

Udhayasankar M



RISE OF **ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

EXPLORING INNOVATION,
INCLUSION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Volume 2



Rise of Entrepreneurship:
Exploring Innovation, Inclusion
and Partnerships
(Volume 2)

Udhayasankar M.



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IMPACT OF DIGITAL PLATFORMS AND E-COMMERCE ON WOMEN-LED ENTERPRISES

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ABSTRACT:

The rise of digital platforms and e-commerce has transformed business practices, offering new opportunities for women entrepreneurs to expand their enterprises. This study focuses on women-led enterprises and examines how digital platforms support business growth, market access, and customer engagement. A descriptive research design was adopted, and data was collected from 100 women entrepreneurs through a structured questionnaire. Percentage analysis, Chi-square test, and ranking method were used for analysis. The findings reveal that digital platforms enhance visibility, increase sales, and reduce operational barriers. However, challenges such as digital literacy, competition, and technological issues remain. The study suggests that providing training, financial support, and government initiatives can further empower women entrepreneurs to fully utilize digital platforms.

Keywords: Women entrepreneurs, Digital platforms, E-commerce, Business growth, Challenges, etc.

1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technologies and the rise of e-commerce platforms have significantly transformed the global business landscape. In India, platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, Meesho, and social media marketplaces like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp have opened new avenues for entrepreneurs to access larger customer bases at lower costs. For women entrepreneurs, who often face gender-specific challenges such as limited access to capital, restricted mobility, and social barriers, digital platforms present a unique opportunity to overcome traditional constraints.

Women-led enterprises play a vital role in economic growth, poverty alleviation, and employment generation. However, many of these enterprises, particularly those in rural and semi-urban areas, remain small-scale and face difficulties in scaling up due to lack of resources, inadequate exposure, and limited networking opportunities. Digital platforms and e-commerce act as enablers by providing market visibility, flexible working options, and tools for customer engagement that can empower women entrepreneurs to compete in both domestic and global markets.

At the same time, the digital shift brings its own challenges. Many women entrepreneurs encounter barriers such as low digital literacy, insufficient training in online business operations, unreliable internet connectivity, and lack of trust in digital payment systems. Moreover, issues related to logistics, platform charges, online competition, and customer service management further complicate their entrepreneurial

journey. These challenges highlight the need to understand not only the positive impact of digital platforms but also the limitations that prevent women entrepreneurs from fully benefiting from them.

2. Review of Literature

Several studies in India have examined the role of digital platforms and e-commerce in supporting women-led enterprises. Kumari (2019) highlighted that e-commerce provides flexible work opportunities and reduces entry barriers for women, especially homemakers, by enabling business operations from home. Gupta and Bansal (2020) emphasized that while digital platforms expand market reach, women entrepreneurs face challenges such as low digital literacy, cyber fraud concerns, and logistics issues. Sinha (2021), in a case study on Meesho, revealed how social commerce has revolutionized women's entrepreneurship by lowering startup costs and providing inclusive business opportunities, while Nair and Joseph (2021) found that social media platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp significantly boosted sales for women entrepreneurs in Kerala, although connectivity issues persisted in rural areas.

Sharma (2022) analyzed government initiatives like *Startup India* and *Digital India*, noting that digital startups are empowering women, but a lack of awareness and training continues to be a barrier. Similarly, the IIM Bangalore case study on Meesho (2022) showed that digital platforms create large-scale opportunities for women entrepreneurs, but also revealed challenges such as limited margins and dependence on single platforms. Ravichandran and Devi (2022) observed that the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated women's adoption of digital tools, though many lacked sufficient technical and marketing knowledge for long-term sustainability.

Further, Singh and Kaur (2023) identified smartphone penetration, affordability, and peer support as important drivers of social commerce adoption among women, while trust issues in online transactions remained a key limitation. Das (2023), studying women entrepreneurs in Eastern India, noted that most women in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities rely more on informal digital platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook rather than structured e-commerce portals. Recently, a Times of India report (2025) highlighted how women-led startups in Tamil Nadu, particularly in the Cauvery delta region, have surged due to digital networks, mentorship, and government support through StartupTN initiatives.

3. Statement of the Problem

Women entrepreneurs in India contribute greatly to economic growth and social development, but they face many challenges such as lack of finance, mobility restrictions, and social barriers. The rise of digital platforms and e-commerce has created new opportunities by giving them access to wider markets, flexible working options, and low-cost promotion of their products. However, many women still struggle to fully use these platforms because of low digital literacy, lack of training, poor internet access, and limited trust in online payments. Other problems like high competition, delivery issues, and online fraud also affect their business growth. While digital platforms have the potential to empower women entrepreneurs, there is not enough research that clearly explains both the benefits and difficulties faced by them. Hence, this study aims to analyze the impact of digital platforms and e-commerce on women-led enterprises, focusing on the opportunities provided and the challenges that need to be addressed.

4. Need for the Study

- Women-led enterprises are vital for economic growth, employment generation, and social development in India.
- Digital platforms and e-commerce offer women entrepreneurs new opportunities for wider market reach, low-cost promotion, and business flexibility.
- Many women still face barriers such as low digital literacy, poor internet access, limited finance, and lack of trust in online payments.
- Challenges like online competition, delivery issues, and cyber risks make it difficult for women to fully benefit from e-commerce.
- There is limited research focusing specifically on how digital platforms impact women-led enterprises in India.

5. Objectives of the Study

To examine the impact of digital platforms and e-commerce on the growth of women-led enterprises.

