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A Study on Role of Digital Marketing in Small Businesses with special reference to Sri Vijaya Puram, Andaman & Nicobar Islands

Abstract : Digital marketing has emerged as an important tool for small businesses to enhance customer reach, business visibility, customer engagement and sales opportunities. The study focuses on the awareness, adoption and use of digital marketing platforms, their perceived impact on customer reach and sales, major benefits, and challenges faced by small business owners. A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. Primary data were collected from 80 small business owners from Aberdeen Bazaar, Bathubasti and Garacharma, and Ferrargunj and Bambooflat using a structured questionnaire and convenience sampling technique. Secondary data were collected from books, journals, research studies, government publications and reliable online sources. Percentage analysis, mean scores and standard deviation were used to analyze the collected data. The findings indicate that awareness of social media marketing was highest at 90%, followed by WhatsApp Business at 85%. WhatsApp Business was the most widely used digital platform, reported by 81.25% of respondents, followed by Facebook 72.50% and Instagram 61.25%. The study further found that 65% of respondents reported either a significant or moderate increase in sales after using digital marketing, while 72.50% reported a high or very high impact on customer reach. The study concludes that digital marketing provides considerable opportunities for small businesses in Sri Vijaya Puram to strengthen their market presence and customer relationships. The study recommends practical digital marketing training, greater use of social media and WhatsApp Business, improved online visibility, digital analytics, cyber-security awareness and institutional support to enhance the effective adoption of digital marketing among small businesses.

Keywords : Digital Marketing, Small Businesses, Social Media Marketing, WhatsApp Business, Customer Reach, Business Visibility, Sales Performance, Digital Adoption,

Sri Vijaya Puram, Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Introduction of Digital Marketing : Digital marketing has transformed the way businesses promote their products and services. With the rapid growth of internet usage, smartphones, and social media platforms, small businesses are increasingly adopting digital marketing strategies to reach customers effectively. Digital marketing tools such as social media marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), email marketing, and online advertising allow businesses to connect with their target audience at a relatively low cost.

For small businesses, digital marketing provides opportunities to compete with larger firms by improving visibility, customer engagement, and sales. In developing and remote regions such as Sri Vijaya Puram, digital platforms are helping local entrepreneurs expand their customer base beyond physical markets.

This study examines the role and effectiveness of digital marketing practices among small businesses in different areas including Aberdeen Bazaar, Bathubasti, Garacharma, Ferrargunj, and Bambooflat.

Meaning of Digital Marketing : Digital marketing refers to the use of digital technologies and online platforms to promote products and services to consumers. It includes marketing through websites, search engines, social media platforms, mobile applications, and email. Digital marketing refers to the promotion of products, services, or brands using digital technologies and internet-based platforms. It involves the use of various online channels such as websites, search engines, social media platforms, mobile applications, email, and other digital media to communicate with customers and influence their purchasing decisions. In the modern business environment, digital marketing has become an essential strategy for businesses because consumers increasingly rely on the internet to search for information, compare products, and make purchasing decisions.

The traditional marketing methods such as newspaper advertisements, television commercials, or printed brochures, digital marketing allows businesses to reach a wider audience quickly and at a relatively lower cost. It enables companies to interact directly with customers, understand their preferences, and provide personalized marketing messages. Through digital platforms, businesses can promote their products and services 24 hours a day, allowing customers to access information anytime and from anywhere.

Definitions of Digital Marketing : Philip Kotler defines “Digital marketing is the use of digital technologies, mainly the internet, to promote products and services to consumers. It involves the use of online platforms, websites, and social media to communicate with customers. Digital marketing helps businesses reach a wider audience and build strong customer relationships.”

Ryan Deiss and Russ Henneberry defines “Digital marketing is the process of attracting, engaging, and converting customers using online marketing channels such as search engines, social media, email, and websites.”

According to Neil Patel defines “Digital marketing refers to marketing efforts that use the internet and electronic devices to promote products and services. It allows businesses to reach customers through search engines, social media, email, and other online platforms.

Digital Marketing Tools :

1. Social Media Marketing: Social media marketing involves promoting products and services through social networking platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Businesses use these platforms to share promotional content, communicate with customers, and build brand awareness. It is one of the most affordable and effective marketing methods for small businesses.

