, M. (2021). Women entrepreneurs in Kerala: A study of social media impact. *Journal of South Asian Development*, 16(2), 153-170. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09731741211020769>. Kumar and Jose (2021) examine how social media affects Kerala women entrepreneurs' commercial endeavors. According to their findings, social media plays a major role in brand establishment, client engagement, and business growth.
- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59-68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003>. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) talk about the overall difficulties and chances that social media present for companies. Their observations are essential to comprehending how Kerala's female businesses use these channels for exposure and promotion.
- Singh, M., & Shukla, S. (2019). Social media as a marketing tool: A study of women-led businesses in South India. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 11(2), 22-35. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijms.v11n2p22>. This study investigates the

use of social media for marketing by women-owned companies in Kerala and other parts of South India. It offers insightful information on the tactics used and the subsequent business results.

- Brush, C. G., de Bruin, A., & Welter, F. (2009). A gender-aware framework for women's entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 1(1), 8-24. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17566260910942318>. The paradigm provided by Brush, de Bruin, and Welter (2009) takes into account the part that social networks play in women's entrepreneurship. Understanding how social media networks support the success of Keralan women entrepreneurs may be done with the help of this framework.
- Jha, S., & Singh, V. (2020). The impact of online social networks on the entrepreneurial success of women in Kerala. *South Asian Journal of Business and Management Cases*, 9(2), 183-197. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2277977919862754>. This study looks at the relationship between women's entrepreneurial success in Kerala and online social networks, highlighting the value of community development and network assistance.
- Ravi, S., & Suresh, S. (2022). Social media and its challenges for women entrepreneurs in Kerala: A critical review. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, 18(3), 67-81. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09727162221112145>. Ravi and Suresh (2022) investigate the difficulties Keralan women business owners encounter when utilizing social media. They pinpoint problems that impede the success of entrepreneurs, such as gaps in digital literacy and online abuse.
- Choudhury, P., & Dey, S. (2021). Barriers to social media usage among women entrepreneurs in Kerala. *Journal of Business Research*, 12(4), 112-126. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbr.2021.02.014>. This paper discusses barriers such as lack of access, technical skills, and support systems that affect the effective use of social media among women entrepreneurs in Kerala.
- George, M., & Thomas, K. (2020). The economic impact of social media on small businesses: Evidence from Kerala. *Asian Economic and Financial Review*, 10(6), 731-745. <https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.aefr.2020.106.731.745>. George and Thomas (2020) provide an analysis of the economic benefits that social media brings to small businesses in Kerala, with a particular focus on women entrepreneurs.
- Nair, P., & Sharma, R. (2019). Social media and entrepreneurial performance: A case study of women-led startups in Kerala. *International Journal of Business and Management Studies*, 11(1), 45-59. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3432589>.

This study examines the relationship between social media use and the success of women-led companies in Kerala, emphasizing the beneficial effects on metrics related to growth and success.

Statement of the Problem

Even though social media is increasingly acknowledged as a game-changing instrument for entrepreneurship, little is known about how it particularly affects women entrepreneurs. Kerala, a South Indian state renowned for its progressive social metrics, has seen a rise in the use of social media by women to grow their enterprises. But the ways in which social media affects their entrepreneurial success—which includes things like economic performance, consumer involvement, brand development, and market reach—remain incompletely understood. According to research, social media can improve exposure, make networking easier, and offer crucial marketing tools. However, there are drawbacks such as disparities in digital literacy, harassment online, and restricted access to technology that could limit its usefulness. The body of research on social media's overall effects on business is now available, but it frequently falls short of providing a detailed examination of how social media influences women's entrepreneurial outcomes.

The study will focus specifically on the state of Kerala, India. Kerala was chosen due to its unique socio-economic environment, including a high literacy rate and increasing digital penetration, which offers a relevant context for examining the impact of social media on women entrepreneurs. The scope will cover major social media platforms widely used by entrepreneurs, such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, and Twitter. These platforms are selected due to their relevance in business marketing, customer engagement, and networking.

Understanding these aspects is crucial for developing strategies to support and enhance the entrepreneurial success of women in Kerala through targeted social media use, policy interventions, and community support. This research will fill the existing gap by providing a detailed analysis of social media's role and implications, thereby contributing to more effective support mechanisms for women entrepreneurs in the region.

Methodology

A qualitative research approach was employed to explore the role of social media in shaping the success of women entrepreneurs in Kerala. Data was collected through interviews with 5 selected women entrepreneurs and analysis of their social media presence and business performance metrics.

Case Studies

1. Case Study 1: Sreelatha's Tiara Naturals

Background: Mrs Sreelatha an optometrist by profession, based in Alappuzha, founded a herbal skin care products brand. She utilized Whatsapp, Instagram and Facebook to promote her products and connect with potential customers. Recently she also started to make and sell terrariums under her brand.

