



THE INDIAN WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR ERA

Amtul Wahab¹, Iffath Unnisa Begum²

¹Lecturer in Commerce, Indira Priyadarshini Govt Degree College for women, Nampally Hyderabad

²Lecturer in Commerce, Govt City College, Nayapul, Hyderabad

INTRODUCTION

The growth of E-commerce enables women entrepreneurs to generate new ideas and work by setting their own schedule. It is pertinent to make a microscopic analysis of the available opportunities and constraints in E-commerce for women entrepreneurs. Hence an attempt is made in this paper to examine the various challenges faced by women entrepreneurs who use online platforms to start, grow and sustain their business and enlighten them are the availability of more opportunities to encourage them to make a diffuse of online platform to reap in rich harvest in their vision.

The entire world is witnessing a marvelous evolution in electronic commerce, and India is no exception. Women have made significant contributions to these evolutions, and those contributions have shifted to empowerment. E-commerce trading and marketing of goods and services through the internet additionally referred to as electronic commerce. Since the early 2000s, when India sought wide spread access to a secure online transaction system, the country's E-commerce sector has expanded dramatically.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the opportunities and challenges faced by women Entrepreneurs.
- To know about the various apps facilitating women Entrepreneurship.

SOURCE OF DATA

Data is collected from both primary and secondary sources.

❖ Primary Sources

The primary data has been collected by means of questionnaire/schedule, like scale, surveys and interviews. A set of two questionnaires have been used. One was addressed to the women entrepreneurs to analyze the problems face by the business, the extent of awareness and the level of satisfaction of the women entrepreneurs of India.

❖ Secondary Sources

Secondary data has been collected through various Journals, Bulletins, reports and research papers published .

THE TOP FIVE CHALLENGES

Though this particular sector gains all attention there are some really big challenges that every entrepreneur has to face. The top five of challenges which are listed below

1. **Finding Suitable Market:** Many entrepreneurs believe E-commerce business is all about niche people all willing to transact over internet for any of their desired product. Finding suitable Niche is quite an important task that every ecommerce entrepreneur faces.
2. **Retaining Customer:** Not only customer retention but Customer acquisition are great challenges that every E-commerce business. E-commerce business requires necessary amount of attention from customers and in order to get that every firm needs to invest huge amount on marketing or other promotional activities, which necessitates a regular timely flow of huge fund and that is survive and succeeding.
3. **Lack of Trust:** Reliable logistics as well as supply chain is another important aspect for E-commerce business of women entrepreneurs. Failure in this particular area leads to detriment and adversely affects the future reputation of the company.
4. **Inadequacy of Funds:** Every E-commerce entrepreneur faces lot of trouble in raising sufficient funds.



5. **Good and effective customer service:** It's important for ecommerce entrepreneur to maintain the good reputation through constant good services. There are times when goods delivered are not satisfactory.

FACTORS IMPACTING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

1. Increase in unpaid care work

One in four of women entrepreneurs surveyed by We Connect International stated that the increased care demands placed on them, with families being physically distanced and confined to their homes, has reduced the time they spend on their businesses. This shouldn't come as a surprise because in most of the Global South, a majority of responsibilities at home have traditionally been borne by women.

2. Disproportionate gender balance in affected sectors

Small and growing businesses (SGBs) have definitely been one of the hardest hit segments during the pandemic. Close to 40 percent of SGBs in emerging markets are staring at potential failure in the next half of the year.

3. Lack of external investment

Prior to the pandemic, supporting and catalysing women entrepreneurship was a topic that was gaining traction across intermediary organisations and investment firms. Gender-lens investing was becoming a part of mainstream conversations. Now, all gears have shifted to focus on immediate relief. As one entrepreneur stated, "We were just about to raise our seed equity round when the pandemic

Related article: *A day in the life of: A woman entrepreneur*

4. An assumption of access

A lot of support services for entrepreneurs have shifted online to ensure that they have access to the guidance they require even in the absence of physical convening's. However, in doing so, the assumption that both men and women have equal access to space, internet, and available time to leverage these resources, is in itself flawed

SOLUTIONS FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Supporting women entrepreneurs with relevant trainings, and providing access to flexible financing options to help keep their businesses afloat are definitely good places to start. We have an opportunity to pivot and rebuild support structures. Here are some things to keep in mind as we do so:

1. Make interventions gender responsive

We need to ensure that, in addition to considering gender norms, roles, and relations, our interventions understand how these affect access to resources, and offer remedial action to overcome these obstacles. Collaborating with known experts in the field is a good way to work towards this.

