

IMPACT OF DIGITAL MARKETING ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

This paper is all about the female empowerment or gender equality in catastrophic period. As COVID-19 continues to exert influence on lives and livelihoods around the world, we can see that the pandemic and its economic fallout are having a regressive effect on gender equality. By reckoning, women's jobs are 1.8 times more unsafe to this crisis than men's jobs. Females make up 39 percent of global employment but account for 54 percent of overall job losses. And the reason for this greater effect on women is that virus is significantly increasing the burden of unpaid care, which is disproportionately carried by women. This, among other factors, means that women's employment is dropping faster than average, even accounting for the fact that women and men work in different sectors. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the outset of the world in a capacity that usually takes a far longer time. The importance of digital skills has been ever increasing but the pandemic has brought urgency to the fore. The digital skills were already considered a great addition to existing abilities but what this pandemic has done is, it has proved that the digital skills are no more an additional skill, in fact, it now is one of the necessary skills to possess in all facets of lives. And by keeping this in mind women did not give up and got off to a great start. They used social media and took their work digitally. So, this paper magnifies current scenario and future aspects of digital marketing in women empowerment as well as how women are touching the heights even in calamity with great examples.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Employment, Empowerment, Gender Equality, Social Media.

Introduction

Digital marketing is the component of marketing that uses internet and online based digital technologies such as desktop computers, mobile phones and other digital media and platforms to promote services and products. Its evolution in the 1990s and 2000s revolutionised the way brands and businesses utilise technology to sell themselves. As digital platforms became more integrated into marketing plans and daily life, and as people increasingly prevalent, employing combinations of search engine optimization (SEO), search engine marketing (SEM), content marketing, campaign marketing, influencer marketing, content automation, data-driven marketing, ecommerce marketing, social media marketing, social media optimization, e-mail direct marketing, display advertising, e-books, and optical disks and games have turned into commonplace. Non-Internet channels that provide digital media, such as television, mobile phones (SMS and MMS), on-hold mobile ring tones, and call back, are examples of digital marketing. Digital marketing is distinguished from online advertising by its expansion into non-Internet channels.

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Women's empowerment (or female empowerment) can be defined in a variety of ways, including accepting women's perspectives or making an effort to seek them out, as well as elevating women's status through education, awareness, literacy, and training. Women's empowerment empowers and allows women to make life-changing decisions in the face of societal problems. They may be able to redefine gender roles or other such roles, which may give them more freedom to pursue desired goals. Women's empowerment has emerged as a critical issue in development and economics. Women's economic empowerment enables them to control and benefit from resources, assets, and income. It also improves women's well-being and their ability to manage risk. It can lead to approaches to support trivialised genders in a specific political or social context. While the terms are frequently used interchangeably, the more comprehensive concept of gender empowerment applies to people of any gender, emphasising the distinction between biological and gender as a role. Women's empowerment improves women's status through literacy, education, training, and awareness-raising. Furthermore, women's empowerment refers to women's ability to make strategic life decisions that were previously unavailable to them.

Digital media is allowing women's empowerment to be seen on a global scale like never before. Many women, from housewives to business owners, are bringing their ideas to life with the help of digital media. Women nowadays are improving their chances of meeting compatible people and coming up with their own ideas. Business opportunities for women have never been this close before, and they have never had structures like these to help them unleash their talents.

Digital marketing has proven to be an ideal platform for ambitious women who are forced to stay at home. This opens up a plethora of opportunities for women to discover, profit from, and become female marketers. At the end of the day, it appears to be the most secure way of nurturing and understanding their desires for a better future.