2. Search Engine Optimization (SEO): Search Engine Optimization is the process of improving a website’s visibility in search engine results such as Google Search. SEO helps businesses

appear higher in search results when customers look for related products or services. By using appropriate keywords and quality content, businesses can attract more visitors to their websites.

3. Content Marketing: Content marketing involves creating and sharing valuable and informative content to attract and engage customers. This content may include articles, blog posts, videos, images, and infographics. It helps businesses build trust with customers and establish a strong online presence.

4. Email Marketing: Email marketing is a digital marketing strategy that involves sending promotional messages, newsletters, or product updates directly to customers through email. It helps businesses maintain communication with existing customers and inform them about offers or new products. This method is effective for building long-term customer relationships.

5. Online Advertising: Online advertising refers to paid promotions on search engines, websites, and social media platforms. Businesses often use advertising tools like Google Ads to reach specific target audiences. These advertisements help increase website traffic, generate leads, and improve sales.

6. Mobile Marketing: Mobile marketing focuses on reaching customers through smartphones and mobile devices. Businesses use mobile-friendly websites, apps, and SMS messages to promote their products and services. Since many people use mobile phones for internet access, this method helps businesses reach customers quickly and conveniently.

Meaning of Small Business : A small business refers to an enterprise that is independently owned and operated with limited capital, a small number of employees, and a smaller market share compared to large organizations. These businesses mainly serve local customers and operate on a limited scale. Small businesses play an important role in generating employment and supporting local economic development.

Definitions of Small Business : Peter F. Drucker, defined “A small business as an independently owned and operated enterprise that is limited in size and resources. It usually serves a local or regional market and is managed directly by the owner. Small businesses focus on meeting specific customer needs within their community.”

According to Philip Kotler, defines “A small business is a firm that operates on a relatively small scale with limited employees and capital. These businesses are usually owned and managed by individuals or families. They primarily serve local markets and customers.”

According to C. B. Gupta, defines “A small business is an enterprise that operates on a small scale with limited capital investment and a small number of employees. It is usually owned and managed by an individual or a family. Such businesses mainly serve local markets and customers.”

K. Aswathappa states that “A small business is a privately owned enterprise that operates on a small scale and has a limited market share. It generally employs a small workforce and focuses on providing goods or services to local customers.”

Types of Small Businesses :

1. Retail Shops: Retail shops are small businesses that sell goods directly to consumers for personal use. These shops usually operate in local markets and provide daily household items, clothing, groceries, and other products. They serve the immediate needs of customers in the community.

2. Restaurants: Small restaurants or food outlets provide prepared food and beverages to customers. These businesses often serve local residents and tourists with different types of cuisines and snacks. They contribute to local employment and the hospitality sector.

3. Small Service Providers: Small service providers offer specialized services such as tailoring, repair services, beauty salons, and transportation services. These businesses operate on a small

scale and focus on meeting the service needs of the local population. They usually require limited investment and workforce.

4. Tourism-Related Businesses: Tourism-related businesses include travel agencies, souvenir shops, guest houses, and tour operators. These businesses provide services to tourists visiting places like Sri Vijaya Puram. They play an important role in supporting the tourism industry.

5. Local Traders: Local traders are individuals or small businesses engaged in buying and selling goods within local markets. They act as intermediaries between suppliers and customers in the community. Their activities help maintain the smooth flow of goods in the local economy. These businesses play an important role in economic development by generating employment and supporting local markets.

Profile of Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair) : Sri Vijaya Puram, formerly known as Port Blair, is the capital city of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands and serves as the administrative, commercial, and cultural hub of this strategically important union territory. Located on the South Andaman Island, the city is surrounded by the pristine waters of the Bay of Bengal and is the main gateway for transportation, trade, and tourism in the islands. Its unique location makes it both a vital port and a center for economic and social activities in the region.

The history of Sri Vijaya Puram dates back to the British colonial period. In 1858, the British established a penal settlement on the islands to house political prisoners and criminals, following the Indian Rebellion of 1857. Port Blair became a key site for the British administration due to its strategic location in the Bay of Bengal. One of the most significant landmarks from this era is the Cellular Jail, commonly known as Kala Pani. The jail became infamous for its harsh conditions and the isolation of prisoners, many of whom were freedom fighters from mainland India. The Cellular Jail stands today as a symbol of the sacrifices of India's freedom fighters and attracts visitors from across the country and abroad.

