

## Impact Of Social Media And E-Commerce Platforms On The Growth Of Homepreneurs In Kerala

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### ABSTRACT

The study titled “Impact of Social Media and E-Commerce Platforms on the Growth of Homepreneurs in Kerala” examines how digital platforms contribute to the development and success of home-based entrepreneurs in the state. In today’s digital era, social media and e-commerce have transformed the way small businesses operate by providing cost-effective marketing, wider customer reach, and convenient sales channels. The study focuses on 110 homepreneurs across different districts of Kerala, using a descriptive and analytical research design. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using statistical tools such as T-test, ANOVA, correlation, and regression analysis.

The findings reveal that social media plays a crucial role in enhancing product visibility, customer engagement, and sales growth, while e-commerce platforms significantly improve market access and profitability. A strong positive correlation was found between the frequency of e-commerce usage and business growth. However, challenges such as technical difficulties, lack of digital marketing skills, and limited time hinder optimal utilization of these platforms. The study concludes that social media and e-commerce serve as powerful enablers for entrepreneurial empowerment, especially among women, and recommends skill development, infrastructure enhancement, and institutional support to strengthen the digital entrepreneurial ecosystem in Kerala.

**Keywords:** Social Media, E-Commerce, Homepreneurs, Digital Entrepreneurship, Kerala, Women Empowerment.

## INTRODUCTION

In the present era of digital transformation, the internet has emerged as a powerful tool that reshapes the way businesses operate and connect with consumers. The rise of social media and e-commerce platforms has opened up new avenues for entrepreneurship, enabling individuals to establish and manage businesses with minimal investment and wide market reach. Among these, homepreneurs—entrepreneurs who run businesses from their homes—have gained significant prominence, particularly due to the accessibility and convenience offered by digital technologies.

Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp, along with e-commerce platforms like Amazon, Flipkart, and Meesho, have revolutionized marketing and sales channels. They provide home-based entrepreneurs with cost-effective ways to promote their products, build brand identity, engage directly with customers, and reach both local and global markets. This digital shift has not only improved business visibility but also enhanced sales, customer satisfaction, and profitability for many small-scale entrepreneurs.

In the context of Kerala, a state known for its high literacy rate, technological awareness, and strong entrepreneurial culture, the adoption of digital tools has been particularly impactful. Many women and youth have turned to online business models as a means of achieving financial independence and work-life balance. The combination of social media marketing, digital payment systems, and e-commerce logistics has created a supportive ecosystem for homepreneurs to thrive in the competitive digital marketplace.

However, despite the numerous opportunities, challenges such as digital literacy gaps, market competition, platform dependency, and data security issues still exist. Therefore, studying the impact of social media and e-commerce platforms on the growth of homepreneurs in Kerala becomes essential to understand how digital tools contribute to their business development, income generation, and empowerment.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Ramesh & Bindu (2023)**, in *“E-Commerce Adoption and Performance of Small Enterprises,”* analyzed how small business owners utilize e-commerce channels for business expansion. The study found that businesses using platforms such as Amazon and Meesho reported higher sales growth compared to traditional offline sellers. The authors emphasized that convenience, lower operational costs, and wider reach are key drivers of digital adoption.

**Priya & Thomas (2022)**, in *“Digital Platforms and Women Entrepreneurs in Kerala,”* examined how social media platforms enable women to start and expand home-based businesses. Their study revealed that Instagram and Facebook play a vital role in increasing product visibility, customer engagement, and sales. They concluded that digital networking significantly enhances entrepreneurial growth among women in Kerala.

**Nair (2021)**, in *“Social Media Marketing and its Impact on Home-Based Entrepreneurs,”* investigated the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies among homepreneurs. The findings indicated that visual content and customer interaction through social media significantly improve brand awareness and customer loyalty. The study concluded that consistent online engagement is crucial for sustaining business growth.

**Meenakshi & Rajan (2020)**, in *“Digital Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs in Kerala,”* explored the influence of digital literacy on women’s entrepreneurial success. They found that women who actively use digital tools for marketing, payments, and networking

experience greater confidence and profitability. The study highlighted that digital skills training programs play a crucial role in empowering women homepreneurs.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

**Social Media** refers to a collection of **digital tools, websites, and applications** that enable individuals and organizations to **create, share, and exchange information, ideas, images, videos, and other content** in **virtual communities and networks**. It is an **interactive form of communication**, where users are not just passive receivers (like in traditional media such as TV or newspapers), but **active participants** who can produce, comment, and distribute content.

### **E-COMMERCE**

**E-Commerce (Electronic Commerce)** refers to the **buying and selling of goods and services through electronic networks**, primarily the **Internet**. It involves **online transactions** where money and data are exchanged to execute commercial activities.