2. Make financial services more inclusive

Women in developing countries tend to not have the same access to information, skills, or awareness to fully leverage financial services. The pandemic provides governments and private finance providers an opportunity to design or tweak existing financial services to be made more inclusive for women entrepreneurs, both from rural and urban backgrounds.

3. Focus on digital inclusion

SGBs are undergoing a transformation to make it through this crisis. In a country where the female internet user population is only half of that of the men, with the divide being more distinct in rural India, this overhaul of services to digital platforms can widen inequalities.

WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY IN INDIA

India's role in Women's Entrepreneurial Activities

India's government has launched a variety of programs and policy that encourage the women entrepreneurship. Every year government announced the budget for entrepreneurship which is almost 1 billion with including other necessary facilities. (Huq&Moyeen, 2002). The government has adopted a few steps, including a distinct tax policy, a tax incentive, and a gift tax, all of which are part of the National Action Plan (NAP) for the advancement of women leaders. India Bank however has developed massive measures to strengthen women, like authorizing a loan with a 9% rate of interest. Several commercial and government sectors, as well as multiple Nongovernmental organizations such as Micro Industries Development Assistance and Services (MIDAS), different small Enterprise development support and advice agency, Basic Bank, commonly known as special bank, was established with the sole purpose of providing finance to small and cottage businesses, role of People's Republic of India tiny and cottage industries corporation (BSCIC), and others, have been recognized for encouraging entrepreneurship development. Different government banks lunched various efforts to boost women's equality.



Sectors of women entrepreneurs in India

Women entrepreneurs began their journey in India and have achieved success. Women contribute to the economy of India in a variety of ways, according to Roy (2016) and Hossain et al. (2009), which include 16.1 percent in textile, 69.4 percent in handicraft, 1.6 percent in printing, 3.2 percent in agriculture product, 3.2 percent in food, 4.8 percent in parlor, and 1.6 percent in others. In today's society, women are very interested in various types of online business. According to Haque (2013), women establish over 12,000 pages on the social networking website 'Facebook.' These statistics are steadily increasing.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE

Today Women were making decisions regarding their lives, education, and career goals. Women in business act as an essential player in the business world. Women entrepreneurs are creating jobs, hope and opportunities in every community worldwide, be it a corporate, government or private sector. The role of women in the workforce has increased dramatically over the last several decades. Many women are successfully balancing both work and family life to create a strong path for future generations who may wish to accomplish the same achievements. The fact that women now have so many new doors open that were once closed, it is possible to achieve anything in terms of business. One of the best ways to gain top-level employment is through a college education, which can either be achieved in a traditional classroom or online. For the woman who has children, learning at home is an ideal way to gain the knowledge necessary to obtain a job with higher pay. Thanks to technology and the innovations that the internet now offers, women can learn and/or work at home. Some of the leading businesses of today are those that are primarily web-based and can be operated from the comfort of a home office. For women who have found the traditional workplace to be less than ideal, the internet provides a way to earn a terrific living with little or no overhead. In corporate sectors sometimes an extraordinary partnership occurred, with women an integral part of a team. The Weekend Leader has compiled the stories of 10 successful women entrepreneurs in India. Their stories will offer you great motivation and inspiration. Indian women's foray into entrepreneurship is women empowerment at its best

1. Anju Srivastava

A tender-hearted 13-year-old girl who volunteered at an ashram before school hours moved by the ubiquitous deprivation that she encountered on the roads of Mumbai, hangs on to the same bleeding heart 45 years later even after launching a successful social enterprise whose turnover touched Rs 50crore in 2018-19.

Win greens Farms Private Limited, founded by 58-year-old Anju Srivastava, sells flavoured dips, sauces, baked chips, bakery chips, tea, pita bread and a lot more but primarily helps women and farmers lead a financially secure life.

Back in 2008, Srivastava had embarked on a unique agrarian venture renting half an acre of land from a farmer in Gurugram. She raised culinary herbs in the land and sold them at Rs 150per pot at exhibitions in and around Delhi.

