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FAMILYWALA ESHOP PVT LTD

EK RISHTA FAMILYWALA – BHARAT KI APNI ONLINE SHOP

Kaushal Kumar | The CEO Magazine

A DIGITAL MARKETPLACE EMPOWERING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

In India, while the entrepreneurship landscape is flourishing, many traditional vendors, especially women, continue to face significant challenges in establishing and scaling their businesses. Despite possessing the skills and determination necessary for success, many women entrepreneurs struggle with limited access to resources, funding, and platforms that can amplify their voices and products. This challenge is not only a barrier for women but also a loss for the economy, as diverse businesses contribute to innovation and growth.

Recognising this gap, Familywala eShop Pvt Ltd emerged with a mission to empower women entrepreneurs and self-help groups by providing them with a digital marketplace tailored to their unique needs.

THE GENESIS OF FAMILYWALA ESHOP

The inception of Familywala eShop Pvt Ltd was inspired by a poignant encounter during the Diwali festival of 2021. While shopping, Dr Vibha Sen and her children, Ayushi and Aditya, came across an elderly woman selling diyas and decorative pieces in a bamboo basket. “Seeing her struggle



DR VIBHA SEN
FOUNDER - FAMILYWALA ESHOP PVT LTD

to attract customers made me realise how many talented women like her remain unheard in the otherwise flourishing market,” says Dr Vibha. This encounter ignited a passion in her to create a platform that could bridge the gap between traditional vendors and the digital marketplace.

Founded by Dr Vibha Sen and Savitri Sen, Familywala eShop was born out of a passion to uplift women and create opportunities for self-reliance. Dr Vibha, an accomplished social entrepreneur, and Savitri, with her extensive background in community development, recognised the immense potential of women-led businesses and the need for a dedicated platform to showcase their products.



“Our vision was clear: we wanted to create a digital marketplace that not only connects women entrepreneurs with customers but also provides them with the necessary tools, training, and support to thrive in the competitive e-commerce landscape,” Dr. Vibha explains.

FUNDING THE DREAM

The initial phase of Familywala was funded through bootstrap financing, relying on personal investments from both founders. This approach allowed them to establish core operations and develop the initial version of the platform.

Recognising the potential for growth, Familywala later secured seed funding through the Start-up India initiative, which was crucial in scaling operations and enhancing platform features. “This funding provided essential resources for expanding our outreach to women entrepreneurs and self-help groups,” Dr. Vibha notes.

EMPOWERING THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

At the heart of Familywala’s mission is a commitment to onboard women entrepreneurs and self-help groups, providing them with a digital platform to sell their

products. “Our process begins with targeted outreach programs,” Dr. Vibha explains. “We connect with potential vendors through self-help groups, community events, and collaborations with local organisations.”

Once onboarded, women entrepreneurs receive comprehensive training and support in managing online sales, enhancing product visibility, digital marketing, and customer engagement. “We aim to empower them by giving them the tools they need to succeed,” Dr. Vibha emphasises. Continuous improvements to the platform enhance the vendor and customer experience, ensuring that Familywala remains user-friendly.

NAVIGATING SETBACKS

Despite its commendable efforts, Familywala faces significant challenges inherent to the e-commerce industry. “We know that the e-commerce space is crowded, and it’s a constant challenge for niche players like Familywala that focus on social impact to differentiate ourselves,” Dr Vibha acknowledges.

“Securing funding remains a critical challenge but, at the same time, essential for us to scale our operations and enhance our offerings,” she explains. “We aim to attract partners who believe in our vision and want to make a difference.”

“Staying relevant in this fast-paced environment requires us to be agile and innovative,” Dr Vibha adds, emphasising the importance of evolving to serve their community better.

WHAT SETS FAMILYWALA APART?

Familywala eShop Pvt Ltd stands out in the e-commerce landscape with its unwavering focus on empowering women entrepreneurs, particularly from self-help groups and rural areas. Unlike generic platforms, Familywala exclusively features products made by women, directly supporting their

financial independence. Dr. Vibha emphasises, “*We believe in creating a community. We provide not just a marketplace but also digital literacy training and business support to help our vendors thrive.*” By nurturing strong relationships with vendors through ongoing support and personalised service, Familywala fosters loyalty and community engagement. This commitment to social impact and specialisation in women-led businesses differentiates Familywala from larger competitors.

**MILESTONES AND SUCCESS:
A JOURNEY OF IMPACT**

Since its inception, Familywala eShop Pvt Ltd has achieved several key milestones that highlight its commitment to empowering women entrepreneurs. In August 2024, the company received the Inspiring Leader Award from Anupam Mittal at a Times Applauds event in Mumbai. The successful launch of its Minimum Viable Product (MVP) marked a significant step, enabling the onboarding of women entrepreneurs. Dr. Vibha notes, “*Reaching this stage allowed us to understand and better serve our target audience.*”

Familywala conducted a survey with over 100 women entrepreneurs, gathering crucial insights to shape its offerings. The platform has seen substantial growth in its customer base and vendor onboarding, along with establishing partnerships with self-help groups to empower rural women artisans. They also introduced innovative value-added services, such as fuel cards and insurance facilities, to address logistical challenges for vendors, helping them reach wider markets more efficiently. As the company prepares to launch a Loyalty Program, Dr. Vibha concludes, “*Building long-term relationships with our vendors and customers is crucial for sustainable growth.*”

EMERGING HORIZONS

The future of the e-commerce industry is bright, especially for platforms that focus on social entrepreneurship and



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niche markets. As consumer preferences shift towards supporting purpose-driven brands and sustainable products, Familywala is well-positioned to thrive in this evolving landscape.

“We are actively networking with potential investors who share our vision of empowering women entrepreneurs,” she notes.

LEADERSHIP MANTRA

Starting an e-commerce business is exciting but challenging. Dr Vibha advises aspiring entrepreneurs to truly understand their market: “Research your audience, analyse competitors, and identify your unique selling point. Focus on solving a specific problem.”

She emphasises starting small. “*Launch a minimum viable product to test the waters and refine it as you grow—it’s a safer way to expand.*” A strong online presence and customer satisfaction are crucial. “*Invest in effective digital marketing and ensure your website is user-friendly. Great customer service turns first-time buyers into loyal customers.*”

“*Connect with other entrepreneurs and seek mentorship,*” she suggests, as these relationships offer valuable guidance. “*The market is always evolving, so adapt with it. Passion paired with strategic thinking will lead you to success,*” she concludes. ■