



EFFECTIVENESS OF DIGITAL MARKETING FOR WOMEN-OWNED HOMEMADE FOOD BUSINESSES

Dr.P.Archanaa

Assistant Professor and Head UG Department of Commerce CA
NGM College, Pollachi

Abstract : In today's digital world, online platforms play an important role in promoting small businesses. This study examines the effectiveness of digital marketing for women-owned homemade food businesses in Pollachi, focusing on its impact on product promotion, sales, and consumer buying behaviour. The study is based on primary data collected from 200 women entrepreneurs using a structured questionnaire, and tools such as percentage analysis, chi-square test, and Friedman ranking test were used for analysis. The findings reveal that digital marketing platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram help increase product visibility and customer reach, while factors such as social media promotion, customer reviews, and product quality influence purchasing decisions. The study also shows that consumers prefer homemade food products due to trust, quality, and convenience. Overall, digital marketing is an effective and low-cost tool for supporting the growth of women-owned homemade food businesses.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Women Entrepreneurs, Homemade Food Products, Consumer Behaviour, Social media, etc.,

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, digital marketing has emerged as a powerful tool for promoting products and services, especially for small-scale and home-based businesses. With the rapid growth of internet usage and social media platforms, businesses can now reach a wider audience at a lower cost compared to traditional marketing methods. Digital platforms such as social media, websites, and online marketplaces have made it easier for entrepreneurs to connect directly with customers, showcase their products, and build strong relationships.

Women entrepreneurs, particularly those engaged in homemade food businesses such as pickles, spice powders, appalam, and other traditional food items, are increasingly adopting digital marketing to expand their reach. These businesses, which were once limited to local markets and word-of-mouth promotion, are now able to access broader markets through platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook. Digital marketing enables them to display product quality, share customer reviews, and provide convenient ordering options.

Moreover, digital marketing not only helps in increasing sales but also enhances brand awareness and customer engagement. It empowers women entrepreneurs by providing opportunities for financial

independence and business growth without requiring significant investment. However, the effectiveness of these digital tools depends on factors such as digital literacy, content quality, customer trust, and consistent online presence.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of digital marketing in supporting women-owned homemade food businesses, focusing on its impact on consumer awareness, purchase behavior, and overall business performance.

Home-Based Products & Digital Marketing Methods

Home-Based Products	Examples	Digital Marketing Methods Used
Food Products	Pickles, spice powders, appalam	Social media marketing, WhatsApp marketing
Coconut-Based Products	Coconut oil, coconut powder	Instagram promotion, online selling
Homemade Snacks & Sweets	Murukku, chips, laddoo	Facebook pages, reels, customer reviews
Handmade Products	Candles, soaps, chocolates	Influencer marketing, content marketing
Textile & Craft Products	Tailoring, embroidery, handicrafts	Social media ads, online marketplaces
Beauty & Herbal Products	Face packs, herbal powders, oils	SEO, YouTube videos, product demos

Review of Literature:

S. Aruna Prabha et al. (2025) conducted a study on women entrepreneurship in Tamil Nadu and found that many women are engaged in home-based businesses such as food processing and handmade products. The study highlighted that digital marketing helps these entrepreneurs expand their market reach and improve income generation. D. Mehala (2024) examined the role of digital marketing in entrepreneurial growth and revealed that home-based product sellers, including food items and handicrafts, benefit from social media platforms by increasing product visibility and attracting more customers at a low cost. J. Suresh Kumar and D. Shobana (2024) analyzed the opportunities and challenges of entrepreneurship in Tamil Nadu and found that home-based businesses face issues like limited market access, but digital platforms provide new opportunities to promote products and increase sales.

S. Thanga Keerthana and K. Jegatheesan (2025) studied marketing practices among entrepreneurs and observed that many small-scale and home-based product businesses are shifting from traditional marketing to digital marketing to remain competitive and improve their customer base. N. Suganthi and M. Asokhan (2022) conducted research in Coimbatore on marketing behaviour and revealed that home-based entrepreneurs mainly rely on direct selling, but there is growing awareness about the benefits of digital marketing for promoting products like homemade food and crafts. Vennila Mary and Tamilselvi G (2023) identified constraints faced by entrepreneurs, especially those involved in home-based production, and highlighted challenges such as lack of marketing knowledge while suggesting digital marketing as an effective solution to improve sales and outreach. Viswapriya C and S. Mayilvaganan (2023) analyzed recent

trends and found that home-based businesses, particularly in food and handmade products, are increasing in Tamil Nadu, and emphasized the role of digital tools in enhancing business performance and customer engagement.

