

Social Media a Boon- *An Analysis with special reference to Self-Employed Women*

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ABSTRACT

In a developing country like India, where providing suitable employment opportunities to the huge amount of labour force is a big challenge for the government; self-employment acts as a boon in the labour market. Self-employment not only provides income generating opportunities to men but also make a huge proportion of women workforce economically independent in India. Flexibility specially in terms of working hours make more and more women come forward to grab this self-employment as their source of income. In this 21st century period, an income generating activity like self-employment cannot be run without the use of information technology. More particularly, social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram etc. create a loyal, direct connection between self-employed women and her customers, which leads to large advertising opportunities. However, still many women are ignorant about the income generating possibility that social media have specially in the field of self-employment. This paper shed light on the impact of social-media on self-employed women. The study also focuses on making a comparative study of socio-economic status between social-media users and non-users.

Key-Words: Self-Employment, Women, Social media user, social media non-user)

1. Introduction

Unorganized sector plays a very important fundamental role in terms of providing employment opportunity to large segment of the working force in the country and also contributes to the national product significantly. This sector not only provide employment opportunity to large segment of the working force in the country but also contributes significantly to country's national product (Kalyani, M. , 2016). In Assam, like most of other states of India there is a positive growth of employment in the unorganized sector (Majumdar A.,Borbora S., 2012). The workers in the unorganized sector can be categorized as wage workers, self-employed and casual workers (Rinoj P K. , 2014). According to the NCEUS report (2007) out of a total of 395 million workers in the unorganized sector the proportion of self-employed workers was 64 per cent (253 million). Of wage workers, casual worker's share in employment was 29 per cent (116 million) and Regular workers on the other hand accounted for only seven per cent. So, out of total workers, self-employed workers dominate the sector. In recent situation, the share of the self-employment to total employment has been

rising among women. In the midst of employment crisis both for men and women, it is the self-employment which gives women a ray of hope for achieving economic independence. Self-employment brings hope specially to women because of its working hours flexibility (Raj, 2014).

One of the most significant advantage of self-employment is that women can work even from home. It is important for a country like India where most of the women are not allowed to work outside. For this marketing the products and activities to far away places becomes a difficult task. Besides this, with increasing number of self-employed women, a good number of innovative and new self-employment activities come in to the market. In this situation, showcasing own products and activities in a creative way become an important issue, so that customers can be attracted. Social media can play a significant role in this regard. Social media in the form of WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram has become a platform that is easily accessible to anyone with internet access. Social media with social networking sites can help self-employed women to connect not only people in neighbouring areas, but also people staying far. Besides this, social media open a big door of large advertising opportunities by creating a loyal and direct connection with customers (Bajpai V., Pandey S., Shriwas S., 2012). Social media can create positive impact and positive influence on customers at minimum investment. It is one of the fastest tool to connect with customers. Social media help self-employed women to get better understanding of customers' preferences. Besides, through social media customer's inconvenience related to products can easily be received in a cost effective manner. Social media tools Facebook, WhatsApp help customers to create page of their products, upload photos and videos, send messages and keep in constant touch with customers. In simple words social media act as massive exposure due to its worldwide access, sharing ability and huge numbers of daily users (Singh T.P., Sinha R., 2017).

In this paper an attempt has been made to examine positive outcome and economic growth of self-employed women through the use of social media. For this a comparative analysis of socio-economic status¹ is made between self-employed women use social media for advertising purpose and Social media non-user (Hereafter, 'Non-User' will indicate those self-employed women not using social media for advertisement and other purposes). This study helps to understand Social media as a medium to connect business with world and its positive outcomes on performance and growth.

