

**IMPACT OF CONSORTIUM IN SOCIAL MEDIA  
ON BUSINESSES OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS  
DURING COVID 19 LOCKDOWN:  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY  
IN STATE OF WEST BENGAL**

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**ABSTRACT**

By the end of March 2020, offline businesses came to a standstill due to Covid 19 outbreak in India. Social media on the other hand, has helped in developing the concept of online businesses among its users. It has been observed that women entrepreneurs are playing a vital role in global economy. In this paper, we wish to investigate what women entrepreneurs responding about their concerned business performances during lockdown, with particular reference to users of Facebook business platform. We have performed a comparative analysis among those women entrepreneurs who are using their personal timeline on Facebook for their businesses and those women entrepreneurs who are using consortium on Facebook. Our analysis has shown that consortium has offered more options for the women entrepreneur than their personal networking during lockdown. Moreover, we have observed that business outcome level in the consortium has been moderate.

**Keywords:** Women Entrepreneur, Facebook, Consortium, Business Performance

## 1. Introduction

Digital culture has become a part of our daily life. After the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic situation, the whole nation has realized the importance of digital online platforms. To maintain social distancing, digital online platforms have become the mainstream for different sectors such as education, consultations with the doctors, entrepreneurship, and many others. In this paper, we have tried to understand the importance of social media platforms to women entrepreneurship during the lockdown period. Social media platforms offer a great opportunity to its users to share their opinions, ideas, create a strong network for business and exchange of ideas, as well as other similar approaches in virtual communities. A woman user can use social media for her business as an individual using her own page or timeline or by joining business consortiums (business pages). We have tried to find out which mode is more convenient and satisfactory for a women entrepreneur. Facebook is a popular social media site where many women entrepreneurs are doing their businesses. Consortiums or business groups of different firms are available and members can join these groups to communicate with their customers. According to a statistical analysis, in India, there were 320 million Facebook users in the year 2020.<sup>8</sup>

### 1.2. Objectives of the Study

The sole purpose of this study is to

understand the role of social media during the lockdown period. We wish to understand how the social media platform benefited women entrepreneurs to continue their businesses after Covid19 outbreak. We intend to have a comparative analysis between personal network and consortium. The objectives of our present study are as follows-

1. To identify the role of social media (with particular emphasis on Facebook) on women entrepreneurs during lockdown.
2. To evaluate the impact of personal network and business consortiums in social media.
3. To understand how we can cope up with an adverse business situation.

## 2. Literature Review

In this section, we discuss the basic concepts which are necessary to understand the importance of women entrepreneurship and the impact of social media on business management, business communication and techniques.

### 2.1. Women Entrepreneur

Examining the role of information sharing and innovations, a study conducted with quantitative approach, resulted with the increase in the performance of women entrepreneurs by sharing information and knowledge.

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<sup>8</sup><https://www.statista.com/statistics/268136/top-15-countries-based-on-number-of-facebook->



her business through it. By using an interpretative phenomenological approach based on mixed methods (Denzin and Lincoln, 1999), (Smith et al., 2009) tried to understand how poor families made a sense of developing their economy by using buy and sell groups in Facebook. Their observation reveals a significant level of deprivation among their group members including social and cultural terms. It has been found that Facebook provides a channel for earning an additional revenue and it can be done without investment cost. (Delacroix, E., Parguel, B., & Benoit-Moreau, F. 2019). In developed countries, subsistence entrepreneurs' rebirth on the structural, cognitive and relational forms of social capital that are grounded in peer-to-peer platforms, digital features offer an interesting contribution and implication for public policy makers engaged in the regulation of the sharing economy. Digital subsistence entrepreneurs' activities is more useful in survival of entrepreneurship rather than transformative entrepreneurship. They satisfy more than purely financial needs, also provides opportunity and time for family. It has rational and symbolic benefits like meeting new people and raising self-esteem etc. (Delacroix, E., Parguel, B., & Benoit-Moreau, F. (2019).

### **2.3. Consortium**

In recent years, blockchain consortia has emerged and is becoming popular among enterprises that leverage the potential of blockchain technology.

Consortium represents a new type of inter-organisational collaboration to develop business collaboration and solve problems. The blockchain consortia can be divided into two categories. The first one is business oriented that aims to solve business problems and build a better collaboration within its members, and the second one is considered as technology oriented that aims to serve an infrastructure which is universal in nature and can be used by the different kind of businesses (Zavolokina, L., Ziolkowski, R., Bauer, I., & Schwabe, G. 2020). A blockchain consortium support the quality of management. Due to the adoption of digital technology, information exchange has become more frequent than before. In terms of quality management, consortium provides the authenticity of information and ensures the security and transparency of the content. Trust collaboration in consortium helps in developing quality of management (Zhong, B., Wu, H., Ding, L., Luo, H., Luo, Y., & Pan, X. 2020).