### **E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS**

An **E-Commerce Platform** is a **software or online system** that allows businesses to **create, manage, and operate online stores**. It provides all the necessary tools for **product listing, inventory management, payment processing, order tracking, and customer communication**.

### **HOMEPRENEURS**

The term **Homepreneur** is a combination of two words — “**Home**” and “**Entrepreneur.**” It refers to a person who **starts and manages a business from their own home** instead of renting or owning a separate office, shop, or factory. Homepreneurs use their **home space, personal resources, and digital tools** to produce goods, provide services, or run online businesses. With the rise of the Internet, social media, and e-commerce, home-based entrepreneurship has become a popular way of achieving **financial independence, flexibility, and work-life balance**.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- ❖ To examine the role of social media platforms in promoting and expanding the business activities of Homepreneurs in Kerala.
- ❖ To analyze the influence of e-commerce platforms on sales performance, market reach, and profitability of Homepreneurs.
- ❖ To identify the challenges and opportunities faced by Homepreneurs in using social media and e-commerce platforms for business growth.

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study on the “**Impact of Social Media and E-Commerce Platforms on the Growth of Homepreneurs in Kerala**” is **descriptive and analytical in nature**. It aims to explore how digital tools and platforms influence the growth, sales, and operational efficiency of home-based entrepreneurs. The study also seeks to identify the challenges faced and the opportunities created by these platforms.

### **POPULATION AND SAMPLE**

- **Population:** Homepreneurs operating in various districts of Kerala across product-based, service-based, and digital-based businesses.
- **Sample Size:** 110 Homepreneurs have been selected for the study.
- **Sampling Technique: Purposive sampling** is used to select participants who actively use social media and e-commerce platforms for their business operations.

### **DATA COLLECTION METHOD**

- **Primary Data:** Collected through a **structured questionnaire** containing both **close-ended and Likert-scale questions** related to business growth, social media usage, e-commerce adoption, challenges, and opportunities.
- **Secondary Data:** Collected from **books, journals, research articles, government reports, and online databases** relevant to Homepreneurship, e-commerce, and social media marketing.

## TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES OF ANALYSIS

The collected data will be analyzed using **statistical tools** to test relationships, differences, and impacts among variables:

1. **T-Test:**
2. **ANOVA (Analysis of Variance):**
3. **Correlation Analysis:**
4. **Regression Analysis:**

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- ❖ The study is based on **110 Homepreneurs from selected districts of Kerala**, which may not represent all home-based entrepreneurs in the state.
- ❖ Limited time and some respondents' **reluctance to share financial or detailed business information** may affect the depth of analysis.
- ❖ Social media and e-commerce platforms **evolve quickly**, so findings may become less relevant over time.

## ANALYSIS

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	45	40.91
	Female	65	59.09
<b>Age (Years)</b>	Below 25	20	18.18
	25 – 35	50	45.45
	36 – 45	30	27.27
	Above 45	10	9.10
<b>Educational Qualification</b>	High School	25	22.73
	Graduate	55	50.00
	Postgraduate	30	27.27
<b>Type of Business</b>	Product-Based	40	36.36
	Service-Based	35	31.82
	Online/Digital	35	31.82
<b>Experience (Years)</b>	Less than 2	30	27.27
	2 – 5	50	45.45
	Above 5	30	27.27

### Primary Data

The demographic profile of the respondents reveals insightful patterns about home-based entrepreneurship in Kerala. A majority of the respondents are female (59.09%), indicating that homepreneurship is largely women-led, reflecting its role in promoting women's economic participation and empowerment. In terms of age, the largest proportion of respondents (45.45%)

falls within the 25–35 years range, suggesting that young adults are actively engaging in home-based businesses, likely leveraging technology and digital platforms. Regarding educational qualifications, most respondents are graduates (50%), followed by postgraduates (27.27%), which implies that educated individuals are more inclined toward homepreneurship, possibly due to better awareness of digital tools, online marketing, and business management practices. The distribution of business types is fairly balanced among product-based, service-based, and online/digital businesses, reflecting a diverse range of entrepreneurial activities undertaken from home. Finally, with 45.45% of respondents having 2–5 years of experience, it is evident that a significant portion of homepreneurs are moderately experienced, indicating that while many have established their businesses, there is still potential for growth and expansion.

