

# Women Empowerment in Reference to Usage of Social Media

**Ravneet Duggal**

Assistant Professor

Sri Guru Gobind Singh College Of Commerce University Of Delhi

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**Abstract**

Women empowerment is gaining momentum and everyone is looking towards how women are able to cope up and adjust with the existing market scenario. It is quite interesting to see the growth of women and how she is able to face the challenges she encounters in her path to success. Various studies have been done on women empowerment but are majorly in foreign context. With the upcoming of social media platforms the empowerment level has further enhanced. The purpose of this study is to understand the challenges a women faces to get her recognition in society and what all help her in this growth journey of hers. The study is entirely qualitative based on the study of researchers done in this topic. This study aims at providing an insight about the difficulties of women who wants to compete with the world and how ultimately she generates opportunities of empowerment not only for her but for society at large with the usage of various social media platforms.

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## **I. Introduction**

### **1. Women Empowerment**

Women are the pillars of society. It is rightly said that if women are educated and empowered they help in the growth of the country. This is the reason why women empowerment is gaining momentum. In past women did not enjoy much importance and recognition because she was not aware of her own worth. She tried to be satisfied with the status and benefits provided to her. Eventually she found that

she can gain respect both in family and in society if she is able to build a standing for herself. She realized that empowerment is the route for her self-respect and people will value her and give importance to her only if she values herself.

The process of women empowerment began when she realized the level of discrimination happening in organizations. She observed that she was not being paid her worth and growth opportunities were always given to male segment. Here

women decided that it is better to work for self and be master of oneself rather than looking at others to evaluate ones capabilities.

Researchers have supported this argument of discrimination and say that discrimination which women faced in the organizations gave them the realization that they should go for setting up their own business houses. (Patterson and Mavin, 2009). They began with setting up small household businesses because of various constraints they had to deal with and eventually grew. (Thompson et al., 2009). This changed attitude of women was the turning point which got support from various sources like ICT, Self Help Groups and now social media platforms. Women empowerment and growth was largely effected by the support system they had from their family because it helped them to maintain a balance between their home and business.(Ahl, 2006)

Researchers have found that there is a wide difference in the way women runs businesses as compared to men. (Jennings and Brush, 2013). Their perception to deal with people and strategies for raising of funds is quite different. (Baker, Aldrich, and Nina, 2006). Researchers suggest that for the growth women need to widen their network and establish their links with government and financial institutes to avoid issues related to scarcity of resources. ( Manolova et al., 2006)

Women have evolved as a successor and got recognition only after great efforts and bypassing numerous hurdles. (Stead, 2017). Now women are not only empowering themselves rather are creators of job opportunities for the society. ( Kumar, 2015). Researchers say that though women entered into the business field to

survive but now have resulted into becoming independent and confident. They are now quite satisfied as they are able to get their due recognition. (Mukherjee, 2013)

Government launched mentor programs and internships being provided by institutes can also be considered as an important landmark in giving direction to women to go for entrepreneurship and gave them confidence. (Austin and Nauta, 2016). Service sector has also paved the route for women to grow by opening new opportunities for them. ( Kumar, 2015). According to researchers, ICT have also helped women to transform the work culture. (Kamberidou, 2013). Researchers also found that the coming up of Self Help Groups in rural regions help women therein to start their small businesses from their homes itself thereby helping them to perform their household responsibilities and getting some earning at the same time. (Sharma and Varma, 2008).

So, researchers are of the view that in the growth of women empowerment, the efforts of institutions and supportive family attitude along with removal of gender biasness is vital. (Vossenber, 2013)

Empowerment means creating job opportunities for self and become a participant to the growth of nation. Government is also supporting this concept. Women empowerment was possible when family support was given and women were allowed to work in their family business as it laid base for confidence building. Further changed attitude of society towards working women and reliance on their thinking and skills gave growth to this wave.

## Challenges

Role of women have changed over the years. They have been facing lot of challenges to seek their recognition in this competing world. Women faced lot of hindrances from their family as well as from society. The reason for this was that they themselves were not confident enough of their skills and capabilities and also they lacked resources and freedom.