2. Dipika Mishra

Dipika Mishra, who has been working as production manager at the unit for the past five and a half years, says that the women are given regular counseling to overcome day to day issues. "Coming from underprivileged backgrounds they are not just earning but also learning," she says. "Two supervisors studied while working here and can now handle bank work while another woman saved money to buy a piece of land, on which she wants to build a paying guest accommodation and be self-dependent in old age,"

Srivastava's husband, Arjun, a former marketing director at PepsiCo, is a director in the company and is actively involved in the business. Elder son Vikram continues to work with her, while her daughter Zoha joined her recently. The youngest son, Omar, is pursuing his education at University of Toronto., and artisanal furnishing that was reminiscent of the culture.

TOP BUSINESS IDEAS FOR WOMEN IN 2021

Online business for women has skyrocketed thanks to the internet. Today, it's possible for women to earn big and be successful on their own terms. They can even buy the tools they need online. Here are eight home based business themes that can be started at the comfort of your home. Women looking forward to starting their very own home business need to have a good idea. Carrying out a business from home is easier, convenient and is low-investment. This blog lists out some of the more successful business ideas for women. India is moving ahead in so many ways. Women today whether at home or at office, they are intelligent, confident and career focused. Many have even become successful entrepreneurs too. Some are successfully running their own business from home. This is why home businesses are attractive to people. They can earn extra income and require minimal investment to begin selling. Making money this way is also simpler for women who are housewives, office goers – even college students. It begins with selling in the simplest way. Here are some business ideas that have worked really well,



- Selling handicrafts online
- Online gift store
- Sell traditional sarees online
- Custom jewellery business
- Sell paintings or modern art online
- Become a freelance writer
- Open a Kids day-care business
- Sell plants and organic produce online
- Start an online cloud kitchen
- Selling handicrafts online

SOME SUCCESSFUL WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR FROM 2014 TO 2021

1. Vidya Venkatraman: Founder & CEO of Meraki & Co.

Woman-owned agencies with a fierce passion for helping others build and grow the business that excites them. A start-up firm delivering big results incepted on 3rd May 2020, in-between the world pandemic of Covid-19 to provide creatively driven and digitally focused marketing solutions to businesses. In Assistance with Social Media Marketing, Graphic Designing, Franchise Consultancy, PR, Content Writing, Photo shoots & video shoots, Influencer Marketing, Packaging, Website Development and other Branding exercises, her team has helped 50+ businesses boost their online discernibility. Vidya trusts "Every brand should have a strong digital presence globally as this pandemic was the perfect example where everyone experienced the POWER OF DIGITALIZATION", aiming for the new Digital Era with prosper growth and valuable productivity.

2. Anamika Sengupta: Founder of AlmitraTattva and Co-founder of AlmitraSustainables

Anamika Sengupta is the founder of AlmitraTattva and Co-founder of AlmitraSustainables. Changing the stereotypical thinking about women and motherhood, she made maternity her strongest pillar and has nurtured and mothered both- her son and the two brands. Working with a unique model of motherhood squad, she has developed the brands through to its pinnacle of success. Her Sustainability mantra of co-existence with her brand AlmitraSustainables is breaking legs with norms that provide conscious and contemporary solutions to end plastic use in regular lifestyle choices. She is a world class leader with a motivated sense of motherhood which helps her to rejuvenate a sense of green lifestyle, conscious consumerism and natural parenting.

3. Rania Lampou: Global Educator, STEM Instructor Greek Astronomy and Space Company (Annex Salamis)

Rania Lampou is a STEM instructor at the Greek Astronomy and Space Company (Annex of Salamis) and she is also working at the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. She is a passionate researcher on Neuro education. She has been awarded many national and international prizes (so far 63) and she is a "Global Teacher Award 2020" (AKS Awards) winner and a "Global Teacher Prize finalist 2019" (Varkey Foundation). She introduced STEM in astronomy and physics projects and combined STEM with Language Teaching. She is the founder and international coordinator of five innovative international projects with humanitarian emphasis. She is also an author of scientific books for kids. Furthermore, Rania is a social activist, a global peace ambassador and is collaborating with many humanitarian, scientific, cultural and educational organizations.