In social media, a consortium is considered as a group of entrepreneurs who share about their business products and techniques. Entrepreneurs can share their problems and ask for solutions from the group members. As far as the concept of consortium is concerned, in Facebook, business groups play the role of a blockchain consortium.

In business groups, the members not only share the information about their products and services, they also ask

for solutions about certain problems. Business group provides different information about the trend and market as well (Holsapple, C., Hsiao, S. H., & Pakath, R. 2014)

#### **2.4. Business Performance**

Business performance is a way of monitoring the business to achieve the goal set by an entrepreneur. Business performance technique differs from firm to firm. To reach pre-selected goals, entrepreneurs practice different management tools.

Over the past three decades, examinations on competitive advantage and the differences of the performance between different firms have concluded that strategic management were dominated by the structure-conduct-performance (SCP) paradigm<sup>9</sup>. Motivation and encouragement also play a vital role in business performance. Thus, the profit is the ultimate measurement of performance.<sup>10</sup>

Social media has a huge impact on business performances. It is a common place of communication with wider scope of networking and content sharing. Many companies and other organisations are seeking this platform for marketing and business opportunities. Social media has a great impact on all wings of business performances including corporate-social performance, finance and business operations (Paniagua, J., & Sapena, J. 2014).

### **3. Methodology**

The study is descriptive in nature and based on primary data. This research was conducted on Facebook. Keeping in mind about the lockdown period after outbreak of Covid19, and its effect on women entrepreneurs, women individual entrepreneur from West Bengal, India, who use their personal timeline for business, and the women entrepreneurs in Facebook consortiums were selected to understand the useful platform between personal timeline and consortium (business groups) for business during Covid19 Lockdown. To understand the better mode for business among personal timeline and consortiums, entrepreneurs (women) were selected followed by a snowball sampling technique. A close end multiple choice answer patterned questionnaire was distributed by Google Form format to 84 such entrepreneurs. Responses were distributed and collected online to maintain social distancing. 42 women entrepreneurs who use their personal timeline for business and 42 entrepreneurs from different business consortiums submitted their responses through Google Form. However, the figure was rounded to 100 for the purpose of easy calculation. The questionnaire includes questions which can bring out the answers for the afore-mentioned objectives.

### **4. Data Analysis**

<sup>9</sup>Morgan, N. A. (2012). Marketing and business performance. *Journal of the academy of marketing science*,

40(1), 102-119.

<sup>10</sup>Neely, A. (2002). Business performance measurement. Cambridge university press, 40, 42.

The first question was a short answer type without multiple choice options. The respondents said about their own field of business. The women entrepreneurs who use their personal timeline are doing business mostly on reselling, fashion jewellery, Cosmetics, as makeup artists and some are doing businesses on Food items and a few are using their personal timeline for some other business.

Women entrepreneurs in Consortium are mostly doing business of saree and garments. Most of them are reselling products and handmade jewellery, food items, perfume, makeup, gift items, are other some of the major firms they are involved.

Among timeline entrepreneurs, 64.3% are using Facebook for more than one year and 35.7% respondents are using Facebook for less than one year. While in consortium, 59.5% are using Facebook for more than one year and 40.5% are using this social platform for less than one year. In both the cases, the number of entrepreneurs

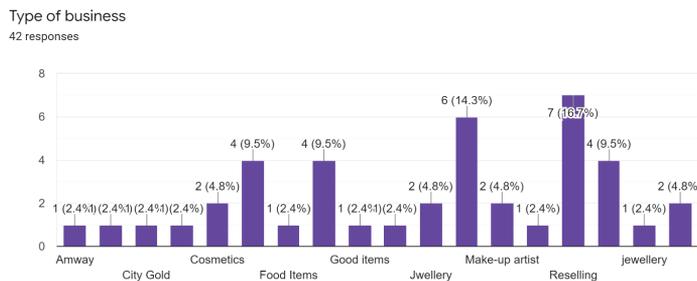


Figure 1.1: this bar chart shows the type of businesses run by women entrepreneurs using their personal timeline.

