

The Impact of E-Commerce in the Growth and Development of Women Entrepreneurs with Special Reference to Chennai City.

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THE IMPACT OF E-COMMERCE IN THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHENNAI CITY.

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Abstract

This study focuses on the role of e-commerce in the growth and development of women entrepreneurs in Chennai city. The research aims to analyse how online platforms have created business opportunities for women by providing wider market access, flexibility, and reduced entry barriers. The study also examines the key factors influencing women entrepreneurs to adopt e-commerce and identifies the benefits gained in terms of sales growth, customer reach, and brand visibility. In addition, the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, such as digital skill gaps, financial constraints, competition, and customer trust issues, are also explored. The research is based on primary data collected from 100 women entrepreneurs through a structured questionnaire, supported by secondary data from journals, articles, and websites. The findings reveal that e-commerce has significantly empowered women entrepreneurs by enabling home-based businesses, improving income generation, and enhancing customer engagement. The study concludes that e-commerce plays a vital role in promoting women's entrepreneurship in Chennai, and with proper digital training, financial support, and government initiatives, women entrepreneurs can achieve sustainable business growth in the digital economy.

Keywords: E-commerce, women entrepreneurs, Barriers, online platform,

Introduction

E-commerce has become a powerful instrument for strengthening women's entrepreneurship by transforming the way businesses are created, managed, and expanded in the digital age. In the Indian context, the rapid growth of internet connectivity, smartphone usage, digital payment systems, and social media platforms has opened new avenues for women entrepreneurs, especially in metropolitan cities such as Chennai. E-commerce enables women to overcome traditional barriers such as limited mobility, lack of capital, restricted market access, and time constraints by providing flexible, low-cost, and home-based business opportunities. Through online marketplaces and digital platforms, women entrepreneurs can reach a wider customer base, promote their products efficiently, improve sales performance,

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and build a strong brand identity without heavy investment in physical infrastructure. From a theoretical perspective, digital empowerment theory explains how access to technology enhances women's economic independence, confidence, and decision-making power, while entrepreneurship development theory emphasises innovation, opportunity recognition, risk-taking, and efficient resource utilisation as key drivers of business growth.

Technology adoption theory further highlights that factors such as perceived usefulness, ease of use, affordability, trust, and external support influence the adoption of e-commerce among women entrepreneurs. However, challenges such as limited digital skills, financial constraints, logistics management, cybersecurity concerns, customer trust issues, and intense online competition continue to affect their business performance. Supportive government policies, digital literacy programs, training initiatives, mentorship, family encouragement, and access to financial assistance act as enabling factors that help women entrepreneurs overcome these challenges. Overall, e-commerce plays a crucial role in empowering women entrepreneurs by fostering sustainable business growth, enhancing economic participation, and contributing to inclusive development in the modern digital economy.

Review of literature:

Dr. Bhupendra Bahadur Tiwari, Dr. E. Eswara Reddy, and Dr. Debolina Gupta (2023), in their article "An Analysis of Factors Determining the Success of Women Entrepreneurs: A Study of MSMEs in Karnataka," aimed to identify key factors influencing women entrepreneurs' success in the MSME sector. The study found that psychological, social, skill, and resource factors significantly affect entrepreneurial success, with motivation, social support, and access to resources playing major roles. The study concluded that enhancing women's skills, resources, and psychological empowerment is vital for improving their success and contribution to the MSME sector.

C. Luminia Vinodhini (2024) in her study "Success and Survival of Retail Women Entrepreneurs: A Study Based on Chennai," aimed to examine the factors that influence women to become retail entrepreneurs, identify the challenges they face, and analyse the key elements contributing to their success and survival in the retail sector of Chennai. The study found that marketing and competition are the major challenges encountered by retail women entrepreneurs, while strong social ties, family support, internal motivation, and innovation significantly contribute to their success. It concluded that despite facing financial constraints and limited institutional support, women entrepreneurs in Chennai demonstrate resilience and adaptability, with social connections and community support emerging as crucial factors for sustaining and expanding their retail businesses.