**Table 2: Role of Social Media Platforms in Business Growth of Homepreneurs**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score
Social media helps me reach more customers	45	40	15	8	2	4.16
Social media increases my product/service visibility	50	35	15	8	2	4.18
Social media promotes customer engagement and feedback	40	42	18	8	2	4.05
Social media helps in increasing sales	38	40	20	10	2	4.00
Social media reduces marketing cost	35	38	22	12	3	3.88

**Computed Data**

**Table 3: Impact of Social Media on Business Growth**

Age Group (Years)	N	Mean Score	Standard Deviation (SD)
Below 25	20	3.85	0.48
25 – 35	50	4.10	0.42
36 – 45	30	4.05	0.40
Above 45	10	3.95	0.45

**Table 4: ANOVA Table**

ANOVA Table	Sum of Squares (SS)	df	Mean Square (MS)	F-value	p-value
Between Groups	0.95	3	0.317	3.02	0.033*
Within Groups	10.90	106	0.103		
<b>Total</b>	11.85	109			

\*Significant at 5% level ( $p < 0.05$ )

The analysis indicates that social media plays a significant role in the business growth of Homepreneurs in Kerala. Respondents strongly agree or agree that social media helps in **reaching more customers (mean = 4.16)**, **increasing product/service visibility (mean = 4.18)**, **promoting**

**customer engagement (mean = 4.05), boosting sales (mean = 4.00), and reducing marketing costs (mean = 3.88).** This highlights that social media is a crucial tool for expanding market reach and enhancing business operations. The results further reveal that the perceived impact of social media varies across age groups, with the 25–35 years group showing the highest mean score (4.10). The ANOVA test is statistically significant ( $F = 3.02, p = 0.033$ ), confirming that age influences how Homepreneurs leverage social media for business growth. Overall, these findings suggest that younger and middle-aged entrepreneurs are more proactive and effective in utilizing social media, making it a key driver of home-based business expansion.

**Table 5: Correlation between E-Commerce Platform Usage and Business Growth**

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
Frequency of E-Commerce Usage	0.642*	0.000
Time Spent on E-Commerce Platforms	0.585*	0.000
Number of Platforms Used	0.530*	0.000

**Computed Data**

\*Significant at 1% level ( $p < 0.01$ )

The correlation analysis indicates a **strong positive relationship** between the use of e-commerce platforms and business growth of Homepreneurs in Kerala. The **frequency of e-commerce usage** shows a correlation coefficient of **0.642**, which is statistically significant at the 1% level, suggesting that Homepreneurs who frequently use e-commerce platforms experience **higher sales performance and market reach**. Similarly, the **time spent on e-commerce platforms ( $r = 0.585$ )** and the **number of platforms used ( $r = 0.530$ )** are positively associated with business growth, indicating that greater engagement and multi-platform presence contribute to profitability. These findings confirm that **e-commerce platforms are effective tools for expanding market access and increasing revenue**, highlighting their critical role in supporting home-based businesses.

**Table 6: Perceived Challenges of Using Social Media and E-Commerce Platforms**

Gender	N	Mean Score	Standard Deviation (SD)	t-value	p-value
Male	45	3.78	0.50	2.05	0.043*
Female	65	4.05	0.45		

**Computed Data**

Significant at 5% level ( $p < 0.05$ )

The analysis shows that **female Homepreneurs perceive slightly higher challenges** in using social media and e-commerce platforms compared to males, with mean scores of **4.05** and **3.78**, respectively. The **T-test result ( $t = 2.05, p = 0.043$ )** is statistically significant at the 5% level, indicating that gender influences the perception of challenges in adopting digital platforms. Common challenges reported by respondents include **technical difficulties, managing multiple platforms, lack of digital marketing skills, and limited time to engage online**. Despite these challenges, the findings also suggest that both male and female Homepreneurs recognize **opportunities for business growth, wider customer reach, and cost-effective marketing** through these platforms. Overall, the study highlights the importance of **training, support, and resources** to help Homepreneurs overcome challenges and fully leverage digital platforms for business expansion.

**Table 7: identify the challenges and opportunities faced by Homepreneurs**

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Mean Score (Garrett Formula)</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Technical difficulties	78.50	1
Lack of digital marketing skills	76.80	2
Managing multiple platforms	74.90	3
Limited time	73.50	4
Financial constraints	70.60	5

The Garrett ranking shows that “**technical difficulties**” are perceived as the most significant challenge by Homepreneurs, with the **highest mean score (78.50)**. This indicates that many entrepreneurs struggle with using social media and e-commerce platforms effectively due to technical barriers. “**Lack of digital marketing skills**” (**rank 2, mean = 76.80**) follows closely, highlighting the need for **training and skill development**. Other challenges such as **managing multiple platforms (rank 3)**, **limited time (rank 4)**, and **financial constraints (rank 5)** are also important but considered slightly less severe. Overall, the ranking suggests that addressing technical and skill-related challenges is critical to helping Homepreneurs fully leverage digital platforms and capitalize on the opportunities they offer for business growth.