Sri Vijaya Puram today is not only the administrative headquarters but also the economic and commercial heart of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The city hosts government offices, the Secretariat, courts, educational institutions, hospitals, and transportation hubs, making it the central urban center for the islands. Its port facilities support trade and supply chains across the islands, while its airport connects it with mainland India.

Tourism is one of the most significant contributors to the city's economy. Attractions such as Ross Island, ChidiyaTapu, Corbyn's Cove Beach, and North Bay Island draw thousands of tourists annually. This influx of tourists has encouraged the growth of small businesses, including hotels, guest houses, restaurants, souvenir shops, and travel agencies. Many of these businesses are now leveraging digital marketing and online platforms to reach both domestic and international customers.

Small Business and Local Economy of Sri Vijaya Puram : The growth of small businesses in Sri Vijaya Puram has been a key factor in the development of the local economy. Retail shops, restaurants, service providers, tourism-related enterprises, and local traders form the backbone of commerce in the city. These businesses not only cater to the local population but also to the increasing number of tourists visiting the islands. The city's infrastructure, combined with its historical significance and scenic beauty, provides a conducive environment for entrepreneurship and small business growth.

Objectives of the Study : The objective of the study are as under

1. To study the role of digital marketing in small businesses.
2. To analyze the awareness of digital marketing among small business owners.
3. To examine the impact of digital marketing on sales and customer reach.
4. To identify the challenges faced by small businesses in adopting digital marketing.

5. To suggest strategies to improve digital marketing practices among small businesses in Sri Vijaya Puram.

Hypothesis :

- i. H_0 (Null Hypothesis): Digital marketing has no significant impact on the growth of small businesses in Sri Vijaya Puram.
- ii. H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): Digital marketing has a significant impact on the growth of small businesses in Sri Vijaya Puram.

Review of Literature :

Ritz, Wolf and McQuitty (2019) the researchers examined the participation of small businesses in digital marketing by integrating the Technology Acceptance Model and the Do-It-Yourself behaviour model. The study found that perceived ease of use was strongly associated with digital marketing behaviour among small business owners and managers. The study highlighted that technological benefits are not the only factors motivating small businesses to adopt digital marketing.

Chatterjee and Kar (2020) examined that social media marketing adoption among small and medium enterprises in India. The study found that social media marketing contributed to improved business performance, sales and customer connections. The authors also identified cost as an important factor influencing the adoption of social media marketing by SMEs.

Tandur, Garg and Rahman (2020) they have studied the adoption of digital marketing among SMEs in India. The study highlighted that digital marketing provides opportunities for SMEs to improve customer reach and business performance. However, the authors identified various adoption-related challenges that restrict businesses from fully utilizing digital marketing opportunities.

Sinha and Fukey (2021) he examined factors affecting the digital visibility of small and medium enterprises in India. The study emphasized the role of digital platforms in improving the visibility of SMEs and strengthening communication with customers. The findings indicate that effective use of digital technologies can help SMEs improve their online presence and customer interaction.

Chatterjee, Chaudhuri and Vrontis (2021) the study investigated the role of social media marketing in developing strategic competitive advantage among SMEs. The study highlighted the importance of customer value and engagement in achieving benefits from social media marketing. The findings suggest that effective social media use can support the competitive position of small and medium enterprises.

Tofail Ahmed, Navkaar Vipul Sonawala, Rishab Jain, Aman Gupta, Shankar Prasad S. and Thanga Kumar R. (2023) they examined the usefulness of digital marketing strategies for small businesses in the increasingly digital business environment. The study highlighted different methods of digitalization that can support business growth and competitiveness. It concluded that digital marketing provides opportunities for smaller businesses to sustain themselves and compete in the changing market.

Babitha B. S., Kabilesh K. G., Ashish V. M., Arun Aadhavan G., Paavani B. Srinivas and Swethaa Senthil Kumar (2023) the researchers examined the effect of online marketing on small business performance. The study emphasized direct selling, lead generation, customer acquisition and brand awareness as important objectives of digital marketing. The findings indicated that digital marketing can be particularly useful for entrepreneurs and small businesses operating with limited promotional budgets.