Dr. Maherukh Khan (2025) in her study "The Role of E-Commerce in Promoting Women's Entrepreneurship," aimed to examine how e-commerce promotes women's entrepreneurship by providing financial independence, flexibility, and expanded market access while identifying the challenges that hinder women from fully utilising digital platforms for entrepreneurial growth. The study found that e-commerce has significantly empowered women entrepreneurs by enabling them to establish and expand their businesses with lower investment, greater flexibility, and access to both national and international markets. It revealed that most women experienced enhanced financial stability and independence through e-commerce, contributing meaningfully to household income and reinvesting in their ventures. The study concluded that overcoming these barriers through targeted training, government incentives, and improved technological access is essential to enhance women's success and long-term sustainability in e-commerce entrepreneurship.

Research Gap

Existing studies on women entrepreneurship and e-commerce mainly focus on broader regions or general factors influencing entrepreneurial success, with limited city-specific evidence. Very few studies have specifically examined how e-commerce platforms influence the growth, opportunities, and challenges of women entrepreneurs in Chennai city. Moreover, there is a lack of empirical research based on 100 women respondents that clearly captures real-time experiences related to market reach, sales growth, and digital challenges. This study fills the gap by providing focused, respondent-based insights into the role of e-commerce in empowering women entrepreneurs in Chennai.

Objectives

1. To analyse the role of e-commerce in enhancing business opportunities for women entrepreneurs in Chennai.
2. To identify the key factors influencing women entrepreneurs to adopt e-commerce platforms.
3. To study the benefits gained by women entrepreneurs through e-commerce in terms of sales, customer reach, and business growth.
4. To examine the challenges and barriers faced by women entrepreneurs in using e-commerce for their business development.

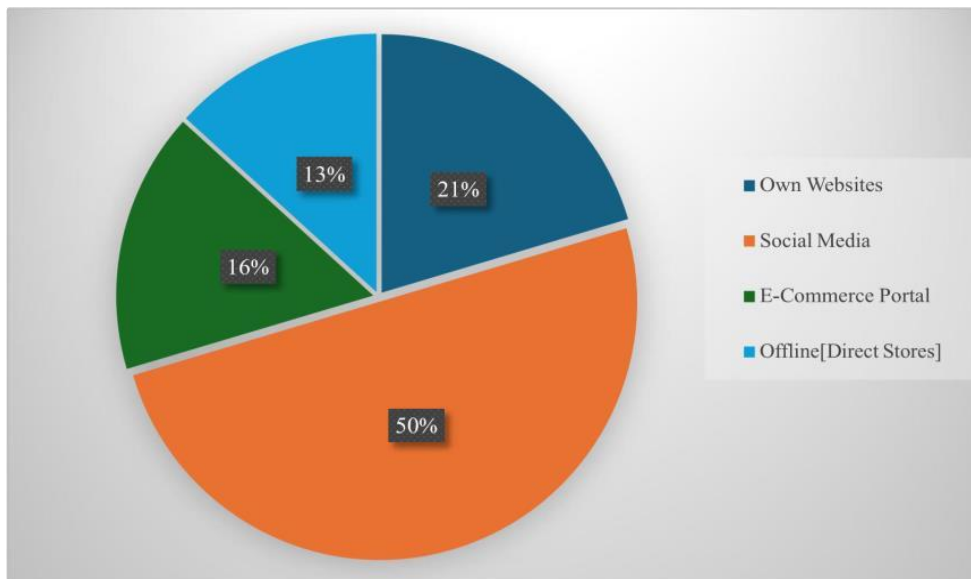
Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design to understand how e-commerce influences the growth and development of women entrepreneurs in Chennai. Primary data were collected using a survey method, where structured questionnaires were distributed to 100 women entrepreneurs from different age groups and business backgrounds across the city. A probability sampling technique was used to ensure fair and random selection of respondents. The collected data were systematically analysed to examine business opportunities, benefits, and challenges associated with the use of e-commerce platforms, providing a clear picture of its role in women's entrepreneurial empowerment.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