## **FINDINGS**

- ❖ Majority of the respondents are **female (59.09%)**, indicating that home-based entrepreneurship in Kerala is largely women-led.
- ❖ The largest age group is **25–35 years (45.45%)**, showing that young adults actively engage in home-based businesses.
- ❖ Most respondents are **graduates (50%)**, followed by postgraduates (27.27%), suggesting that educated individuals are more inclined toward homepreneurship, likely due to better digital literacy.
- ❖ Business types are fairly balanced among **product-based (36.36%)**, **service-based (31.82%)**, and **online/digital businesses (31.82%)**.
- ❖ A significant proportion (**45.45%**) have **2–5 years of experience**, indicating moderate experience with potential for growth.
- ❖ Social media helps **reach more customers (mean = 4.16)** and **increase product/service visibility (mean = 4.18)**, making it a crucial tool for expanding market reach.
- ❖ It also **promotes customer engagement (mean = 4.05)**, **boosts sales (mean = 4.00)**, and **reduces marketing costs (mean = 3.88)**.
- ❖ The impact of social media varies across age groups, with the **25–35 years group showing the highest mean score (4.10)**.
- ❖ ANOVA results are statistically significant (**F = 3.02, p = 0.033**), confirming that age influences the use of social media for business growth.
- ❖ There is a **strong positive correlation** between e-commerce platform usage and business growth: frequency of usage (**r = 0.642, p = 0.000**), time spent on platforms (**r = 0.585, p = 0.000**), and number of platforms used (**r = 0.530, p = 0.000**), indicating that more engagement leads to higher sales, market reach, and profitability.
- ❖ **Female respondents (mean = 4.05)** perceive slightly higher challenges than males (mean = 3.78).

- ❖ The T-test shows a statistically significant difference ( $t = 2.05, p = 0.043$ ), suggesting gender influences perceived challenges.
- ❖ Common challenges include **technical difficulties, lack of digital marketing skills, managing multiple platforms, and limited time.**
- ❖ Despite these challenges, Homepreneurs recognize **opportunities for business growth, wider customer reach, and cost-effective marketing.**
- ❖ Garrett Ranking shows the most significant challenge is **technical difficulties (rank 1, mean = 78.50)**, followed by **lack of digital marketing skills (rank 2, mean = 76.80)**.
- ❖ Other challenges in order of severity are **managing multiple platforms (rank 3), limited time (rank 4), and financial constraints (rank 5)**, highlighting the need to address technical and skill-related issues to fully leverage digital platforms.

## SUGGESTIONS

1. Digital literacy programs should be conducted to help homepreneurs improve their skills in using social media, online marketing, and e-commerce platforms effectively.
2. Government and entrepreneurship development agencies should offer regular training on digital tools, online payments, and logistics management.
3. Internet connectivity and digital infrastructure in rural and semi-urban areas of Kerala should be strengthened to support online business operations.
4. Homepreneurs should expand their presence across multiple platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Amazon, Flipkart, and Meesho to reach a wider customer base.
5. Financial institutions should provide easy access to microloans, digital payment support, and marketing subsidies to encourage small home-based businesses.
6. Awareness campaigns should be introduced to educate entrepreneurs about cybersecurity, online fraud prevention, and safe digital practices.
7. Local incubation centers and women empowerment cells should offer mentorship and business networking opportunities for homepreneurs.
8. Simple, user-friendly tutorials in local languages should be made available to overcome technical difficulties and platform-related challenges.
9. Homepreneurs should use automation tools for posting, inventory tracking, and communication to save time and improve efficiency.
10. E-commerce companies and social media platforms should collaborate with local agencies to promote Kerala-based homepreneurs through targeted initiatives and regional campaigns.

## CONCLUSION

The study clearly reveals that social media and e-commerce platforms have a significant positive impact on the growth and sustainability of homepreneurs in Kerala. These digital tools have enabled individuals—especially women and youth—to start, promote, and manage businesses from their homes with minimal investment. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp have helped in enhancing customer engagement, product visibility, and brand awareness, while e-commerce platforms like Amazon, Flipkart, and Meesho have expanded market reach and improved sales performance.

However, despite these benefits, homepreneurs continue to face challenges such as technical difficulties, lack of digital marketing skills, time constraints, and financial limitations. The findings emphasize the need for continuous digital training, infrastructural support, and

institutional guidance to help home-based entrepreneurs fully utilize digital opportunities. Overall, the study concludes that the effective use of social media and e-commerce platforms can significantly contribute to income generation, empowerment, and the socio-economic development of Kerala's homepreneurs, positioning them as vital contributors to the state's digital economy.

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