

Empowering Women in Social Commerce: Challenges and Importance in the Clothing Sector of Haryana

Research Scholar: Bharti Lathar

Baba mastnath university, Rohtak

Guide :Dr. Megha

Abstract

Social commerce has completely changed how companies function and given women entrepreneurs new chances, especially in the apparel industry. Social commerce has the potential to empower women in Haryana, a state with a mix of urban and rural populations, by giving them access to a larger market and financial independence. However, a number of obstacles prevent them from succeeding in this online market. This study examines the main problems that women encounter, including disparities in digital literacy, financial limitations, social and cultural hurdles, cybersecurity difficulties, and rivalry from well-known brands. According to research, social commerce has a lot of promise for women, but in order to guarantee inclusivity and long-term growth, major societal and infrastructure obstacles need to be removed. In order to improve the environment for female entrepreneurs, the report also suggests strategic initiatives such as awareness campaigns, financial support systems, training in digital literacy, and enhanced cybersecurity. Policymakers, financial institutions, and digital platforms are among the stakeholders who can help promote gender inclusivity in social commerce by tackling these issues. This study offers insightful information for further research as well as workable strategies to empower women in Haryana's expanding digital economy.

Keywords: Social commerce, Women entrepreneurs, Clothing sector, Haryana, Digital literacy, Online transactions, Gender barriers

Introduction

Traditional company landscapes have been significantly altered as a result of the proliferation of social commerce, particularly in the textile industry. The term "social commerce" is a subclass of "e-commerce" that describes the process of purchasing and selling products and services using social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Pinterest. As a result of its ability to combine the power of social interactions with digital

transactions, it is becoming an increasingly popular business model all over the world. Individuals and small-scale entrepreneurs have the opportunity to reach a larger audience through social commerce, which does not require them to make significant investments in traditional shopfronts.

In India, social commerce is fast gaining traction as a result of the growing number of people who have smartphones and increasing internet coverage. The state of Haryana, which is home to a diverse population of both urban and rural residents, has seen an increase in the number of digital transactions and online business activities. Women business owners in Haryana, particularly those operating in the apparel industry, have begun to tap into the potential of social commerce in order to broaden their customer base and achieve greater financial autonomy. However, despite the fact that it has many advantages, they are unable to fully exploit the potential of social commerce due to the many obstacles that they face.

Review of literature

(Alsaif 2013) studied “Factors Affecting Citizens’ Adoption of E-government Moderated by Socio-cultural Values in Haryana” The deployment of electronic government has been hastened by a number of governments all over the world in order to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, quality, speed, and accessibility of their services. It is important to note that there is no global model that can be utilised by governments all over the world. Each administration is responsible for putting into action its own unique agenda, while also taking into account the peculiarities of the nation, which include social, cultural, economic, and political aspects. When it comes to the implementation and acceptance of e-government, characteristics such as these may either help or impede the process.

(Gurumurthy, Chami, and Thomas 2016) studied “A Feminist Commentary on Policy Agendas in the Digital Moment As a feminist perspective on India's national digital agenda in the light of the current political climate, this paper is presented here. In the analysis, three primary policy threads are pursued: social welfare, democracy, and economic growth. Additionally, the meta-narrative of technology, gender, and development that characterises the unique complexion of authoritarian neoliberalism that is reconstituting Indian democracy in digital times is unpacked.

(Rani and Sinha 2016) studied Barriers Facing Women Entrepreneurs in Rural India: A Study in Haryanaharyana The purpose of this study is to shed light on the challenges that women entrepreneurs in Haryana (India) encounter. In terms of methodology, the study was descriptive-cum-exploratory in character, and the approach of convenient sampling was

utilised. Primary data, which were gathered through the use of a structured questionnaire, constitute the entirety of the study's foundation. According to the findings, the most significant challenges that women entrepreneurs face include a lack of support from their families, the non-cooperation of male counterparts, a weak bargaining position, psychological barriers, a lack of experience, a lack of knowledge, a lack of support from society, harassment, difficulties in obtaining loans to establish a business, a lack of awareness about credit facilities for women, a lack of infrastructure facilities, stringent regulations and policies, difficulties in attracting customers, a lack of marketing skills, and unfavourable market behaviours.

(Bhargav 2017) studied haryanaA STUDY ON FACTORS AFFECTING ON ONLINE SHOPPING OF CONSUMERS IN RURAL HARYANA SHREYAaharyana One of the most recent trends that has grown a significant amount of substance in the contemporary corporate sector is online shopping. The development of internet purchasing has made it possible to take advantage of opportunities and give a competitive advantage over businesses. the door has been opened. The proliferation of internet connectivity, the accessibility of technologically capable devices to the general public, and the utilisation of e-commerce by merchants have all contributed to the explosive rise of online shopping in recent years.