2. Review of Literature

Unorganized sector contributes significantly to economic development of India. It is evident from the fact that share of this sector towards Net Domestic Product at current prices has been over 60 percent (Kalyani, M., 2016). Among the three categories of workers viz wage

¹ According to Kingsley Davis (1949), "status is a position in the general institutional system, recognized and supported by the entire society". For Horton and Hunt (1964), "status is the rank or position of an individual in a group". Some status are given at birth (Ascribed status) and some status determined by social position which a person attains through his own efforts, ability, performance, individual choice and competition (Achieved status) (Linton 1936).

workers, self-employed and casual workers; it is self-employed workers, which have a significant role to play in terms of employment as well as income generation. Self-employed workers further divided in to own-account workers, employers and unpaid family workers(Rinoj P K. , 2014). During the Asian financial crisis in 1998, proportion of self-employed workers rapidly increasing in the country. Self-employed workers are recorded 7.1 million as of August 2012, which is the highest since September 2009 (D'souza2013). As there is limited numbers of opportunity for women to be employed in a male dominated society like India, self-employment acts as a boon for women to be economically independent. Share of self-employed women to total employment in unorganized sector has been increasing over the years (Raj, 2014). In today's fast changing society, this increasing self-employed women need to be updated with new technology. Social media can be used by self-employed women as a promotional technique for customer's adoption and product's promotion. Unlike the other popular media like television, new paper etc. in social media products and activities can be showcased in minutes of time at minimum cost (Bajpai V.,Pandey S.,Shriwas S.,2012).Social media can create a positive impact on the business as well as on customers at minimum investment. The feedback in the form of comments also helps women to innovate creative ideas and apply it in the activities. However, still women are not aware of utilizing social media as a tool to advertise their products (Singh T.P.,Sinha R. 2017).

3. Objectives and Hypothesis of the Study

3.1 Objectives

The main objective of the study is to analyze the importance of social media in making self-employed activities more productive. The specific objectives of the study are as under-

- I. To explore the different field of intervention by the social media user self-employed and non-user.
- II. To make a comparative analysis of the socio-economic status of self-employed social media users and non-users women for advertisement purpose.

3.2 Hypothesis

To examine whether there are difference in socio-economic status of self-employed women between social media user and non-user, the following null hypothesis is framed-

Ho: There is no difference in status of self-employed women between social media users and non-users.

This is to be tested against the alternative hypothesis

H1: There is difference in status of self-employed women between social media users and non-users.

3.3 Data source and methodology

The study is empirical in nature and based on primary data. A face to face interview with a well-structured questionnaire have been used. The population of the proposed study consists of all the women workers of unorganized sector engaged in different non-agricultural

activities in six sub-districts of Kamrup Metro district², Assam. These sub-districts are Guwahati, Azara, North Guwahati(pt), Dispur, Sonapur and Chandrapur. The information is collected from 100 women engaged in different self-employment activities. Out of these 100 women, 50 women are those who use social media for advertisement purpose and 50 women who does not.

Table 1: Self-Employed respondents by type of Activity:

Types of Activity	Social Media Users	Non-Social Media Users
Beauty Therapist	11	20
Make Up Artist	25	13
Make Up Tutor	1	6
Pizza Making	1	3
Catering	2	2
Cake Baking/ Cake Baking Trainer	6	3
Mehendi Artist	2	2
Nursery	2	1
	50	50

Source: Primary Data, 2022

As shown by table 1 self-employed women are categorized in to two groups viz social media user and non-user. Women from both of the groups engage in 8 different activities i.e. Beauty Therapist, Make Up Artist, Make Up Tutor, Pizza Making, Catering, Cake Baking/ Cake Baking Trainer, Mehendi Artist and Nursery.

To analyze and compare status of social media user and non-user women, a Status index is constructed. For this purpose five aspects of socio-economic status are selected and are accordingly five indicator variables, for the purpose of constructing status index. The selected indicators are Yearly income, Number of Hours Spend with Family after Work, Assets owned, Yearly income of the household and number of customers. The yearly income here refers to the yearly gross income of the respondents. The number of hours spend with family after work implies the time range self-employed women spend with family. Assets owned consider the number of assets owned through earned income from self-employment activity. The assets considered in the study are possession of Bank Account, Insurance Policy, Financial Securities (Fixed Deposit, Recurring Deposit and Mutual Funds etc.), Gold, Vehicle, Land, house and others (material things). Number is given according to the assets owned by respondent. For example-if a respondent own bank account and insurance policy and do not receive gold, then her number of assets owned will be two. The next indicator is

²Kamrup Metro district have the highest percentage (34.6 percent) of self-employed people. Besides, it is the Kamrup metro district where only 4.7 percent of people are engaged in Agriculture. This implies that the economy of the district is basically dominated by non-agriculture activities (Human Development Report 2014).

yearly income of the household, it implies gross income of the respondent over the year. The last indicator used in the study is number of customers of the respondent in a year.