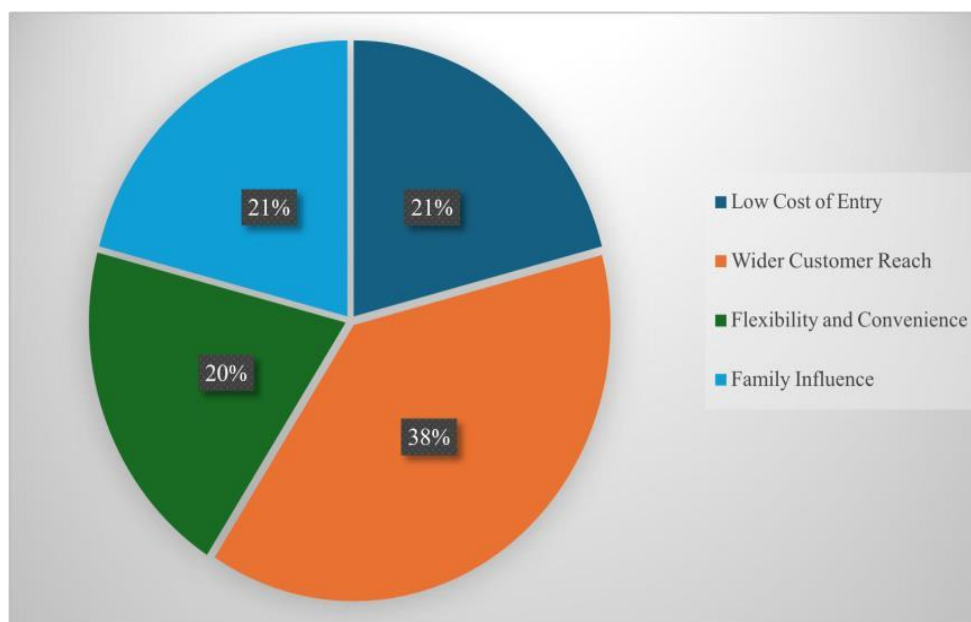
The data analysis shows that social media has become the most effective sales channel for women entrepreneurs, as nearly half of the respondents earn their highest sales through these platforms, highlighting the growing influence of social commerce. Most women adopted e-commerce mainly to reach a wider customer base, proving that online platforms help overcome geographical limitations and improve visibility. A majority also agreed that e-commerce has increased their customer reach, supporting its role in business expansion and growth. However, the findings reveal that high competition remains the biggest challenge in online selling, followed by financial constraints and limited technical knowledge, indicating that while e-commerce offers strong opportunities, women entrepreneurs still need better support, skills, and resources to succeed sustainably.

Figure 1:



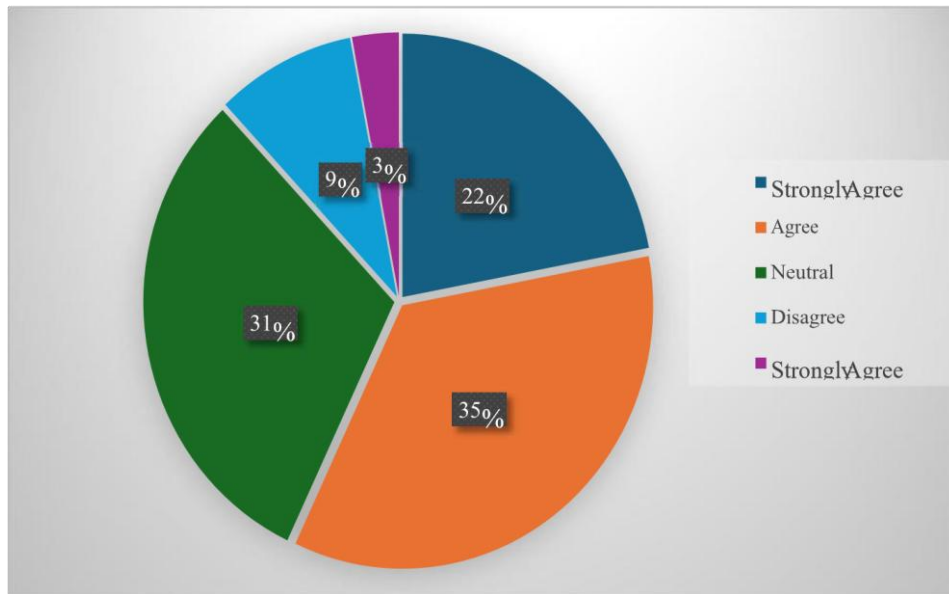
This figure shows the role of e-commerce in enhancing business opportunities for women entrepreneurs in Chennai.