4. ZorainKhaleeli: Founder of Zorain Studio and Academy

Empowering the domain of hair makeup Industry, Zorain has become the founder of India's first fully digitally equipped training academy. Passionate from the age of 15, she has been part of India fashion week, couture weeks, having worked with top models and designers including Rocky S and Falguni Shane Peacock. She has also been serving the Bollywood and Kannada film Industry, catering to Zeenat Aman, Shradha Kapoor, Shruthi Hariharan and many more. Embracing the journey by becoming the most fabulous women leader winning distinguished awards in lifestyle, wedding and hair makeup industry, Zorain believes "Makeup is not just an art but a technology that can create the most beautiful transformations".

5. Sushmitha Gowda: Founder of Mirakki Hair care

Sushmitha Gowda is a young Entrepreneur with a multi-faceted career. After graduating, her entrepreneurial instincts led her to start a hair care brand "Mirakki" that stands today as one of the top-selling hair care products across India. In the year 2021, she ventured into a new project ENTICE which deals with a series of luxury skincare and wellness products. She is also a belly dancer and Actor. She will be playing a lead role in the upcoming Kannada feature film- Love Mocktail 2. This powerhouse of talent envisions a niche in the beauty and wellness industry. She truly believes that today health is one of the biggest assets one can possess and we must invest right and take good care of ourselves.



6. S Sarita Singh: Managing Trustee Priyadarshani Group of Schools

S Sarita Singh is an Entrepreneur and Educationist and has discharged the role of creator and curator in Publishing, Entertainment and Investment sectors. She has been featured in Forbes and has been positioned in India's A-Listers and was recently awarded as "The Woman Icon of The Year" and has been honored with the National Award for Woman Leadership. She has also been featured as one of the 100 Inspirational Leaders of India. Student is at the centre of her vision for Education. She wants to help every learner to evolve as a complete person, fulfill his or her potential and help shape a shared future built on the well-being of individuals, communities, and the planet.

7. Sheelaa M Bajaj: Founder of Sheelaa M Bajaj

Sheelaa M Bajaj, is a serial Entrepreneur. Her latest start-up being the largest divine guidance platform in the world, aims to empower, guide and transform people who are at the rock bottom in their lives. Sheelaa, is an Author, Radio and TV host, Life coach, Motivational speaker, Tarot, Feng Shui Grand Master and priestess of 'The Temple of Miracles' – India's first Yoruba Community temple. A name to reckon with Numerology, Tarot, Spiritual healing for over two decades, the team has 17 practitioners globally, mentored by Sheelaa – providing guidance and healing through Tarot, Akashic records, and many advanced modalities, all with an intention to serve and support the society.

8. Paridhi Goel: Co-Founder Love Earth Skincare

A young entrepreneur, Paridhi Goel is the co-founder of Love Earth Skincare. She started the brand at the age of 21 in 2016 and within a short span of 4 years, the brand has become one among the top selling skincare brands across India. She is a believer of consistency and feels that the key to every successful business is regularity and not losing hope in what one believes in. Being a successful women entrepreneur herself, Paridhi feels that all women should be empowered and she promotes it by employing enthusiastic and hardworking women in her team. She also believes in giving back to the society which has helped her brand become a success, and thus, a part of the profit made by Love Earth goes to an orphanage in Ghaziabad.

9. Yukti Nagpal: Director of Gulshan

Empowering the Idea of Wellness- Luxury- Living-Responsibly, Ms. Yukti Nagpal, Director, Gulshan announces the arrival of a new creed of Real Estate stalwarts. An MS in marketing from San Francisco (US) not only graduated on the Dean's list but also did her alma mater proud by bagging the prestigious MARCOM Gold Award. Yukti is a strong-willed dynamic leader, taking care of everything from Sales, Human Resource Acquisition, Construction, to the Best CRM Strategies, with indomitable flair. She has pioneered the idea of initiatives like 'Home Konnect' that enables residents to embrace and exercise a positive approach towards imprinting Eco-friendly footsteps as a collective community.