Kanth and Siva Rama Prasad (2023) study reviewed the existing literature on social media marketing in small and medium enterprises. Their study highlighted the growing importance of

social media in marketing, customer engagement and business development. The review also identified several areas for further research concerning social media marketing practices among SMEs.

Wani and Palkar (2023) the study examined marketing strategies used by SMEs with particular emphasis on traditional and new-age approaches. The study emphasized that changing customer preferences and competitive conditions require SMEs to adopt modern marketing techniques. Digital marketing was identified as an increasingly important approach for improving the marketing effectiveness of small businesses.

Gitinejad and Sayyah (2024) they examined the role of digital marketing in the success of small businesses using a qualitative research approach. The study focused on how digital marketing contributes to brand awareness, customer engagement and overall business growth. The findings emphasized the importance of adopting digital marketing strategies for long-term sustainability and success.

Patil, Banagiri, Bhoyar, Felicita and Ray (2024) the study examined the use of social media marketing by Indian SMEs and identified its major benefits and challenges. The study highlighted the contribution of social media to customer attraction, customer retention, product promotion and brand building. Lack of awareness, skilled personnel and financial resources were identified as important challenges.

Ahmad and Pandey (2024) the researchers examined the adoption potential of digital marketing among Indian SMEs. The study found that SMEs recognize the benefits of digital marketing but face difficulties in adopting and effectively utilizing digital technologies. The authors emphasized the need to address adoption barriers to improve the digital marketing capabilities of small businesses.

Sharma (2024) he investigated digital marketing adoption among start-up companies in India using the Technology Acceptance Model and Theory of Planned Behaviour. The study examined factors such as perceived usefulness, ease of use and behavioural intentions influencing digital marketing adoption. The findings contribute to understanding the factors that encourage emerging businesses to adopt digital marketing.

Dsilva and Singh (2024) they examined digital marketing practices among SMEs in India, including social media marketing, search engine optimization and content creation. The study found that these practices can contribute to customer reach, sales and brand visibility. However, limited resources and inadequate knowledge of digital analytics were identified as challenges affecting effective digital marketing.

Nair, Chaudhry, Allappanavar and Jaulkar (2025) the researchers are examined the increasing importance of digital marketing strategies for small businesses in a highly competitive and digitally connected market. The study highlighted strong online presence, social media marketing, search engine optimization and content marketing as important strategies. The findings emphasized their contribution to small-business growth and market visibility.

Sharma and Pandey (2025) the study shows comparatively examined traditional and digital marketing approaches in the contemporary business environment. The study observed that traditional marketing continues to contribute to brand visibility, while digital marketing provides a more dynamic and data-driven approach. The authors suggested that integrating traditional and digital marketing approaches can support broader marketing objectives.

Jha (2025) the study examined various digital marketing channels, including social media, SEO, email marketing, pay-per-click advertising and content marketing, used by small businesses. The study highlighted digital marketing as an important tool for establishing and developing brands

in competitive markets. It also emphasized its ability to help resource-constrained businesses reach wider audiences and improve customer engagement.

Research Gap : The review of literature indicates that several studies have examined digital marketing adoption, social media marketing, customer engagement and business performance among SMEs in India. However, limited empirical research has been conducted on small businesses in Sri Vijaya Puram, Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Existing studies mainly focus on broader national, state or metropolitan contexts, with relatively less attention to the specific conditions of small businesses in island regions. There is also limited research examining the combined aspects of digital marketing awareness, frequency of online promotion, platforms used, impact on sales and customer reach, and challenges faced by local small business owners. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill this gap by examining the role of digital marketing among 80 small business owners in Sri Vijaya Puram, thereby providing a local perspective on digital marketing practices and challenges.

Statement of the Problem : Despite the increasing importance of digital marketing, many small businesses in Sri Vijaya Puram still rely heavily on traditional marketing methods. Limited knowledge, technological barriers, and lack of digital skills prevent some entrepreneurs from fully utilizing digital platforms. This study attempts to understand how small businesses are using digital marketing, its benefits, and the challenges they face. Previous studies highlight the importance of digital marketing in improving business performance.