We have seen an environment where we were all locked up in our home during this pandemic where there is less hope of recovery and coming out of this pandemic digital marketing has been proving to be a break through for all the people sitting at home and trying hard to earn their living. During this pandemic there were many cases of where women faced domestic violence there digital marketing helped women become self dependent and there are many resources which are helping women to make money as well as respect:

Twitch

The game streaming service - While the gaming space continues to be dominated by male influencers, women make up 35% of the streamer base on Twitch. According to GlobalWebIndex, Twitch's user base was 81.5 percent male in Q3, 2017, with females accounting for 18.5 percent of the platform. Many women are taking their love of gaming and creative abilities online. Despite not having millions of followers on YouTube like the top gamers, these women have done well for themselves.

There are top 10 female Twitch streamers in 2021, their real names following their usernames and income:

- Pokimane - ImaneAnys - \$250, 000 a year
- Loeya - Liah, Olivia - approx. \$420.000 a year
- Amouranth - Kaitlyn Siragusa – approx. \$300.000 – \$408.000 a year
- Alinity - Natalia Mogollon - approx. \$300.000 – \$400.000 a year
- KittyPlays - Kristen Michaela - approx. \$300.000 a year
- STPeach - Lisa Vannatta - approx. \$276.000 a year
- AriGameplays - Abril Abdamari Garza Alonso - \$36.000 – \$72.000 a year
- Loserfruit - Kathleen Belsten - approx. \$69.000 a year
- Pink_Sparkles - Samantha Tomlensen - approx. \$50.000 a year
- itsHafu - Rumay Wang - approx. \$50.000 a year

Youtube

44% are female. YouTube's user based skews male, but there are still plenty of women creating and consuming content on the platform. 8. YouTube is the world's second-most visited website.

There are top 10 female worldwide YouTubers in 2021:

- Jenna Marbles – 18 million
- Liza Koshy – 15 million
- RCLBeauty101 – 13 million
- IISuperwomanII – 13 million
- Zoella – 12 million
- Wengie – 11 million
- Bethany Mota – 10 million
- Lindsey Stirling – 10 million
- Rosanna Pansino – 10 million
- Miranda Sings – 8.9 million

There are top 10 female Indian YouTubers in 2021:

- Anaysa – 12.9 million
- Nisha Madhulika - 12.4 million
- Kabita Singh – 11.7 million
- Shruti Arjun Anand – 9.76 million
- Vidya Iyer – 7.5 million
- Pooja Luthra – 7.2 million
- Prajakta Koli – 6.55 million
- HimanshiTekwani – 4.57 million
- Shirley Setia – 3.82 million
- Komal Gudan – 3.32 million

Insta influencers

The influencer market has expanded and flourished to an extent that it is hard for anyone to not notice it. If we look back at the time when influencer marketing had just started, it was mostly the big established businesses who were opting for such a dynamic strategy. Just like every marketing strategy this one also was being tested and experimented with by marketers and businesses. Now, influencer marketing has successfully become a priority for most brands.

This statistic gives information on the greatest part of Instagram users, sorted by gender, as of April 2021. During the survey period, 50.4 percent of Instagram audiences were female and 49.6 percent were male. Globally, there are top 10 female instainfluencers with their followers of main account and start-up account:

- Emma Chamberlain – 15.1 million + 447k
- Kayla Itsines – 13.9 million + 1million
- Huda Kattan – 2.4 million + 50million
- Kusha Kapila – 2.2 million
- Zara McDermott – 1.6 million + 260k
- Olivia Jade – 1.3 million + 4.2k
- Dolly Singh – 1.4 million
- Tanaya - 652k
- Natasha Noel – 331k
- Trinetra – 227k

And there are so many options of reselling on applications. Many sub-urban small scale female producers of clothes and handmade crafts have come on internet platform to sell their articles and products to feed them and their family to have better lifestyle.

Applications name: **Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, Meesho** Etc.

Literature Review

In a Forbes post published "The branding and marketing jobs with a bright future," Jacqueline Smith (2013) evaluates the effect of marketing and advertising on people's daily decision-making. More literate and working professionals it is sure that they end up having no time to doubt or think of comparing and sparing time to think of certain brands and all. All matters, is impression and first experience. It is easy to get loyal customer but equally difficult to retain them.