Figure 2:



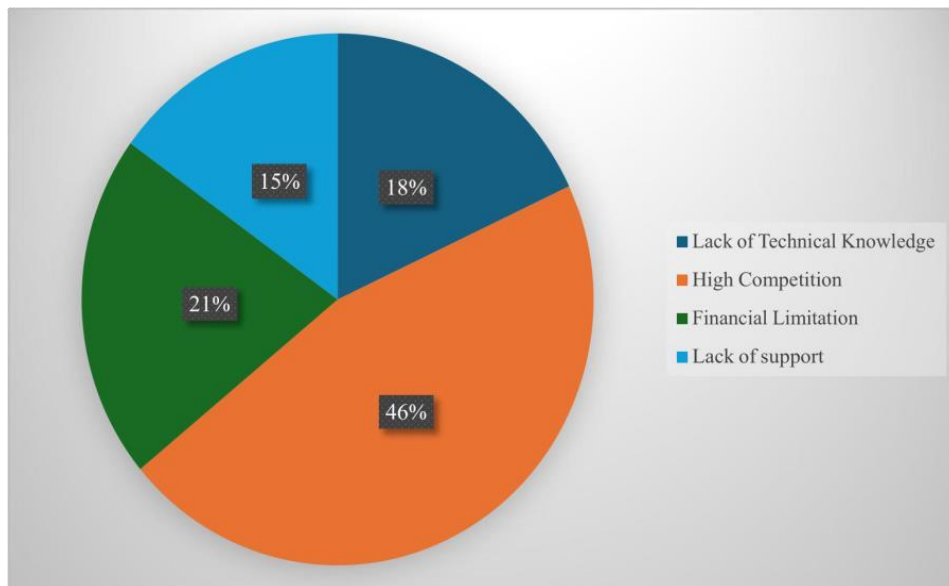
This figure shows the key factors influencing women entrepreneurs to adopt e-commerce platforms.

Figure 3:



This figure shows the benefits gained by women entrepreneurs through e-commerce in terms of sales, customer reach, and business growth.

Figure 4:



This figure shows the challenges and barriers faced by women entrepreneurs in using e-commerce for their business development.

Discussion

The study aims to understand how e-commerce has influenced the business growth of women entrepreneurs in Chennai by examining its impact on market reach, revenue, and customer engagement. It focuses on the role of major platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, and Meesho in improving visibility and access to wider markets while also identifying key

challenges like digital skill gaps, logistics issues, and intense competition. The study further evaluates the support provided by government initiatives and training programs in encouraging women-led online businesses and explores the social and economic benefits gained through e-commerce, including financial independence and social recognition. By comparing traditional business models with e-commerce-based ventures, the study highlights the transformative role of digital platforms and suggests ways to improve accessibility and digital skills to ensure long-term entrepreneurial sustainability.

Scope for future research

The scope for future research in this area includes extending the study beyond Chennai to other regions for comparative analysis, examining the long-term impact of e-commerce on business sustainability and income stability, and exploring the role of advanced digital tools, social media strategies, and emerging technologies in enhancing women-led enterprises. Future studies can also focus on the effectiveness of government support, digital skill development programs, and financial inclusion initiatives, while assessing issues such as cybersecurity, customer trust, and competition to develop more inclusive and supportive e-commerce ecosystems for women entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

The study on the impact of e-commerce in the growth and development of women entrepreneurs in Chennai City reveals that digital platforms have significantly transformed women-led businesses by providing wider market access and reducing entry barriers. E-commerce has empowered women to operate from home, balance personal and professional responsibilities, and reach customers beyond geographical limits. It has enhanced their confidence, financial independence, and decision-making abilities. However, challenges such as a lack of technical knowledge, digital marketing skills, and logistics management persist. Government initiatives and training programs have played a supportive role in encouraging digital participation. The shift towards online business models has enabled women to innovate and compete effectively in the marketplace. Overall, e-commerce has emerged as a vital tool for women's economic empowerment in Chennai. Continued support and digital education can further strengthen their entrepreneurial journey.

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