Scope of the Study : The study on “Role of Digital Marketing in Small Businesses with special reference to Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair)” focuses on understanding how small business owners use digital marketing tools such as social media, websites, online advertising, and email marketing to promote their products and services. It covers selected areas including Aberdeen Bazaar, Bathubasti, Garacharma, Ferrargunj, and Bambooflat, providing a local perspective on small business practices. The research examines the impact of digital marketing on sales, customer engagement, and brand awareness while identifying challenges faced by small businesses in adopting these tools. The findings aim to help business owners improve marketing strategies, support policymakers in promoting small enterprises, and offer insights to researchers studying digital marketing in island regions. Overall, the study highlights the importance of digital marketing in enhancing the growth and sustainability of small businesses in Sri Vijaya Puram.

Methodology of the study : The methodology adopted for this study is designed to systematically examine the role of digital marketing in small businesses operating in Sri Vijaya Puram. The research focuses on understanding how small business owners are adopting digital marketing tools, the level of awareness among them, and the impact of these practices on their business growth.

Research Design : For this study, a descriptive research design has been employed. Descriptive research is appropriate because it allows the researcher to collect detailed information about the current status of digital marketing practices among small businesses. This design helps in identifying patterns, trends, and relationships between the use of digital marketing and business performance. The approach focuses on providing an accurate picture of the situation rather than establishing cause-and-effect relationships.

Data Collection : The study uses both primary and secondary data to ensure comprehensive analysis.

Primary Data: Primary data has been collected directly from small business owners in selected areas of Sri Vijaya Puram through structured questionnaires and personal interviews. The questionnaire includes questions about awareness, usage, benefits, and challenges of digital

marketing. Interviews were conducted to gain deeper insights into business practices and the factors influencing digital marketing adoption.

Secondary Data: Secondary data has been collected from various sources, including books, journals, research papers, government reports, and reliable online sources. These sources provided background information on digital marketing, small business practices, and the economic context of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. This information helped in framing the objectives, hypotheses, and survey questions for the study.

Sample Size and Area Distribution : The study focuses on small business owners from different commercial areas of Sri Vijaya Puram. A total of 80 respondents were selected for the survey using a convenient sampling technique. The respondents are distributed across key business areas as follows:

- i. Aberdeen Bazaar – 30 respondents
- ii. Bathubasti & Garacharma – 25 respondents
- iii. Ferrargunj & Bambooflat – 25 respondents

This distribution ensures representation from major commercial hubs of the city and captures the perspectives of business owners operating in different localities.

By combining primary and secondary data, this research methodology provides a comprehensive understanding of how digital marketing is shaping the growth of small businesses in Sri Vijaya Puram.

Sampling Technique : This study, the convenient sampling method has been used to select respondents. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which the respondents are chosen based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study. This method is suitable for this research because it allows the researcher to collect data efficiently from small business owners across different areas of Sri Vijaya Puram. By using this technique, the researcher was able to focus on respondents who are directly involved in business operations and have experience with digital marketing practices. Although convenience sampling may not provide complete representation of the entire population, it is practical and effective for exploratory studies like this project.

Analysis of Data : The collected data will be analyzed using statistical tools such as percentage and graphical representation. The analysis will focus on:

- a) Awareness of digital marketing
- b) Platforms used (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc.)
- c) Impact on customer reach and sales
- d) Frequency of online promotion
- e) Challenges faced in digital marketing

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Area

Sl. No.	Area	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Aberdeen Bazaar	30	37.50
2	Bathubasti & Garacharma	25	31.25
3	Ferrargunj & Bambooflat	25	31.25
Total		80	100.00

Source : Primary data

Interpretation: The table shows that 37.50% of the respondents were selected from Aberdeen Bazaar, while 31.25% each were selected from Bathubasti & Garacharma and Ferrargunj & Bambooflat. The distribution provides representation from different commercial locations and enables the study to examine digital marketing practices among small businesses operating in different parts of the study area.

Awareness of Digital Marketing : Digital marketing awareness is an important factor influencing the adoption of online promotional methods by small businesses. The respondents were asked about their awareness of different digital marketing tools.