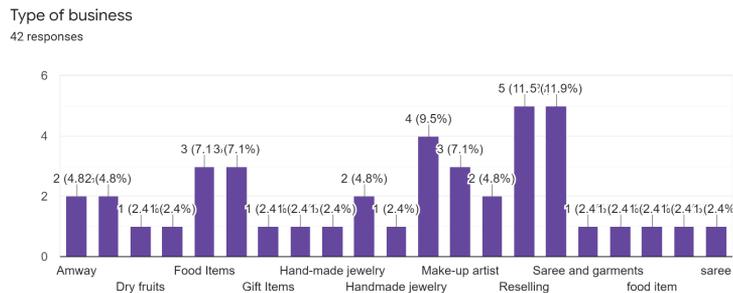


Figure 1.2: this bar chart shows the type of businesses run by women entrepreneurs using their consortium.

who are using Facebook for less than one year are the entrepreneurs who have started business during the Covid19 lockdown period.

Facebook played an essential platform for timeline entrepreneurs during lockdown. 52.4% users said Facebook is a useful medium for business. 16.7% respondents suggested Facebook was little useful and 16.7% said it was a

54.8% women entrepreneurs from consortium suggested that Facebook was a very useful platform and 35.7% entrepreneurs suggested that it was useful during lockdown while 7.1% said it was little useful and 2.4% suggested Facebook as not at all useful medium for the lockdown period.

Though 31% entrepreneurs are little satisfied with their businesses on Facebook, women entrepreneurs from timeline were mostly little satisfied (64.3%) with this social platform during lockdown and 4.8% entrepreneurs were not at all satisfied.

Consortium users are mostly satisfied with Facebook platform (52.4%) and a few are very satisfied (2.4%) but 45.2% women entrepreneurs were little satisfied with their business during lockdown.

Most of the women entrepreneurs think that personal timeline is little helpful (61.9%) for business strategy making. Though some of them think that personal timeline is helpful (26.2%) but 11.9% of them think that Facebook is not at all helpful for making business strategies.

According to the women entrepreneurs of consortium, Facebook is helpful (52.4%) for making business strategy. 21.4% entrepreneurs suggest Facebook is very helpful for business strategy making and similarly 21.4% of them think it is little helpful. 4.8% among them said it is not at all helpful for business strategy.

Personal timeline sometimes encourages women entrepreneurs (40.5%). 33.3% entrepreneurs think it to be rarely encouraging, 14.3% think it frequently encourages and 11.9% think it does not encourage entrepreneurs at all. Consortium frequently (59.5%) encourage women entrepreneurs. In some consortiums, women entrepreneurs are encouraged sometimes (28.6%) and in some consortiums they are rarely encouraged (11.9%).

To solve any business problems timeline through networking offers little help (54.8%) to the entrepreneurs. Though some individual's timeline is helpful (11.9%) but 33.3% thinks personal timeline is not at all helpful to solve business problems.

## **5. Discussion**

Saree, ladies' garments, handmade Jewellery, handicraft products and reselling are the most common firms that women entrepreneurs are associated with. Most of the entrepreneurs who use their personal timeline are using Facebook for businesses for more than one year and after lockdown many have started

doing business through their personal timeline networking. Personal timeline is considered as a useful platform for business during lockdown but women entrepreneurs were mostly not much satisfied with their business during lockdown period. Personal timeline offers little scope for making business strategies and sometimes encourage women entrepreneurs. Personal timeline offers little scope for solving business problems and most of the women entrepreneurs now want to use consortium platforms in the near future.

Most of the consortium users are using this platform for more than one year and after lockdown many have joined. Consortium was very useful during the lockdown and most of the women entrepreneurs are satisfied with their business. Consortium is helpful for making business strategies and it encourages women entrepreneurs frequently. To solve business problems, consortium is little helpful to the entrepreneurs. Members of a consortium want to join more consortium in the near future.

## **6. Results**

After Covid19 lockdown the number of women entrepreneurs increased

in both the platforms. Women entrepreneurs in consortium has increased 5% more than the number of women entrepreneurs increased in personal timeline mode. The usefulness of Facebook was more in consortium mode in comparison with personal timeline. The satisfaction of women entrepreneurs was more in consortium than that of the women entrepreneurs in personal timeline. Some women entrepreneurs are not at all satisfied with personal timeline while such responses were not found in the consortium mode. Consortium mode is helpful in making business strategies while personal timeline offers less scope of making business strategies to the women entrepreneurs. Consortium encourages women entrepreneurs frequently which is a vital role to continue a business. Women entrepreneurs from both the modes are willing to join consortium in near future that indicates consortium has more opportunities for women entrepreneurs. Some of the factors are not well defined as a cause of this satisfaction and need more investigation to understand what can a consortium do to solve business problems faced by a women entrepreneur.

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