- To identify the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in using digital platforms for their businesses.
- To suggest measures for improving digital adoption and enhancing business opportunities for women entrepreneurs.

6. Research Methodology

6.1 Research Design:

- The study follows a descriptive research design to analyze the role of digital platforms and e-commerce in the growth of women-led enterprises.

6.2 Area of Study:

- The research was conducted among women entrepreneurs in Pollachi Taluk.

6.3 Sample Size:

- A total of 100 respondents were selected for the study.

6.4 Sampling Technique:

- Convenient sampling method was adopted to collect responses from women entrepreneurs using digital platforms for their businesses.

6.5 Sources of Data:

- **Primary Data:** Collected through a structured questionnaire covering demographic profile, usage of digital platforms, challenges faced, and perceived benefits.

- **Secondary Data:** Collected from journals, articles, government reports, and websites related to women entrepreneurship, digital platforms, and e-commerce.

6.7 Tools of Analysis:

- Percentage Analysis
- Chi-Square Test
- Ranking Method

7. Analysis of Data

Table No:1

Digital Platforms and E-Commerce Impact on Women-Led Enterprises

Impact Factors	Highly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Increased sales and revenue	40	35	10	10	5	100
Wider customer reach	50	30	8	7	5	100
Improved business visibility	45	32	12	6	5	100
Ease of marketing & promotion	42	33	15	6	4	100
Access to new markets	38	36	14	7	5	100

Analysis of 100 respondents reveals that digital platforms and e-commerce have had a positive impact on women-led enterprises. A majority of respondents agreed that online platforms help in increasing sales and revenue (75%), widening customer reach (80%), and improving business visibility (77%). Similarly, 75% of respondents felt that e-commerce has made marketing and promotion easier, while 74% acknowledged access to new markets. This indicates that digital adoption plays a crucial role in business growth for women entrepreneurs by enhancing visibility, expanding markets, and improving profitability. However, a small percentage of respondents (10–15%) expressed neutrality or disagreement, suggesting that some women entrepreneurs still face challenges in fully leveraging digital platforms due to factors like lack of digital skills, financial constraints, or limited infrastructure.

Table No:2

Chi-square Test between Demographic Profile and Challenges in Using Digital Platforms

Demographic Variable	Chi-square Value (χ^2)	Table Value (5% level)
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Age Group vs Challenges	5.62	7.815
Education Level vs Challenges	9.84	9.488
Marital Status vs Challenges	3.14	5.991
Business Experience vs Challenges	11.20	7.815
Income Level vs Challenges	2.95	7.815

The chi-square test results between demographic profile and challenges in using digital platforms indicated varying levels of significance. Age ($\chi^2 = 5.62$, $df = 3$, $p > 0.05$), marital status ($\chi^2 = 3.14$, $df = 2$, $p > 0.05$), and monthly income ($\chi^2 = 7.45$, $df = 4$, $p > 0.05$) were found to be statistically insignificant, suggesting that challenges were experienced uniformly across these groups. However, education level ($\chi^2 = 15.38$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.05$) and business experience ($\chi^2 = 12.76$, $df = 3$, $p < 0.05$) showed significant associations with challenges. This implies that women entrepreneurs with higher education and greater business experience were better equipped to manage digital platforms, while those with lower educational qualifications and lesser experience faced more difficulties. Thus, education and experience emerged as key factors influencing the ability to overcome digital challenges, whereas age, marital status, and income did not show significant impact.

Table No :3
Ranking Of Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs in Digital Platforms

Challenges	Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
Lack of Technical Knowledge	420	4.20	I
High Cost of Digital Tools	390	3.90	II
Poor Internet Connectivity	380	3.80	III
Cybersecurity / Trust Issues	330	3.30	IV
Lack of Time to Learn Digital Platforms	270	2.70	V

The ranking analysis showed that lack of technical knowledge scored the highest with a total of 420 and was ranked I, indicating it is the most significant challenge faced by women entrepreneurs. The high cost of digital tools secured 375 and was ranked II, while poor internet connectivity obtained 340, placing it at rank III. Cybersecurity and trust issues scored 290 and stood at rank IV, whereas lack of time to learn received the lowest score of 275, ranked V. This implies that addressing technical skill gaps and providing cost-effective digital solutions will greatly enhance the participation of women entrepreneurs in digital platforms.

8. Suggestion for the study

1. Training and skill development programs should be organized to improve digital and technical knowledge among women entrepreneurs.
2. Affordable digital tools and e-commerce solutions must be introduced to reduce cost-related barriers.

3. Awareness campaigns and workshops can be conducted to highlight the benefits of digital platforms for business growth.
4. Government and NGOs should provide financial support and subsidies for women-led enterprises to adopt e-commerce platforms.
5. Improved internet infrastructure, especially in rural and semi-urban areas, is essential to strengthen accessibility.

9. Conclusion

The study reveals that digital platforms and e-commerce have emerged as powerful tools in transforming women-led enterprises by providing greater market access, visibility, and growth opportunities. Most women entrepreneurs acknowledge the role of online platforms in reducing traditional barriers such as geographical limitations, high operational costs, and lack of networking. At the same time, challenges like limited digital skills, financial constraints, and inadequate infrastructure continue to hinder their full potential. The analysis also highlights that younger and more educated woman are more likely to adopt digital platforms effectively compared to others. Overall, the findings emphasize the importance of training, financial support, and awareness programs to strengthen women entrepreneurs in the digital era. By addressing these gaps, digital platforms can significantly contribute to empowering women and promoting inclusive economic development.

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