Table 2: Awareness of Digital Marketing Tools

Sl. No.	Digital Marketing Tool	Aware	Not Aware	Percentage Aware
1.	Social Media Marketing	72	8	90.00%
2.	WhatsApp Business	68	12	85.00%
3.	Google Business Profile	54	26	67.50%
4.	Online Advertising	51	29	63.75%
5.	Search Engine Marketing	37	43	46.25%
6.	Email Marketing	42	38	52.50%
7.	Influencer Marketing	35	45	43.75%

Source : Primary data

Interpretation: The analysis indicates that awareness is highest for social media marketing, with 90% of respondents indicating awareness. WhatsApp Business is also widely known among small business owners. Awareness of Google Business Profile and online advertising is moderate, whereas awareness of search engine marketing and influencer marketing is comparatively lower. This indicates that small businesses tend to be more familiar with simple and easily accessible digital platforms than with specialized digital marketing techniques.

Table 3: Digital Platforms Used by Respondents

Sl. No.	Platform	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	WhatsApp/WhatsApp Business	65	81.25%
2.	Facebook	58	72.50%
3.	Instagram	49	61.25%
4.	Google Business Profile	43	53.75%
5.	YouTube	27	33.75%
6.	Own Website	18	22.50%
7.	Online Marketplaces	21	26.25%
8.	Email Marketing	16	20.00%

Source : Primary data

Interpretation: WhatsApp Business is the most commonly used digital platform, followed by Facebook and Instagram. The relatively low use of websites and email marketing suggests that many small businesses depend primarily on social-media-based promotion rather than maintaining dedicated digital marketing infrastructure.

Table 4: Frequency of Digital Marketing Activities

Sl. No.	Frequency	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Daily	24	30.00
2.	Several times a week	28	35.00
3.	Weekly	16	20.00
4.	Occasionally	9	11.25
5.	Rarely	3	3.75
Total		80	100.00

Source : Primary data

Interpretation : The table indicates that 30% of respondents undertake digital marketing activities daily, while 35% undertake them several times a week. Thus, a substantial proportion of small businesses engage in digital promotion regularly. However, 15% of respondents use digital marketing only occasionally or rarely, indicating scope for improving consistency in digital promotional activities.

Role of Digital Marketing in Small Businesses : The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement regarding the role of digital marketing in their businesses. (A five-point Likert scale was used) (5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree)

Table 5: Perceived Role of Digital Marketing

Sl. No.	Statement	Mean	SD	Rank
1.	Digital marketing helps increase customer reach	4.31	0.78	1
2.	Digital marketing improves business visibility	4.25	0.81	2
3.	Digital marketing helps communicate with customers	4.18	0.84	3
4.	Digital marketing helps promote new products	4.12	0.86	4
5.	Digital marketing provides information about competitors	3.89	0.94	5
6.	Digital marketing reduces promotional costs	3.84	0.96	6
7.	Digital marketing improves customer relationships	3.82	0.91	7

Source : Primary data

Interpretation: The results suggest that respondents generally perceive digital marketing positively. The highest mean score relates to **increasing customer reach**, followed by improved business visibility and communication with customers. The findings indicate that digital marketing is perceived primarily as a tool for reaching customers and improving business visibility.

Table 6: Perceived Impact on Sales

Sl. No.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Significant Increase	17	21.25
2.	Moderate Increase	35	43.75
3.	Slight Increase	18	22.50
4.	No Change	8	10.00
5.	Decrease	2	2.50
Total		80	100.00

Source : Primary data

Interpretation: The analysis indicates that **65% of respondents** reported either a significant or moderate increase in sales after using digital marketing. Another 22.50% reported a slight increase. Only a small proportion reported no change or a decrease. The result indicates that respondents generally perceive a positive association between digital marketing activities and sales performance. However, the descriptive result should not be interpreted as proof that digital marketing alone caused the increase in sales.

Table 7: Impact of Digital Marketing on Customer Reach

Sl. No.	Level of Impact	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Very High	22	27.50
2.	High	36	45.00
3.	Moderate	15	18.75
4.	Low	5	6.25
5.	Very Low	2	2.50
Total		80	100.00

Source : Primary data

Interpretation: The table shows that 45.00% of respondents reported a high and very high 27.50 % impact of digital marketing on customer reach. This indicates that digital platforms provide small businesses with opportunities to communicate with customers beyond their immediate physical location.

