

Women, Work, Web: Social Media's Influence on Microenterprises

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Abstract

India's informal economy has traditionally relied on the invisible and undervalued contribution of women labours. After the rise of Digital India and affordable smartphones, the social media platform started bridging the gaps in mobility, literacy and access to market. This changed home-based activities into successful micro enterprises. The main objective of the study is, to identify and classify the different kinds of micro-enterprises that used by women, and to analyze the ways in which these platforms influence women's digital identities, self-confidence and social mobility. The study is based on secondary data, reports from Economic Survey (sX) and government portals. Findings indicate that social media platforms are influenced by their geographic location, digital knowledge, and the nature of their enterprise. In rural and semi-urban women prefer WhatsApp and Facebook for selling directly and customer interaction but in urban and advanced technology adopters prefer Instagram and YouTube for branding and earning income. Social media not only expands market access but also enables women to build their digital identities and interaction with their customers confidently. Among other benefits the level of independence and the role they currently perform in their households has been increased. In order to ensure that social media becomes a useful instrument for women in microentrepreneur's, economic growth and empowering

women. The study recommends for the focus of skill-building programs and inclusive digital norms to enhance women's participations and performance in digital platforms.

Keyword: Women microentrepreneurs, social media, Economic growth, empowering women.

I.INTRODUCTION

The invisible labour of women who works at home, engaged in works like parenting, making food, tailoring, caregiving for senior citizens and other home-based activities, are continue to be an important component of India's informal economy. Despite being essential these contributions were remained undervalued due to limited mobility, literacy and market access. After the rise of Digital India and affordable smartphones, the social media platform started bridging the gaps in mobility, literacy and access to market. This changed home-based activities into successful micro enterprises. According to the National Sample Survey 73rd Round (2015-2016), 19.5% of unincorporated non-agricultural businesses are owned by women, engaging up to 27 million workers. As reported by NITI Aayog (2022) women contribute around 17% of India's GDP, highlighting their rising economic role. By connecting small businesses with Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), the Ministry of MSME's MSE TEAM works under the RAMP program aims to digitally empower them wit wider market access and income growth. In addition to the training and capacity building, it provides assistance with initial integration cataloging and logistics. Through increasing public procurement's speed, efficiency and transparency the e-Marketplace serves as a platform for different government departments and organizations to purchase products and services. It is a unified platform for public that offers functions like reverse auction and e-bidding. Social media has an enormous opportunity to promote gender-equitable growth in the unorganized sector in the future. The targeted digital skill development, inclusive platform design and supportive policy frameworks are necessary to make more essential. The social media is no longer a communication tool alone, it is a strategic tool for women entrepreneur's economic empowerment and social mobility among women.

Review of literature

¹Sanjana Malkani and CS Prof.Manish Sitlani (2025), the study examines the social media might support women entrepreneurs in India, focusing on literature from 2015 onwards. Its methodology involves a descriptive analysis of previous studies without the collecting of actual data. The analysis of the study highlights both positive aspects, like visibility and networking, and negative impacts like harassment and misinformation. The findings emphasize the important yet varied impact of

social media on women entrepreneurs. In order to solve current problems and take advantage of social potential, the study concludes for further research on existing challenges and leverage social media's potential.

²Sanjya Pattanshetty and Dr. Srinivasa Murthy B.V (2025), the study explores the challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs in developing the economy, emphasizing the role of digital platforms, policies and social norms. It examines the barriers such reduced financial access and cultural limitations using a mixture of methods, by secondary data. The results highlight the importance of digital knowledge, effective policy and enhanced infrastructure for empowerment. The study concludes that innovative technologies can progress socio-economic development and gender-sensitive support systems. Overall, it highlights that women's entrepreneurship holds the capacity to transform inclusive growth.

³Gunjan Sachdeva, Maithili Ganjoo & Tinam Borah (2025), the research is on examining the role of Instagram in empowering women entrepreneurs and addressing gender inequality in startup leadership, the study uses purposive sampling and Netnography, and the data was collected from selected Instagram accounts and through NVivo it is analyzed. Leadership, innovation and employment were the main elements of the thematic coding. The study findings highlight that Instagram helps women become more visible, confident and capable entrepreneurs. The study concludes that Instagram serves as a revolutionary platform that supports women's successful engagement in entrepreneurship field.

Scope of the study

1. The study focuses on women-led microenterprises using WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. It identifies the enterprise types and classifies the social media platforms used based on their business type.
2. It also evaluates, the involvement of social media that shapes the women entrepreneurs.

Objectives

1. To identify the types of microenterprises operated by women and classify the social media platforms.
2. To evaluate how social media platforms influence women's digital identities, self-confidence and social mobility

Methodology

The study makes use of secondary data only. The research use the recent data published by the MSME (2020-2024) and SXth Economic Survey *11 ChapterVI 6ecRep 0.pdf, 2024-2025 Startup India.