(Kumaravel 2017) studied haryanaconsumer Shopping Behaviour And The Role Of Women In Shopping – A Literature Reviewharyana Even if a person purchases a product or service, they might not necessarily be considered a user or customer. The study of shopper behaviour has mostly concentrated on individuals and the variables that influence their choices about the expenditure of their resources on things connected to consumption or consumption-related goods. There are many different fields of study that have been utilised in the development of notions and theories regarding shopper behaviour. These fields include sociology, social psychology, cultural anthropology, and economics. The majority of consumers that take pleasure in shopping are female, and they are regarded as a significant force in the retail industry.

(Vashista 2017) studied haryanaConception towards Electronically Shopping: An Analysis of Haryana buyersharyana An essential part of the electronic buying experience is played by the purchasers. The younger population in Haryana is increasingly using the Internet, which presents a new opportunity for businesses that provide goods and services via electronic means. It is possible for electronic merchants to further expand their marketing tactics in order to convert potential consumers into active ones if they are aware of the elements that influence

the purchasing behaviour of Haryanan purchasers and the associations that exist between these factors and the kind of electronic buyers. Four major aspects of electronic shopping, as viewed by buyers in Haryana, are highlighted in this study.

(Jayachandran 2018) studied haryanaImpacts of Breakthrough's school-based gender attitude change programme in Haryana, Indiaharyana According to Jha et al. (2006), the outcomes for women in India remain significantly poorer than those for males, despite the fact that India has seen fast economic growth and social revolution over the past two decades. Despite the fact that boys and girls have practically equal enrollment at the elementary level and the beginning of secondary school, only 73 females register in tertiary school for every 100 boys (World Bank 2010). This tendency is visible in the outcomes of education. According to Duflo (2012), women are more likely to marry at a young age and have children at a young age.

(Arpita, Amrut, and Srikant 2019) studied haryanaInvestigating the Role of Knowledge, Materialism, Product Availability, and Involvement" in Predicting the Organic Clothing Purchase Behavior of Consumers in the Indian Marketharyana The current study investigated the factors that impact Indian consumers' decisions to purchase organic clothes. These factors included, but were not limited to, the level of participation with organic clothing products, the level of consumption involvement, organic clothing knowledge, perceived product availability, and materialism. An online survey was used to collect data for the study, and the researchers used a combination of convenience sampling and random sampling. The sample had a total of 351 individuals, all of them were Indian customers and had an average age of 34. An method known as structural equation modelling was utilised in order to investigate the hypothesised correlations that existed between the available variables.

Role of Women in Social Commerce

Despite the growing acceptance of women in digital business spaces, cultural expectations still limit their entrepreneurial activities, and it is difficult for women to start and maintain their businesses due to a lack of access to digital literacy programs and financial resources. Women-led businesses in the clothing sector have become an essential part of the social commerce ecosystem, contributing to local economies and promoting sustainable livelihoods. Many women in Haryana have embraced social commerce as a means of entrepreneurship, using platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp to promote and sell clothing products. This digital transformation has given them a flexible way to manage businesses from their homes while fulfilling familial responsibilities.

Growth of Social Commerce in India and Haryana

Over the past ten years, India's digital economy has grown at an exponential rate. E-commerce and social commerce have grown because to government programs like "Digital India" and improved internet connectivity. India's social commerce market is predicted to expand dramatically, according to reports, providing new chances for small business owners, especially women. As a forward-thinking yet culturally conservative state, Haryana has gradually moved towards digital business models.

Social media platforms are being used more and more by the state's female entrepreneurs for business dealings, especially in the apparel sector. Women-led social commerce businesses have grown in popularity due to the desire for ethnic clothing, casual fashion, and personalised clothing. Nevertheless, in spite of this expansion, Haryana's female entrepreneurs still face a number of practical and social obstacles that impede their advancement.

Challenges Faced by Women in Social Commerce

Women in Haryana face multiple obstacles when engaging in social commerce for clothing. Some of the key challenges include:

- **Limited Digital Literacy:** Many women lack the technical knowledge required to manage digital platforms, create effective marketing strategies, and handle online transactions efficiently.
- **Financial Constraints:** Access to funding and capital remains a significant challenge for women entrepreneurs, limiting their ability to scale their businesses.
- **Social and Cultural Barriers:** Gender norms and societal expectations often restrict women from actively participating in business activities.
- **Safety and Cybersecurity Concerns:** Women entrepreneurs frequently encounter online fraud, harassment, and security threats, making them hesitant to expand their businesses digitally.
- **Trust and Consumer Confidence Issues:** Establishing trust with customers and ensuring product quality are critical concerns in social commerce.
- **Competition from Large E-commerce Platforms:** Women entrepreneurs struggle to compete with well-established online marketplaces like Amazon, Flipkart, and Myntra, which have advanced logistics and marketing strategies.