Objectives of the study:

- To examine the effectiveness of digital marketing in promoting homemade food products.
- To analyze the impact of digital marketing on sales and consumer buying behavior of homemade food products.

Statement of the Problem:

Pollachi is known for its agriculture and small-scale home-based food businesses such as pickles, spice powders, coconut products, and traditional snacks. These businesses mainly rely on local markets and word-of-mouth for sales, which limits their growth and customer reach. With the increasing use of the internet and social media, digital marketing has become an important tool for promoting products and expanding markets. However, many small entrepreneurs in Pollachi lack awareness, technical skills, and resources to effectively use digital platforms. As a result, they are unable to fully benefit from online marketing opportunities. Therefore, it is necessary to study the effectiveness of digital marketing in promoting homemade food products in Pollachi and its impact on sales and consumer buying behavior.

Need for the Study

- To understand the importance of digital marketing for promoting homemade food products.
- To identify the level of awareness of digital marketing among home-based entrepreneurs in Pollachi.
- To analyze how digital marketing helps in increasing sales and customer reach.
- To examine the challenges faced by entrepreneurs in using digital platforms.
- To study consumer response towards homemade food products promoted online.
- To provide suggestions for improving digital marketing practices among small-scale businesses.

Limitations of the Study

- The result of the study is based upon the views expressed by the women entrepreneurs in Pollachi, Tamil Nadu.
- All the limitations of primary data are applicable to this study.
- The statistical tools used to analyse the data have their own limitations.

Research Methodology:

- ❖ **Area of the study:** The research study was done in Pollachi Taluk.
- ❖ **Nature and source of data:** The study is based on questionnaire method; primary data has been collected from various consumers in Pollachi and the secondary data have been collected from related journals, websites, magazines and textbooks.
- ❖ **Statistical tools used for the study:**

- Simple percentage analysis
- Chi-Square analysis
- Friedman Ranking Test.
- ❖ **Sampling Used:** 200 women entrepreneurs were selected by purposive sampling method.

Table No. 1

Demographic Profile of Women Entrepreneurs (N = 200)

Demographic Variable	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Age	Below 25 years	35	17.5%
	25–35 years	75	37.5%
	36–45 years	55	27.5%
	Above 45 years	35	17.5%
Marital Status	Married	120	60%
	Unmarried	80	40%
Educational Qualification	School Level	25	12.5%
	Undergraduate	95	47.5%
	Postgraduate	60	30%
	Others	20	10%
Type of Homemade Food Business	Pickles	50	25%
	Spice Powders	55	27.5%
	Snacks & Sweets	40	20%
	Appalam	30	15%
	Other Food Products	25	12.5%
Digital Marketing Used	WhatsApp	85	42.5%
	Instagram	55	27.5%
	Facebook	35	17.5%
	Online Platforms	25	12.5%

The demographic profile shows that the majority of women entrepreneurs belong to the 25–35 years age group (37.5%), indicating that young and middle-aged women are more actively involved in homemade food businesses. Most of the respondents are married (60%), suggesting that married women play a significant role in home-based entrepreneurial activities. In terms of education, a large proportion of respondents are undergraduates (47.5%), followed by postgraduates (30%), indicating that educated women are actively participating in such businesses. Regarding the type of homemade food business, spice powders (27.5%) and pickles (25%) are the most common products, showing a strong preference for traditional food items. With respect to digital marketing usage, WhatsApp (42.5%) is the most widely used platform, followed by Instagram (27.5%) and Facebook (17.5%), indicating that simple and easily accessible digital tools are preferred for promoting homemade food products.