The social mind set was a big constraint and acted as a hurdle in women growth. (Jyoti, Sharma and Kumari, 2011). Women were restricted to particular businesses because of the gender biasness that existed. (Welter, Brush and de Bruin, 2014). Women faced lot of problems in raising financial resources because of the orthodox thinking of the society who rely on male if question of providing funds come as compared to women, resulting in scarcity of fund availability for women. (Jennings and Brush, 2013; Ahl, 2006). These unrealistic societal norms did not allow women easy access to resources. (K. Gupta and M. Bhawe, 2007; Jose Rodriguez and Javier Santos, 2007). This was the reason why women were restricted to small businesses only. (Manolova, Manev, Carter and Gyoshev, 2006)

Another major challenge encountered by women was lack of education and lack of proper training to refine their skills. The household responsibilities also acted as an obstacle since they were not getting proper support from family front. (Tripathi and Sharma, 2012; E. Jennings and G. Brush 2013). Media was also found to be unsupportive. (Baker, Aldrich, and Nina, 2006).

The challenges which women faced were both from within and outside. Internal challenges comprised of her insecurities in

terms of confidence, unaware of own skills and capabilities, lack of risk taking capacity, etc. Not only this, society also acted as a hurdle in her growth path and did not provide any support to her. In the male oriented society it was difficult for her to get financial or any other form of help.

Besides these external challenges, researchers believe that women faced psychological challenges also because of their internal fears and their lack of confidence in themselves. They were not able to perceive what they were capable of doing. (Noguera, Alvarez, and Urbano, 2013).

The responsibilities on women were so many that they rarely thought about themselves and their own upliftment. Since they were not exposed to the outside world, they were hesitant to take any initiative and when family support was also missing their risk taking capacity further reduced.

Women were supposed to look after the needs of her family and perform her household responsibilities like cooking, cleaning, child care, etc. She was not able to get any time to satisfy her esteem needs and give exposure to her skills and talents. Lack of resources and social non-cooperation were big challenges before women empowerment.

## 2. Social Media

With the introduction of social media women are given a platform to come up and grow. Social media acts as a guide and helping aid for them. Women are able to develop confidence in themselves and gather courage to face this world. Social media platforms provide lot of support to women by helping her to come out of her

fears and get recognition. These social media platforms are so user friendly that they provide very good exposure to women without coming in direct contact with people. This gives time to them to overcome their fears and stabilize. Eventually they are able to develop confidence and go for tapping new opportunities of growth.

Now-a-days social media has gained momentum because it has the capacity to change the entire perception of people if used properly. (Putter, 2017). It attracts the attention of young generation who are always looking for newness.(Shabir et al., 2013). Social media has not only been able to get the attention of youth but has given people a wide platform for discussion where they can freely converse, give their views and also criticize if need be. (Heinonen, 2011) It is an information provider whom people use at their convenience. (Goyal, 2016) It is a great help to the organizations who are wishing to build brand image because it provides them online platform to propagate the product and its features leading to more awareness. (Balakrishnan, 2014; Erkan and Evans, 2016).

It has played a very important role in women empowerment. Many small women entrepreneurs are seen coming up on social media where they have started their small household businesses and got independent.

Social media helps in bridging the gap and brings businesses as well as consumers close to each other leading to being beneficial to both the business houses as well as consumers. (J. Jussila, Karkkainen and Aramo-Immonen, 2014). It was found that social media not only helps big business houses but also is of great help to

small entrepreneurs who are moving towards growth by removing the constraints of time and place.(Hayta, 2013) Social media gives scope for wider coverage at economical cost and it was observed that if media is strategically used, it can give big gains. It helps in acting as a link between people and build bond. It provides a platform to people to gather information and also share their information and views.

Social media helps the organizations to build brand image for their concerns also due to which it is not only being used by small and upcoming firms but by all established firms who wish to go for expansion.