To assess income of social media user and non-user, data collected from women engaged in different self-employment activities on an average. Cost that women have to incur in the process of production and revenue they obtained from it are taken in to consideration to determine income. Cost include the expenses on raw-materials, electricity, rent salary to the employees etc. Number of customers are also considered here.

The selected indicator variables are merged and then Factor Analysis is used to construct a composite index from the set of indicator variables. For this purpose specific weights for each of the indicator variable is defined and are summed up to construct the status index. The details of factor analysis are shown in the Annexure I.

Construction of Status Index then leads to Independent t-test, which is carried out with the help of SPSS. However, before running the test firstly data of the indicator variables are converted in to normalized values by applying the formula -

$$NV_{ij} = 1 - \frac{[\{Max_{xi} - Actual_{xij}\}]}{[\{Max_{xi} - Min_{xi}\}]}$$

To conduct Independent t-test, status index is considered as Dependent Variable and the self-employed women social media user and non-user as Grouping Variable. The non-users are grouped as 0 and social media users are grouped as 1.

After obtaining the Normalized Values for all the indicators to assign factor loadings and weights, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is used in the study to compute the Factor Loading and Weights of these indicators. The output obtained through SPSS is given below. However, some parts of the output are depicted in Annexure I.

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Analysis N
Normalized Value of Yearly Income	.2232	.19669	100
Normalized Value of Yearly Income of the Household	.2677	.23939	100
Normalized Value of Assets	.5451	.27564	100
Normalized Value of the Customers	.3383	.21495	100
Normalized Value of Family Hours	.4220	.28695	100

On the basis of Descriptive Statistics shown above and other output depicted in Annexure I, Eigen Value is multiplied with Extracted Component Column that will give weights for each of the indicator variables, which is given below-

Component Matrix		Eigen value	Weights
		4.053409	
Normalized Value of Yearly Income	0.947	3.838578323	15.55932792
Normalized Value of Yearly Income of the Household	0.828	3.356222652	13.6041431
Normalized Value of Assets	0.854	3.461611286	14.03132634
Normalized Value of the Customers	0.952	3.858845368	15.64147854
Normalized Value of Family Hours	0.914	3.704815826	15.01713381
			77.90681872

Each Normalized value are now multiplied by the weights, summed and then divided by the total weights to produce status index for each of the respondents. The following formula is used to determine the Index-

$$I = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n X_i \left[\sum_{j=1}^n |L_{ij}| \cdot E_j \right]}{\sum_{i=1}^n \left[\sum_{j=1}^n |L_{ij}| \cdot E_j \right]}$$

Where I is the Index, X_i is the i^{th} Indicator; L_{ij} is the factor loading value of the i^{th} variable on the j^{th} factor; E_j is the Eigen value of the j^{th} factor.

After computation, the first result obtained in SPSS is Group Statistics, which is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary results of the t-test

Group Statistics

	Type of Self-Employment	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Status Index Values	Non-Social Media User Self-Employed women	50	.1940	.11278	.01595
	Social Media User Self-Employed women	50	.4835	.17393	.02460

From table it is observed that of self-employed women with sample size (N) 50 of social media user and 50 of non-social media use. As table shows mean status of non-social media user self-employed women is .1940 and of social media user is .4835. Again, the Standard Deviation of social media non-user and user is .11278 and .17393 respectively. Again, the mean status difference between social media user and non-user is 0.2895 and standard deviation difference is 0.06115.

Table 3: Independent Samples Test to assess hypothesis

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Status Index Values	Equal variances assumed	6.083	.015	-9.877	98	.000	-.28954	.02932	-.34772	-.23136
	Equal variances not assumed			-9.877	84.014	.000	-.28954	.02932	-.34784	-.23124

Table 3 produces the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances. As the table shows the significance of this F value is .015 which is not statistically significant i.e. more than .05. Hence as Significance Value is not 0.5 or less, in this test we are confident that we can interpret the regular t-value in the significance level associated with this t-value.