Social Media Strategies:

- Visual Branding: Regular posts featuring product images and brand stories.
- Community Engagement: Active interaction with followers through live sessions and feedback polls.
- Customer Interaction: Engaging with customers through comments and feedback forms
- Exhibitions : she participated a lots of exhibitions to promote her products
- Outcomes: Mrs Sreelatha become a successful entrepreneur within a year, leveraging social media to build a community of environmentally conscious consumers and expand her market reach.

2. Case Study 2: Akhila Vijayan's Varnapushpam

Background: Mrs Akhila Vijayan a housewife make her hobby to a new business named Varnapushpam. She is very good in making flowers with foam papers and the products she makes look like original flowers. She make home decors and hair accessories with these flowers. She utilized Whatsapp, Instagram and Facebook to promote her products and connect with potential customers.

Social Media Strategies:

- Visual Branding: Regular posts featuring product images and brand stories.
- Community Engagement: Active interaction with followers through live sessions and feedback polls.
- Direct Sales: Managing orders and customer queries through WhatsApp and all other social media platforms.
- Customer Interaction: Engaging with customers through comments and feedback forms.

3. Case Study 3: Anitha's Haritha Floor Mats

Background: Anitha a middle aged house wife from Trivandrum, used Whatsapp and Facebook to showcase her handcrafted floor mats. She also participates in various exhibitions in her locality.

Social Media Strategies:

- Direct Sales: Managing orders and customer queries through WhatsApp.
- Community Engagement: Active interaction with followers through and feedback.

Outcomes: Anitha's customer base increased by 75%, with social media facilitating direct communication.

4. Case Study 4: Anakha's Baksters Queen

Background: Anakha a passionate baker starts customised cake baking business and uses Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp to engage with local customers and promote her produce.

Social Media Strategies:

- Direct Sales: Managing orders and customer queries through WhatsApp.
- Content Sharing: Posting updates about baking in social media.
- Customer Interaction: Engaging with customers through comments and feedback forms.

Outcomes: Anakha's customer base increased by 175%, with social media facilitating direct communication and streamlined order processes.

5. Case Study 5: Drisya's Dhruvam

Background: Mrs Drisya a teacher by profession, used Whatsapp, Facebook Instagram and Pinterest to showcase her handcrafted jewelry and hair accessories.

Social Media Strategies:

- Visual Marketing: High-quality images and videos of jewelry pieces.
- Influencer Partnerships: Collaborations with fashion influencers to boost visibility.
- Engagement Campaigns: Running contests and giveaways to enhance follower engagement.

Outcomes: Drisya succeed in online sales and expanded her customer base beyond Kerala, thanks to effective visual marketing and brand promotion on social media.

These case studies demonstrate that social media is a valuable tool for women entrepreneurs in Kerala. It offers significant benefits, including enhanced brand visibility, customer engagement, and cost-effective marketing. However, challenges such as maintaining content quality and managing time effectively must be addressed to maximize the potential of social media.

Best Practices for Women Entrepreneurs in Kerala

1. **Leverage Visual Content:** Use high-quality images and videos to attract and retain customers on platforms like Instagram and Pinterest.
2. **Engage Actively:** Maintain regular interaction with followers through comments, messages, and live sessions.
3. **Utilize Local Influencers:** Collaborate with local influencers to increase brand credibility and reach.
4. **Monitor Analytics:** Track social media metrics to understand what works and make data-driven adjustments.
5. **Stay Updated:** Keep up with social media trends and platform updates to utilize new features effectively.

Conclusion

Social media has a profound and evolving impact on how women succeed as entrepreneurs. Kerala, known for its high literacy rates and robust digital infrastructure, provides an enabling environment where women can harness social media platforms to elevate their businesses effectively. Social media has significantly enhanced the visibility and market reach of women-led enterprises in Kerala. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp are extensively utilized by women entrepreneurs to showcase their products and services, connect with a broader customer base, and engage in real-time interactions. This digital presence not only facilitates brand recognition but also opens avenues for accessing diverse markets beyond local confines. The unique cultural and social fabric of Kerala, with its high literacy rate and progressive stance on women's education, has further facilitated the adoption of social media among women entrepreneurs. These platforms offer them the tools to market their products, engage with customers, and build supportive networks that are instrumental in overcoming the challenges of scaling their businesses. Social media also plays a significant role in fostering communities where women can share experiences, seek mentorship, and collaborate on ventures, thereby enhancing their business prospects.

In conclusion, social media has become a pivotal element in the entrepreneurial journeys of women in Kerala, enabling them to break through conventional limitations

and achieve success. To maximize the benefits, there is a need for targeted support, digital literacy programs, and initiatives that address the specific challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in the region. With the right strategies and support systems in place, social media can continue to empower women entrepreneurs in Kerala, contributing to the state's economic growth and social progress.

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