Table No: 08 Major Benefits of Digital Marketing

Sl. No.	Benefits	Mean Score	SD	Rank
1.	Wider customer reach	4.35	0.72	1
2.	Better business visibility	4.28	0.76	2
3.	Quick customer communication	4.21	0.80	3
4.	Product promotion	4.15	0.82	4
5.	Customer feedback	3.96	0.88	5
6.	Brand awareness	3.91	0.90	6
7.	Increased sales	3.87	0.94	7
8.	Lower promotional expenditure	3.74	1.01	8

Source : Primary data

Interpretation: The table shows that wider customer reach received the highest mean score of 4.35, followed by better business visibility (4.28) and quick customer communication (4.21). Product promotion also recorded a high mean score of 4.15, indicating its importance to small businesses. Lower promotional expenditure ranked eighth with a mean score of 3.74, suggesting that cost reduction was considered relatively less important than customer reach and visibility.

Table 9: Challenges Faced by Small Businesses

Sl. No.	Challenge	Mean	SD	Rank
1.	Lack of technical knowledge	4.12	0.88	1
2.	Lack of time	4.03	0.91	2
3.	Difficulty creating regular content	3.98	0.94	3
4.	Cost of paid digital advertising	3.91	0.97	4
5.	Lack of trained employees	3.86	1.00	5
6.	Difficulty measuring results	3.78	0.96	6
7.	Internet/connectivity problems	3.69	1.05	7
8.	Cyber security or privacy concerns	3.64	1.02	8
9.	Lack of knowledge about online analytics	3.55	1.01	9

Source : Primary data

Interpretation: The table indicates that lack of technical knowledge was the major challenge, with the highest mean score of 4.12, followed by lack of time (4.03) and difficulty creating regular content (3.98). The cost of paid digital advertising and lack of trained employees were also significant challenges. Lack of knowledge about online analytics ranked lowest with a mean

score of 3.55, though it remained a notable concern.

Table 10: Satisfaction Level

Sl. No.	Satisfaction Level	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Highly Satisfied	18	22.50
2.	Satisfied	39	48.75
3.	Neutral	15	18.75
4.	Dissatisfied	6	7.50
5.	Highly Dissatisfied	2	2.50
6.	Total	80	100.00

Source : Primary data

Interpretation: The analysis indicates that 48.75% of respondents are either satisfied and 22.50 % are highly satisfied with their digital marketing activities. This suggests a generally favourable perception of digital marketing among the surveyed small business owners.

Frequency of Online Promotion : Respondents were asked how frequently they use online platforms to promote their products or services. The responses are presented below.

Table11 : Frequency of Online Promotion

Sl. No.	Frequency of Online Promotion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Daily	20	25.00
2.	Several times a week	27	33.75
3.	Once a week	15	18.75
4.	Occasionally	13	16.25
5.	Rarely	5	6.25
Total		80	100.00

Source : Primary data

Interpretation: The table shows that 33.75% of the respondents promote their products or services online several times a week, while 25% undertake online promotion daily. About 18.75% promote their businesses once a week, whereas 16.25% use online promotion occasionally. Only 6.25% of the respondents rarely undertake online promotion.

Findings of the Study :

1. Out of the 80 respondents, 30 respondents (37.50%) were from Aberdeen Bazaar, while 25 respondents (31.25%) each were from Bathubasti & Garacharma and Ferrargunj & Bambooflat.
2. The analysis shows that awareness was highest for social media marketing (90%), followed by WhatsApp Business (85%). Awareness was comparatively lower for search engine marketing, email marketing and influencer marketing.
3. WhatsApp Business (81.25%) was the most commonly used digital platform, followed by Facebook (72.50%) and Instagram (61.25%). The use of own websites and email marketing was comparatively low.
4. 33.75% of respondents promoted their products several times a week, while 25% undertook online promotion daily. Thus, a considerable proportion of respondents used online promotion regularly.
5. Digital marketing was perceived to play an important role in increasing customer reach, business visibility, customer communication and product promotion. Customer reach received the highest mean score of 4.31.
6. The analysis found that 65% of respondents reported either a significant or moderate increase in sales after using digital marketing, while 22.50% reported a slight increase.

7. 72.50% of respondents reported that digital marketing had a high or very high impact on customer reach, indicating its importance in expanding the potential customer base.
8. Wider customer reach, better business visibility and quick customer communication were identified as the major perceived benefits of digital marketing, with mean scores of 4.35, 4.28 and 4.21, respectively.
9. The principal challenges identified were lack of technical knowledge, lack of time, difficulty in creating regular content, cost of paid digital advertising and lack of trained employees.
10. The analysis shows that 71.25% of respondents were satisfied or highly satisfied with their digital marketing activities, indicating an overall favourable perception of digital marketing among the surveyed small business owners.