As shown in the table, significance level computed is .000 which is less than .05, thus we would reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis and state the probability that difference in status between self-employed social media user and non-user women is statistically highly significant. Table also shows standard error difference between equal variances assumed and not assumed is same i.e. .02932.

Considering table 2 of Group Statistics, it is observed that the group means are significantly different because the value in the "**Sig. (2-tailed)**" row is less than 0.05 (from table 3). The Group Statistics table further revealed that the Mean score for user of social media (M=.4835, S.D.= .17393) is greater than the Mean score for non-user of social media (M=.1940, S.D.= .11278). So a conclusion can be drawn that status of self-employed women using social media is significantly higher than women not use social media.

To sum up, self-employed women advertise in social media and women do not use social media to showcase their product do appear to have a significant difference in status as

determined by independent t-test result. Besides this, the test also specifies that the status of social media users self-employed women is higher than that of the non-users.

4. Findings Suggestions and Conclusion

4.1 Major Findings of the Study

- The personal profile of the working women revealed that out of the total 100 respondents 50 self-employed women are social media user and 50 are non-user. These self-employed women engage in 8 different activities i.e. Beauty Therapist, Make Up Artist, Make Up Tutor, Pizza Making, Catering, Cake Baking/ Cake Baking Trainer, Mehendi Artist and Nursery.
- The hypothesis tested in the study is H_0 : There is no difference in status of self-employed women between social media users and non-users against the alternative hypothesis H_1 : There is difference in status of self-employed women between social media users and non-users.
- The computed t-value is 9.877 with Degrees of Freedom 98 and significance level computed is .000. As this value is less than .05, thus we would reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis and find that there is difference in status of self-employed women between social media user and non-users.
- The Mean for social media user is .4835 which is greater than the Mean for the non-social media user i.e. .1940 implying status of women use social media for work purpose is significantly higher than women do not use social media.

4.2 Conclusion

From the above study thus it can be concluded that social media can provide a better market for self-employed women and able to make a better connection with customers. An image of the product can easily be showcased by self-employed women through social media. The feedback and reviews about the products and activities given by customers in social media help women to apply innovative and creative ideas in respective self-employment activities. The study reveal that with these advantages social media bring positive impact on growth and performance not only in income of the respondent but also in income of the household as a whole. With high levels of income, women can possess material assets like gold, land etc. as well as financial materials like insurance policy, mutual funds and so on. As through social media, connection with customers becomes easier, women need not to go for door to door advertisements, need not to approach newspaper or other means to attract customers. This saved time women can now devote to their family and children. All this leads to improvement in the socio-economic status of self-employed women.

4.3 Suggestions

It is evident from the study that a significant difference in socio-economic status between self-employed women use social media and non-users. In the study itself it is observed that those self-employed women use social-media as a platform to advertise their product can generate more income, customers, assets, household income and devote more time to family than those do not use social media for their work. Therefore, in this fast changing world self-employed women need to be updated with the modern technology to survive in this competitive world. In this regard, NGO's and government in its different skill development programmes should highlight the importance of social media and should also provide training if required. Family members can also support women and can help them to learn the use of

social media for business purposes and can also make them aware about the new changes and updated technology.

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ANNEXURE I

The illustrations, procedures and steps required for undertaking Principal Component Analysis has been demonstrated by using one such software, namely SPSS. The output obtained through SPSS is given below- The output obtained through SPSS is depicted below-

KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.852
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	509.887
	Df	10
	Sig.	.000

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
Normalized Value of Yearly Income	1.000	.898
Normalized Value of Yearly Income of the Household	1.000	.685
Normalized Value of Assets	1.000	.728
Normalized Value of the Customers	1.000	.907
Normalized Value of Family Hours	1.000	.836

Total Variance Explained

Comp onent	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% Variance	of Cumulative %	Total	% Variance	of Cumulative %
1	4.054	81.079	81.079	4.054	81.079	81.079
2	.469	9.390	90.469			
3	.228	4.566	95.035			
4	.185	3.704	98.739			
5	.063	1.261	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix^a

	Component
	1
Normalized Value of Yearly Income	.947
Normalized Value of Yearly Income of the Household	.828
Normalized Value of Assets	.854
Normalized Value of the Customers	.952
Normalized Value of Family Hours	.914

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.