Importance of Addressing These Challenges

Addressing these challenges is crucial for creating a more inclusive and supportive business environment for women entrepreneurs in Haryana. Enabling women to participate fully in social commerce can lead to economic growth, job creation, and greater financial independence for women. Governments, financial institutions, and digital platforms must work together to implement policies and initiatives that facilitate women's involvement in the digital marketplace.

- **Economic Growth and Financial Inclusion:** Empowering women in social commerce can significantly contribute to the state's economy. Women entrepreneurs can generate employment opportunities for others, thereby fostering local economic development. Enhanced participation in the digital economy can also reduce dependency on traditional income sources.
- **Bridging the Digital Divide:** Many women in Haryana lack digital literacy and access to technological resources. By providing training and improving digital infrastructure, more women can leverage social commerce, ensuring a more inclusive and equitable business environment.
- **Gender Equality and Social Empowerment:** Encouraging women to engage in social commerce challenges traditional gender roles and promotes financial independence. By addressing cultural and societal constraints, women can play a more active role in decision-making processes within their families and communities.
- **Improving Consumer Trust and Market Expansion:** When women entrepreneurs receive the necessary support to enhance their business credibility and reliability, it fosters greater consumer trust. A well-regulated and supportive ecosystem can also help social commerce businesses expand beyond local markets, increasing profitability and sustainability.
- **Cybersecurity and Safety:** Addressing cybersecurity threats and privacy concerns is vital for creating a secure online environment for women entrepreneurs. Implementing

stricter regulations and promoting awareness about safe online practices can reduce fraud, harassment, and data breaches.

- **Encouraging Innovation and Entrepreneurship:** By removing barriers to entry, women will be more motivated to innovate and develop creative business models. Increased access to financial resources, digital marketing strategies, and networking opportunities can contribute to business sustainability and growth.
- **Strengthening Logistics and Infrastructure:** Many women entrepreneurs struggle with inefficient logistics and delivery systems. Addressing these logistical issues through improved partnerships with delivery services can ensure timely order fulfillment and better customer experiences, leading to long-term business success.

Conclusion

Social commerce has the potential to be a game-changer for women entrepreneurs in Haryana's clothing sector. The digital marketplace offers flexibility, low investment requirements, and the ability to reach a wider audience. However, several obstacles continue to hinder the growth and success of women-led businesses in this space. These include digital illiteracy, financial constraints, cultural and social barriers, cybersecurity threats, trust issues, logistical difficulties, and competition from established brands. Addressing these challenges is imperative for fostering an inclusive, supportive, and sustainable environment for women entrepreneurs. To fully realize the benefits of social commerce, multi-stakeholder efforts are required. Governments and policymakers must prioritize digital literacy programs to ensure women have the necessary skills to engage in online businesses effectively. Financial institutions should introduce tailored funding solutions, micro-loans, and grants to support women-led ventures. Awareness campaigns can help challenge traditional gender norms, encouraging families and communities to support women's participation in digital entrepreneurship.

References

1. Alsaif, Mohammed. 2013. "Factors Affecting Citizens ' Adoption of E -Government Moderated by Socio-Cultural Values in Saudi Arabia By." (July)
2. Gurumurthy, Anita, Nandini Chami, and Sanjana Thomas. 2016. "Unpacking Digital India A Feminist Commentary on Policy Agendas in the Digital Moment." 6.
3. Rani, Jyoti, and Sanjay Kumar Sinha. 2016. "Barriers Facing Women Entrepreneurs in Rural India : A Study in Haryana." 1(1).

4. Bhargav, Shreya. 2017. "A STUDY ON FACTORS AFFECTING ON ONLINE SHOPPING OF CONSUMERS IN RURAL HARYANA." 5(07):61–68.
5. Kumaravel, Ramprabha. 2017. "Consumer Shopping Behaviour And The Role Of Women In Shopping-A Literature Review." (December).
6. Vashista, Mahesh. 2017. "Conception towards Electronically Shopping : An Analysis of Haryana Buyers." 2(4):156–63.
7. Jayachandran, Seema. 2018. "Impacts of Breakthrough ' s School-Based Gender Attitude Change Programme in Haryana , India December 2018 Impact Evaluation Report 89." (December).
8. Arpita, Khare, Sadachar Amrut, and Manchiraju Srikant. 2019. "Investigating the Role of Knowledge , Materialism , Product Availability , and Involvement in Predicting the Organic Clothing Purchase Behavior of Consumers in the Indian Market." *Journal of International Consumer Marketing* 0(0):1–15. doi: 10.1080/08961530.2019.1695239.