Analysis

Table 1. Objective 1: The types of microenterprises operated by women

SI.No	Microenterprises type	Description
1.	Tailoring and Garment making	This field consist of stitching, embroidery, boutiques services, Aari works, etc.
2.	Food processing and Catering services	Homemade snacks, pickles, tiffin services, packaged foods are involved in this service.
3.	Beauty and wellness services	This type of enterprises involves salons, wellness coaching, mehendi artists, home-based beauty services.
4.	Handicrafts and Artisan work	Making of Jewells, pottery, weaving and traditional crafts involved in this type of business
5.	Reselling and Retail	This type consists of Reselling clothes, cosmetics, kitchenware products, etc....
6.	Digital content creation	YouTube tutorials, Instagram shops, influencer marketing comes under this type of enterprises
7.	Home-based services	This field consist of tuition, coaching, bookkeeping, digital marketing, etc....
8.	Agro-based enterprises	Organic farming, nursery, herbal products involved in agro-based business.
9.	Tech services (technology)	Digital support services, data entry, etc.
10.	Eco-Friendly products	This type of business consists of cloth bags, compost kits, sustainable packaging, etc.,

Source: framed by author.

The table 1 shows the informal sector women are growing into microbusinesses that make use of digital platforms and traditional abilities. Due to local demand and low entry hurdles, the enterprises of tailoring, food processing and beauty services are continued dominate, Facebook and WhatsApp are excellent for reselling and handicrafts, whereas Instagram and YouTube allow for branding as well as income, these are product-based enterprises. Home-based services like tuition and digital marketing reflecting the digital literacy. Eco-friendly and agro-based

businesses support rural economy and sustainability trends. The trend toward digital inclusiveness and remote job opportunities for women are symbolized by tech (Technology) services. The top ten microbusinesses highlight the way women have effectively utilized digital platforms and traditional abilities to create future incomes.

Table 2. The classification of Social Media Platform

Social Media Platform	Key features	Typical uses
WhatsApp	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free business profile• Catalog• Auto-replies• Order tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homemade food• Tailoring• Reselling• Tuition services
Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Groups• Live selling• Local discovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crafts• Coaching• Wellness• Community services
Instagram	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visual branding• Short videos (reels)• Influencer marketing• Product showcasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fashion• Beauty• Artisanal products• Eco-friendly goods
YouTube	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monetization• Tutorials• Storytelling• Long-form content	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coaching• Digital marketing• Reviews• Education
Meesho	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social commerce platform tailored for women resellers with zero inventory model	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reselling clothes• Cosmetics• Kitchenware

Source: framed by author.

The table 2 illustrates that a few social media platforms support women-led microenterprises through key features and typical uses. The WhatsApp application is accessible to home-based businesses like food, tailoring, reselling and tuition services to communicate directly with customers. Facebook supports community involvement and live coaching and wellness sales. Instagram promotes influencers marketing for fashion and visual branding for arts and crafts products. YouTube made it easier to earn money from content and educate users with reviews and education. Messho provides a zero-inventory business model that is perfect for

cosmetics and kitchenware dealers. These social media platforms bridge gaps in literacy, mobility and market access for women entrepreneurs.

Objective 2:

This objective explores the way social media shapes women's entrepreneurial journey. It focuses on how social media platforms like facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp its impact not only on company operations but also community image and personal growth.

Table 3. Number of women establishments by social group of owners.

States	SC	ST	OBC	Others	Total
Tamil Nadu	151826	30434	696473	208876	1087609
All India	980947	561167	3272478	3236227	8050819

Source: SXth Economic Survey – women entrepreneurs.

The table 3 represents the number of women establishments by social group owner. The table is listed by caste wise whereas, in Tamil Nadu there is 151826 of owners in SC, 30434 of owners in ST, 696473 of owners in OBC and 208876 of owners in others, the total of owners in Tamil Nadu are of 1087609 of owners. Combination of all states the All-India row represents the overall owner of social groups, 980947 of owners in SC, 561167 of owners in ST, 3272478 of owners in OBC and in other category it is of 3236227 owners. In total of all India there are 8050819 of women establishments by social group of owners.

1. Digital identity formation:

The term 'digital identity formation' describes how female entrepreneurs utilize social media to interact with customers, build reliability and represent themselves as business women's. The Economic Survey noted that over 73,000 women-led enterprises have been registered under Startup India in the year 2024-2025, highlighting an increase in their digital presence. According to the Udyam Portal (2020-2024) 40% of MSME are owned by women, and many of the entrepreneurs utilize digital platforms to reach out for potential customers. These developments indicate that women in informal sector are currently depending on their digital identities to achieve market access, recognition and confidence.

2. Self-confidence and communication:

The regular interaction with customers through online builds a self-confidence to women entrepreneurs. Professionalism and control are promoted by handling orders, handling customer queries and advertising products online. Women are more capable to express their value and negotiate due to this exchange. As they gain always positive feedback and repeat customers, their self-assurance in business decisions strengthens. Enhanced the power in both domestic and entrepreneurial positions is at some point outcome of this digital fluency.

3. Social mobility:

Since social media allows women to break free from traditional roles and engage them in income generating activities from home, it improves their social mobility. Their importance in families and communities grows as a result of their visibility and recognition online. To express their independence, financial decisions and access wider networks were connect with a larger network through digital entrepreneurship. The social mobility of women expands their reach by the platforms like Instagram and YouTube helps women to connect with urban markets and professional circles.

II.CONCLUSION

The study concludes that social media platforms have become essential tools for women in informal sector, enabling home-based work to be transformed into microbusinesses. Based on the findings, women in rural areas utilize Facebook and WhatsApp for direct sales while in urban areas Instagram and YouTube support to branding and revenue generating. These social media platforms improve social mobility, develop digital identity and increase confidence in customer interactions. To sustain and develop the women entrepreneurs to access digital platforms more digital norms and targeted skill-building programs are essential.

III.REFERENCE

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