

Rural Women E-commerce School (RWE): A Case of Sustainable E-commerce for the Rural Women



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Abstract

The rise of E-Commerce in Bangladesh has opened new avenues for entrepreneurship, particularly for women. Women are not only utilizing E-Commerce platforms to purchase products but are increasingly engaging in entrepreneurial activities through community networks. Despite the challenges, the growing participation of Bangladeshi women in E-Commerce entrepreneurship highlights the potential of this sector to empower women economically and socially.

Traditionally, starting a business was particularly difficult for women due to societal and structural barriers. E-Commerce provides a more accessible platform for initiating entrepreneurial ventures. This study aimed to assess the skills of small-scale entrepreneurs, explore strategies to promote E-Commerce among rural entrepreneurs through digital networking, and address support mechanisms for women in E-Commerce. Specifically, it evaluated the competencies of rural women entrepreneurs, identified digital networking strategies, and proposed solutions to challenges related to market access, capital, and expertise.

The research involved 70 entrepreneurs from the Rural Women E-Commerce School (RWE School) platform, employing both quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection. The respondents, primarily women aged 21 to 40 years with a bachelor's degree, reported selling homemade food and traditional clothing as their top products. While most participants earned a monthly income of BDT 5,000–10,000, they identified significant challenges such as market competition, family responsibilities, limited capital, and lack of E-Commerce expertise. Despite these barriers, respondents expressed positive attitudes toward the future of E-Commerce and its potential to improve their livelihoods.

The findings indicate that E-Commerce platforms can play a transformative role in empowering rural women by providing accessible business opportunities and enhancing their quality of life. This research underscores the importance of targeted support, capacity-building initiatives, and networking strategies to further integrate rural women into the E-Commerce ecosystem and foster sustainable development.

Keywords: Rural Women; E-Commerce; Entrepreneurship; RWE School; e-business