### **3. Role Of Social Media In Women Empowerment**

Social media helps women to access information and interact with people with ease. The interactive social media platforms help them to communicate with people and present their views with ease which they might not otherwise be comfortable in doing because of the introvert nature and lack of confidence in the initial stage of business.

Researchers believe that social media has paved the way for women to explore business opportunities as it provides them economy. It helps them to gather all relevant information they need along with giving them the opportunity to grow and build a good brand image for themselves which ultimately gives her confidence. (Beninger et al.,2016)

Women by using social media platforms can interact with a large segment and explore all possible opportunities feasible to them. It saves time of both the seller and buyer. Not only this it spreads the

information at a very fast pace and also ethics are kept which results in building goodwill for the seller. This is the reason why social media platforms are being widely used by all big business houses to build their brand image.

Social media sites like Facebook and WhatsApp help in interaction with public and reduces the constraints of time and place. Researchers found that the features of these sites and their user friendly interaction opens opportunities for women and attracts women and girls to use them. (Abdul Hamid,,Sobhi Ishak and Yusof, 2015)

Social media has helped in making women tech friendly. (Lugaye Ukpere, D. Slabbert and I. Ukpere, 2014). Researchers believe that women can achieve success even globally if she is able to use technology strategically. (Hashim, Razak, and Amir, 2011).

It provides features which are user friendly and to use them no special knowledge and skill is required. This is the reason why it is being widely used by household ladies to set up their businesses. Moreover, it requires no infra structure nor any investment. So, the financial issue also is waved off. By using social media women are able to manage their home and business conveniently and are able to maintain proper balance between their home and business.

#### **4. Social Media Platforms**

There are lot many social media platforms being used by business houses to grow and build brand image for themselves. Most popular out of them are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp. Many new entrepreneurs are using these platforms to establish themselves. We find lot of

women using WhatsApp groups to promote their household businesses because of the ease and large reachability, which is provided by them. These platforms have different features which provide convenience to its users due to which they are visited frequently. These platforms because of their multiple features and benefits are being in high demand. People visit these sites for information.

Different social media platforms provide unique features and these features are designed and modified as per the needs of the users.

#### **5. Changes Empowerment Brings In Women**

It has been observed that women who are working and have been able to establish their businesses are much more confident and have a wider prospective. They can contribute in the growth of the country by generating new job opportunities and also by bringing new perspectives of doing business as it has been observed that thinking process of women is quite different from that of men.

An independent woman is more motivated and is able to handle situations in a better way. Empowerment brings change in women's personality, status and also in her mental state. She becomes more of a strategical thinker and her expectations from herself enhance leading her to tap new opportunities.

Empowerment helps in generating a feeling of satisfaction in women that she is contributing something to her family. She starts getting recognition by her family through the mode of asking her views in the important matters of family. This boosts her morale.

## II. Methodology

The paper under study is based on secondary data comprising of articles and literature reviews. The objective of this paper is to have a qualitative aspect about women, social media and women empowerment.

## III. Findings And Conclusion

The study has helped in understanding the difficulties of women who wish to come out of their houses to find a place for them in the society. She faces different challenges from social and family front but because of her will power and the helping aid provided to them through means of institutions, Self Help Groups, ICT and many more, motivate them to come out of the clutches of orthodox societal norms and seek recognition. Women empowerment is a long journey of women from the four walls of her house to absolutely a new world. The study depicts that journey of women. It has been observed that social media has played a very important role in building confidence and making women self-reliant. With the help of social media platforms women have been able to overcome her fears of interaction, insecurity of lacking financial resources, risk involved, etc. Social media has come as a savior and helped women to grow with more confidence and satisfy her esteem needs.

Women empowerment has not only empowered women but given her a realization of her skills, talent, strategic thinking and above all a feeling of being financially independent. These things have given her a respectable position both in society and in family.

The study has been able to portray the success story of women from being dependent to becoming independent. There is lot of scope for future researchers to study the changing role of women, especially from the context that how they are using social media strategically for their benefit and growth.

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