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Powering Indian Digital Revolution: Women-Led E-commerce

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Abstract

India's digital revolution has changed everything. One main achievement is the rise of e-commerce businesses run by women. These businesses not only help the economy grow, but they also promote equality between men and women and give women businesspeople more power. Indian women are breaking down obstacles, fighting against stereotypes, and changing the business world by using technology. A lot of women have started and grown their businesses with the help of e-commerce sites in the last few years. If these women are selling handmade goods, niche items, or specialized services, they are making a name for themselves in the online market. What is inspiring is how they are using technology to get around standard barriers to entry, like not having enough money, resources, or networks. However, what needs to be remembered is that many problems need to be solved. To make the digital world truly fair for everyone, we need to fix the problems that cause women to be less likely to get funds and resources and make sure that everyone feels safe and welcome online. Governments, companies, and citizens must work together to make sure that women-led e-commerce has the help, policies, and infrastructure it needs to grow. With the support of e-commerce which is run by women not only will the economy grow but a digital economy will also be built which is more open, diverse, and strong. The present study focuses on the role of Digital Revolution in E-commerce initiatives by Women and the challenges confronted by them.

Keywords: Digital Revolution, Women, E-commerce, Challenges, Support

Introduction:

Indian women who are driven to achieve their professional and business objectives do not let the current "male-only" stigma in entrepreneurship stop them. Whether they work for the government or the commercial sector, women and men share jobs in practically every field. In this perspective, women's growing participation in organizations makes the case that they should be viewed as active participants in the process of developing the nation. In the transition from pastoral civilization to modern information and global society, women's roles have changed significantly. Work still must be done to support female business owners.

Indian women are making good names for themselves in the business and corporate worlds. They are exceeding social norms and applying their intelligence to accomplish outstanding success in entrepreneurship. Even However, statistics for the fiscal year 2020–2021 shows that there are only about 19.9% of women entrepreneurs in India, which is significantly fewer than the percentage of men in the same field. The reason for this could be their lack of knowledge about the financial and financing advantages associated with operating a firm. In the past, girls were considered a burden to the entire family and were often killed after birth. This was our nation's brutal reality. But with Indian women attaining the highest levels of success in every industry—business, politics, athletics, medicine, and the military, among others—the landscape has completely changed.

In recent times, there has been a notable upsurge

in women-led e-commerce enterprises and their entrepreneurship, with the latter contributing significantly to the growth of both national and global economies. These women have shown incredible fortitude and tenacity, and they are not only prospering but also making a substantial economic contribution to India, moving from being business owners to strategists, philanthropists to consultants. Online business platforms have made it possible for women to lead successful businesses in the ever-changing e-commerce industry and given them a rare chance to succeed on a global scale. In addition to generating jobs, women-owned e-commerce companies are fostering creativity and bringing e-commerce to neglected communities.

The global experience of e-commerce enables buyers to sell and vice versa. Women entrepreneurs who work in technology and e-commerce manage their own businesses entirely online. One of the main factors eradicating gender variation in online media behaviour is the invisible layer that experts use. A strong preference for social media has a significant impact on business by minimising disruptions. Tensions surrounding boundaries arise with the introduction of virtual works and digital licenses. With the advent of new technologies, e-commerce communication has gotten easier and has given women access to new opportunities. Women are not concerned about their career and business aspirations because of everyday obstacles.

But despite making up over half of all minds on Earth, women are still the world's least utilized and most suppressed resource. India is witnessing a range of women's achievements despite all the social issues. Women's aspirations to live decent lives and achieve higher educational status have developed because of revolutionary ideas in Indian

society's social fabric. Through tenacity, determination, and diligence, they managed to thrive in such a demanding and cutthroat patriarchal culture. Emerging stars and new development engines for the expanding economy, women entrepreneurs provide affluence and prosperity to the masses. Many industries, including the development and academic sectors, are fascinated by the rising number of women who are starting their own businesses in developing nations.

Review of Literature

According to Kalpana (2017) Indian women's lifestyles had to alter because of the social fabric of Indian society changing due to women's higher educational status and a range of ambitions for better living conditions. In every aspect of life, she has successfully challenged and outlasted men, and the economic world is no different. These female leaders are risk-takers who possess confidence and assertiveness.

Cphoon, Wadhwa & Mitchell's (2010) studied explores the motivations and experiences of men and women entrepreneurs, focusing on successful women entrepreneurs. The top five factors motivating women to become entrepreneurs include wealth building, capitalizing on business ideas, startup culture, and long-standing company ownership.