10. Gauthami Balraj: Co-Founder of Mirakki

A people's person, an enterprising entrepreneur, a social media enthusiast and above all a humanist who closely works for various social causes, especially welfare of street dogs. Also, a nature lover with an attachment for traditions and culture. That's a short description of Gauthami Balraj, the co-founder of Mirakki haircare. Gauthami believes in staying calm through all situations and building a good rapport with her team to give their best and more for the growth of the brand. Her zeal and hard work brought the Mirakki brand- Times Business Award for serving the best herbal hair care products to their valued customers. She is eagerly strategizing to continue her work and path of success for Mirakki.

11. Priya Paul – Chairperson of Park Hotels

Priya Paul is considered one of the most successful female entrepreneurs in India and a legendary figure in the hospitality industry. She hails from a prestigious business family, Apeejay Surrendra Group. After completing her graduation in Economics from Wellesley College in the U.S, Priya joined the family business at the marketing Division of Park Hotels. She initially reported to her father and Chairperson, Surrendra Paul. In less than two years, she became the Acting General Manager of The Park, New Delhi. However, in 1990, she lost her father in a tragic incident when the ULFA militants gunned down Surrendra Paul. Only one year before that incident, Priya's younger brother Anand died in a car accident. These incidents left a vacuum both in the family and at the workplace.

12. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Founder of Biocon

Kiran graduated college in the late 1970s with a B.Sc. in Biology and Zoology. However, she aspired to follow in her father's footsteps later in life. Her father's work, as the head brew master for one of India's largest beer companies, inspired her to change her career. Shortly after, she headed to Australia to train as a brew master. Her intentions were to return to India and obtain a job with her newfound knowledge. However, the Indian brewing industry was heavily male dominated (still true today) and employers refused to offer her a job. In an interview with The Financial Times, Kiran recalls, "I was being politely told, 'we are very impressed with your qualifications, but this is not a woman's job.'"

13. Richa Kar, Co-Founder & CEO of Zivame

Richa Kar was born in Jamshedpur and comes from a very conservative family. After completing her engineering from BITS Pilani, followed by a brief stint in the IT sector, she moved on to complete her master's from



NarseeMonji Institute of Management Studies in 2007. Soon after, she worked at SAP Retail Consulting, a company that helped her gain valuable retail experience. One of her clients included the famous lingerie company, Victoria's Secret. This opportunity offered her a chance to research the Indian lingerie market, where she realized a social discomfort that was causing a myriad of issues for both women shoppers and retailers.

14. Jyoti Naik, Ex-President, Shri Mahila Griha Udyog, Lijjat Papad

Jyoti Naik was 12 years old when she joined her mother in the business of making *papad* (a thin, crisp, round flatbread from India) in the early seventies. The brand they worked for, Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat Papad, was started by seven women way back in 1959 with a modest loan of Rs.80. Growing up, Jyoti was the eldest among her four brothers and sisters. After the sudden demise of her mother in 1976, she continued working various jobs at Lijjat Papad while caring for her four siblings.

15. Upma Kapoor, Founder of Teal & Terra

Born and raised in Delhi, Upma lost both her parents in a tragic accident when she was 12 years old. She went to live with her sister and brother-in-law and completed her MBA in finance from ICFAI. There were many challenges in the path, including brand acceptance and stiff competition from the established players in the segment. She also had to struggle to maintain a healthy work-life balance as a single mom (or mompreneur).

16. Vandana Luthra – Founder of VLCC

Vandana Luthra started VLCC as a wellness center in 1989 on a small bank loan, with a focus on health and beauty in New Delhi. Over the years, she has endured criticism and competition to become a wellness queen – a concept that was an alien concept way back in the 1980s. Born into an educated middle-class family, her father was a mechanical engineer and her mother was an Ayurvedic doctor who ran an organization called Amar Jyoti.

CONCLUSION

Women's empowerment in cases of social status, economic security, self-actualization, etc. is an inevitable part of country's overall development. Without women the mainstream development program, sustainable development process is just nearly impossible. Not only that, this development would always be a dream without active and meaningful participation of the country's women in it. Economic status, self-worth, self-confidence, control over own life-related issues, control over resources, and social status of women entrepreneurs are the variables that define empowerment of women. If women gain economic freedom, social recognition, they gain visibility and a voice at home, workplace and community. This has an impact on their social status regarding increase in their leadership ability, gender equality and so on.

SUGGESTIONS

- There should be continuous efforts to inspire, encourage, motivate and co-operate women entrepreneur. Government and agencies must come front to help, encourage women entrepreneur.

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