In an article by M.Farouk Radwan(2017), in know myself, he discussed difference between a man's and woman's choices and the gender issues which has been raised now is related with lack of understanding between these two genders. He said it is not a problem in itself, it was grown slowly and gradually by ourselves. There is no limitation of possibilities to expand each of them, but the matter is of focus and understanding. An article in The American Interest (2016) titled "Men and Women Choose Careers Differently" reveals that males are paid 30% more than females for the same job. It entails not only gender discrimination in terms of contribution value, but also an attempt to discourage females from pursuing similar careers as men do for them. Women are compelled to think differently and less than men. Not only now, but since a long time ago.

A different result is presented in case of millennial, by a report in indeed blog, July, 2016. In this research, indeed found that there is no or very less difference between career choices on the basis of gender. Both genders are discovered to be optimistic about obtaining a full-time job of their choice after completing their academic qualifications. Furthermore, job contents such as location, work place, timing, salary, and so on are equally important to both genders.

While we specifically study the marketing field, the current situation is different. According to a BizReports study published in October 2013, there is a gender balance in marketing jobs. Furthermore, they trace a record that initially, the marketing profession has a 3:1 ration of female and male employees. However, after the age of 30, the rate of female employees taking long breaks and leaving jobs is extremely high, affecting the pay scale of women to men. As a result, males hold the majority of marketing positions, while females re-join but take time to reclaim their positions and respective pay scales.

Apart from these, where a lot of studies are done in women for marketing, there are sufficient studies done about how marketing support women career enhancement. A study presented by University of Texas reveals major 4 reasons how marketing is good for women. First, because marketing is focused for market and market is dominated by women interest , thus marketing job prefer female candidates to male. Second, because there are already enough successful examples of women in this field. As a result, they have greater credibility and are more likely to be accepted. Third, women have a greater ability to comprehend and imagine than men. So they can get multiple options to be in like product development, strategy development, creative head and even model in any advertisement project. Fourthly, this sector is always moving side by side the sentiments of society, thus the trend and theme changes as per the need of time and situation. And, without a doubt, this is a period of female empowerment. Digital techniques are extremely useful for transforming things in a unique and improved manner.

Objective of the Study

The entire study will be based on analyzing the efforts of various digital marketing tools in advancing women's careers in such a difficult time. During COVID-19, this paper will attempt to cover all aspects of women's career advancement (education, employment, and empowerment).

Research Methodology

This paper will be a conceptual paper and will be based upon various secondary information available in different sources like books journals, research papers, newspaper, online articles, etc. Additionally opinions and ideas dragged from the observation of marketing trends will also be presented in paper.

Analysis

Marketing's goal is to make things visible and generate demand. There are numerous marketing tools available to assist in achieving this goal in a variety of ways. As already discussed in introduction part, how a women is more feasible by nature to handle marketing jobs, further how marketing tools support women better will be now discussed. Marketing tools are majorly classified into two categories at present. First is traditional marketing tool and second is digital marketing tool. This paper will discuss both of them relating to their role in women career enhancement. Most of traditional tools has been digitalized in same state and some are added to the list like;

S.N	Traditional marketing tools	Digital marketing tools
1	Advertisement	Graphic designing
2	Personal selling	SEO
3	Public relationship	E-mail marketing
4	Publicity	Content Marketing
5	Sales promotion	Social media marketing
6	Direct marketing, etc.	Marketing schedule, etc.

In addition to digitalizing traditional marketing tools, digitally developed tools are all simple to learn and effective to enact.

Advertisement trends have shifted the media landscape. It is not only broadcast on radio or television, but also online via other apps. But theme of advertisement started being more entertaining that people started responding, searching and sharing those advertisement amongst their network. For women to assist, theme started encouraging women education, equality, right, justice, power, role in society and highlighted her contribution. Women started playing lead roles, heroic activities and achievements are exhibited well.