Juneja et al. (2016) have identified that women can gain a lot of power from the internet because it provides a platform for them to manage their businesses from home and maintain a healthy work-life balance.

Objectives of Study

- To investigate the challenges faced by female entrepreneurs in the e-commerce industry.
- To offer solutions for the obstacles faced by

female entrepreneurs in the e-commerce industry.

Research Design and Methodology

This research study is entirely dependent on secondary data that was gathered from books, journals, articles, reviews, websites, and newspapers.

Challenges/Obstacles Faced by Women Entrepreneurs

A. Tough Competition Due to Fierce Market Competition

It is extremely difficult for female entrepreneurs to thrive in the e-commerce business. Women entrepreneurs find it challenging to sell their products because there is intense competition in every product area.

B. Insufficient Funds

Money is the most essential and life-giving resource for any business. The difficult process of obtaining a loan and the lack of knowledge among women about other sources of funding provide many challenges for female entrepreneurs seeking to grow their businesses.

C. Having Trouble Identifying a Good Market

A challenge faced by all female entrepreneurs is locating a viable market. Women find it extremely difficult to locate a suitable or specialized market because they are unable to conduct market research or recognize the difficulties of their customers because of their immobility.

D. Holding on to Customers

A common challenge faced by several female-owned businesses is attracting and retaining clients. Every business needs its customers to be

loyal to it. The e-commerce company needs to make significant investments in marketing and promotional activities to draw clients. Thus, to keep clients, female business owners must work very hard at promotion and advertising.

E. Absence of Knowledge

To manage any business successfully, awareness and education are the most crucial components. Most women are unable to operate their businesses effectively and efficiently because they are ignorant of the many government programs and incentives.

F. Poor Managerial Skills

Only effective managers can now undertake the specialized duties of management. Planning, organizing, regulating, coordinating, staffing, leading, motivating, and other managerial tasks are not effectively performed by female entrepreneurs. Consequently, women's poor managerial skills have made it difficult for them to properly run the business.

G. Legal Formalities

Because corrupt practices are common in government offices and there are delays in the process for obtaining various licenses, electricity, water, and shed allotments, women entrepreneurs find it difficult to fulfil the legal formalities necessary for operating a business. It can be challenging for female entrepreneurs to focus on the efficient operation of the business in such circumstances.

H. Middle-Man Exploitation

Women are dependent on middlemen for marketing, distribution, and money collecting because they are unable to perform these tasks on their own. They frequently fall victim to middle men who pretend to be helpful. They increase their own profit margin, which lowers profit and decreases sales.

I. Lack of Self-Confidence

Women entrepreneurs naturally lack self-confidence, which is fundamentally a driving force behind the success of an organization. They have to work very hard to find a balance between running a business and raising a family. She sometimes needs to give up her desire to start her own business in order to balance the two.

Statistics for Women Entrepreneurs

Women business owners are well-positioned to take full advantage of their digital potential. Approximately 20% of the 63 million micros, little, and medium-sized firms (MSMEs) in India are held by women. This offers a substantial chance to generate jobs for between 22 and 27 million people. According to estimates, India may produce more than 30 million women-owned businesses and possibly 150–170 million employments if it accelerates the entrepreneurship of women.

Eighty-three percent of Indian small firms have moved their activities online in the past five years, and sixty-five percent of them rely on internet sales for up to half of their total income. The trend toward e-commerce shows how much room there is for female businesses to succeed in this quickly expanding online sector.

By 2028, 75% of discretionary spending worldwide will be owned by women, predicts Nielsen study. It is no secret that prejudice at work prevents women from rising to executive positions in the corporate world. However, things are changing, with women now having more opportunities in the e-commerce industry. There is a lady out there with enormous desire and enthusiasm who is taking advantage of the flexibility that comes with owning an online business for every Jeff Bezos.

Amazon reports that 32% of its merchants are female⁴, but Shopify has a more remarkable 53%⁵. In the meanwhile, female Amazon sellers make money faster: Compared to 18% of men, 26% became profitable after just three months.

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Solution for Obstacles:

It is important for female entrepreneurs to keep up with technical updates on technology-related issues. There are organizations that offer free entrepreneurship training. The females must verify the availability of the internet and make sure the server is refreshed. The product ought to have quality assurance, similar to the online buying web Flipkart. The females must provide a guarantee of excellence for the product's quality. Institutions are also willing to lend money to women entrepreneurs who provide a strong business plan under government programs. Female entrepreneurs starting their own businesses must first launch an advertising campaign before they can learn about the product.

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