Table No. 2

Friedman Ranking Test: Factors Influencing Effectiveness of Digital Marketing for Women-Owned Homemade Food Businesses

Factor	Total Score	Ranking
Product Quality	390	3
Price	360	5
Social Media Promotion	460	1
Customer Reviews	430	2
Packaging	310	7
Brand Image	370	4
Availability Online	340	6
Discounts & Offers	300	8

The results of the Friedman ranking test show that social media promotion (Rank 1) is the most important factor influencing the effectiveness of digital marketing for women-owned homemade food businesses, indicating that online visibility plays a major role in attracting customers. Customer reviews (Rank 2) also have a strong influence, showing that trust and feedback significantly affect purchase decisions. Product quality (Rank 3) and brand image (Rank 4) are important factors contributing to customer satisfaction and repeat purchases. Price (Rank 5) and availability online (Rank 6) have moderate influence, while packaging (Rank 7) and discounts and offers (Rank 8) are considered less important compared to other factors.

Table No. 3

Consumer Buying Behaviour Towards Women-Owned Homemade Food Products (Likert Scale)

Factor	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Total Score
Trust in Homemade Products	2	4	14	48	32	404
Quality Perception	3	5	16	46	30	395
Influence of Social Media	5	9	20	42	24	371
Online Reviews	4	7	18	45	26	382
Convenience of Online Purchase	2	6	15	47	30	397

The interpretation of the above Likert scale table reveals that trust in homemade food products prepared by women entrepreneurs has the highest total score of 404, indicating that consumers strongly prefer these products due to safety, authenticity, and traditional value. Convenience of online purchase (397) and quality perception (395) also show high scores, suggesting that ease of buying and product quality significantly influence consumer behaviour. Online reviews (382) and influence of social media (371) have moderate impact, indicating that digital marketing plays an important supporting role in shaping consumer decisions.

Table No. 4

Demographic Variables and Effectiveness of Digital Marketing among Women Entrepreneurs

Demographic Variable	Chi-Square Value (χ^2)	Table Value	Result
Age	12.10	9.488	Significant
Educational Qualification	14.25	9.488	Significant
Type of Homemade Food Product	10.80	9.488	Significant
Digital Marketing Platform Used	6.50	5.991	Significant
Marital Status	3.90	5.991	Not Significant

The chi-square test results indicate that age, educational qualification, type of homemade food product, and digital marketing platform used have a significant relationship with the effectiveness of digital marketing among women-owned homemade food businesses, as their chi-square values exceed the table values at the 5% level of significance. This shows that these factors influence how digital marketing impacts sales and consumer buying behaviour. However, marital status does not have a significant influence, as its chi-square value is lower than the table value.

Scope for further study

- The study can be extended to include larger geographical areas beyond Pollachi to compare results across districts or states.
- Future research can focus on different types of products such as handmade crafts, textiles, or beauty products along with food items.
- A comparative study can be conducted between women-owned and men-owned businesses to understand differences in digital marketing effectiveness.
- Further studies can analyze the role of advanced digital tools like influencer marketing, SEO, and paid advertisements.
- The impact of specific social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp can be studied in detail.

Suggestions for the study:

- Provide training programs to improve digital marketing skills among women entrepreneurs.
- Encourage the use of multiple digital platforms such as social media and e-commerce websites to increase market reach.
- Improve product quality and packaging to attract more online customers.
- Build customer trust by encouraging reviews, ratings, and feedback.
- Offer attractive pricing and promotional offers to compete with established brands.
- Increase awareness about digital marketing tools through workshops and awareness programs.
- Strengthen online presence by regularly posting content and engaging with customers.
- Seek support from government schemes and financial institutions to expand business activities.

Conclusion:

The study concludes that digital marketing plays a significant role in the growth and success of women-owned homemade food businesses. It has enabled entrepreneurs to reach a wider customer base, improve product visibility, and increase sales with minimal investment. The findings show that platforms like social media are widely used and are highly effective in influencing consumer buying behaviour. Factors such as customer reviews, product quality, and online promotion strongly impact purchasing decisions. The study also highlights that demographic factors like age, education, and type of product influence the effectiveness of digital marketing, while some factors like marital status have limited impact. Overall, digital marketing serves as a powerful and accessible tool for empowering women entrepreneurs and enhancing the performance of home-based food businesses.

Acknowledgement

I express my gratitude to the Management of NGM College, Pollachi, TamilNadu for their generous financial assistance through the SEED Money support for this research work.

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