Personal selling and direct marketing have given way to individualised selling via e-mail, live chats, and SMS marketing. There are ample opportunities for both genders to work behind the desk in this capacity. However, because it is a target-based job, it has come up with flexible working hours and pay for performance. This is also a motivator for women to work on their own time and for themselves.

Public relationship is now developed through social media marketing. These assist women to utilize a large network they always are. The sharing and high communicative nature they have makes them easily reach more clients and be visible widely. Publicity is still in the hands of the media, and the media is a nearly 70 percent female-dominated industry. Sales promotion shines as usual in both the digital and physical markets, i.e. mostly directed at women who are in charge of the house and decide what to buy when, for what, and for whom. Thus this is also better understood by a woman and their idea will better work. So it is also beneficial for a woman both ways.

SEO has been the most successful tool, which now has made an allure of digital marketing courses that help women work creatively from wherever they are and get paid well. So online education through digital classes made it easy to reach and implement learning for women. Being on demand, there is significant opportunity of employment.

To reach target customers, content marketing entails filtering the most desired contents and everyday look in the lounge attractive links. Marketing schedules aid in tracing the history of strategies implemented and a well-planned process for what comes next. When used wisely, these digital marketing tools make marketing jobs more systematic, worthwhile, flexible, easy to learn, secure careers, good pay, and available in one's own time and space.

There are few examples that show that women have succeeded in the pandemic as well:

- Vidya Venkatraman: Founder & CEO of Meraki & Co.
- Anamika Sengupta: Founder of Almitra Tattva and Co- founder of Almitra sustainable
- Rania Lampou: Global Educator, STEM Instructor Greek Astronomy and Space Company (Annex Salamis)
- ZorainKhaleeli: Founder of Zorain's Studio and Academy
- Sushmitha Gowda: Founder of Mirakki Hair care
- SsaritaSiingh: Managing Trustee Priyadarshini Group of Schools
- Sheelaa M Bajaj: Founder of Sheelaa M Bajaj
- Paridhi Goel: Co-Founder Love Earth Skincare
- Yukti Nagpal: Director of Gulshan
- Gauthami Balraj: Co-Founder of Mirakki

Conclusion

Better understanding capacity of women makes them on demand for marketing jobs. But to note how marketing supports women education, employment and empowerment. Before concluding let us see the reasons why a women must learn digital marketing:

- Benefits of flexible working hours.
- Good pay scale
- Chance to be an entrepreneur
- Digital on demand
- Easy learning
- Best ROI
- Nothing to lose

After it, It can be said that marketing in digital age is no more a physical pressure and selling things door to door. It is now to make things or present things as such target audience comes seeking them. So, it has more to do with understanding psychology of customers and dealing with it responsibly.

Digitalization of marketing tools have made them easy learning, which is supporting women education, better employment with good pay scale supports in women employment and financial and intellectual independence makes women empowered. This way digital marketing plays a crucial role in women education, employment and empowerment.

Additionally, digital marketing has added few new concepts like social marketing, green marketing, CSR in their theme, content marketing, etc. which has made marketing more responsible in directing society in a positive way towards growth and sustainability. Women are integral part of society and their development is must in overall growth of the society. Overall comprises of academic, economic and social strength to grow as an independent person with their own status and recognition.

Digitalization has made impact on everyone's life from many aspects. It has made learning easier and more convenient, exposer wider and more unlimited opportunity for talent anywhere. But the awareness of how and where is done by marketing tools. Making female education as requirement and presenting it as their basic right is one of the contribution of digital advertisements in women education. Highlighting success stories of women entrepreneurs and ladies in top positions, need of women economic independence is reflected and at the same time shaping thoughts of it audience is achieved.

Suggestions

- Women should have technical edge in this era to get optimum of their knowledge and skills they possess.
- The attributes and knowledge required to perform specific tasks are referred to as technical skills. They are useful, and are frequently associated with mechanical, information technology, mathematical, or scientific tasks.
- Through technical skills females can open up alternate income avenues.

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