Suggestions of the Study : Based on the findings of the study on “A Study on the Role of Digital Marketing in Small Businesses with Special Reference to Sri Vijaya Puram, Andaman & Nicobar Islands” the following suggestions are proposed:

1. **Conduct digital marketing awareness programmes:** Small business owners should be provided with regular awareness programmes on the importance and benefits of digital marketing for business growth.
2. **Provide practical digital marketing training:** Training should be organized on Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp Business, Google Business Profile, online advertising, content creation and other commonly used digital platforms.
3. **Increase the frequency of online promotion:** Business owners should promote their products and services regularly rather than only occasionally. A simple weekly or monthly content calendar can help maintain a consistent online presence.
4. **Strengthen social media marketing:** Small businesses should make effective use of social media platforms to display products, announce offers, share customer reviews and communicate with potential customers.
5. **Make effective use of WhatsApp Business:** Business owners should use WhatsApp Business features such as product catalogues, business profiles, quick replies and customer messages to improve customer communication.
6. **Improve online business visibility:** Small businesses should maintain updated Google Business Profiles with correct business names, locations, contact details, operating hours, photographs and customer reviews.
7. **Develop quality digital content:** Businesses should regularly prepare attractive photographs, short videos, product descriptions, promotional messages and customer-oriented content to improve engagement.
8. **Adopt affordable digital advertising:** Small businesses with limited budgets should start with low-cost and targeted online advertising and gradually increase expenditure according to measurable results.
9. **Develop digital skills among employees:** Business owners should encourage employees to acquire basic skills in social media management, graphic design, photography, video creation and digital customer service.
10. **Use digital analytics:** Business owners should monitor indicators such as views, reach, enquiries, engagement, website visits and sales generated through digital channels to understand the effectiveness of promotional activities.
11. **Focus on customer reviews and feedback:** Businesses should encourage satisfied customers to provide online reviews and should respond professionally to both positive and negative feedback.

12. **Improve cyber security awareness:** Business owners should be educated about strong passwords, two-factor authentication, secure online payments, phishing, fraudulent messages and protection of customer information.
13. **Create dedicated digital marketing responsibility:** Where feasible, small businesses should assign one employee or responsible person to manage social-media accounts, customer enquiries, online promotions and digital content.
14. **Encourage use of websites and online marketplaces:** Businesses with sufficient resources should consider developing simple websites or using suitable online marketplaces to expand their customer base beyond their immediate locality.
15. **Provide institutional support:** Government departments, local business associations and entrepreneurship-development institutions can organize affordable digital marketing workshops and mentoring programmes for small business owners.
16. **Promote local digital entrepreneurship:** Training programmes should encourage small businesses in areas such as Aberdeen Bazaar, Bathubasti, Garacharma, Ferrargunj and Bambooflat to adopt digital tools according to their business size and customer requirements.
17. **Link digital marketing with sales objectives:** Business owners should not use digital platforms merely for posting advertisements. Online activities should be linked with specific objectives such as generating enquiries, increasing customer visits, promoting new products and improving sales.

Conclusion : Digital marketing has become an important component of modern business practices, particularly for small businesses seeking to improve their visibility, customer communication and market reach. The findings indicate that small business owners are increasingly aware of digital marketing and are using platforms such as WhatsApp Business, Facebook and Instagram for product promotion and customer communication. Regular online promotion has become an important method of maintaining customer contact and improving business visibility. The study also indicates that digital marketing is perceived to contribute to wider customer reach, better business visibility, improved customer interaction and increased sales opportunities. Online platforms enable small businesses to communicate with customers quickly and promote products and special offers without depending entirely on traditional promotional methods. Therefore, small businesses in Sri Vijaya Puram should focus on consistent online promotion, quality digital content, customer engagement, digital analytics and cyber security. Training and awareness programmes conducted by government agencies, business associations and entrepreneurship-support institutions can help business owners improve their digital capabilities. In conclusion, digital marketing provides significant opportunities for small businesses to strengthen their market presence and customer relationships. Its successful adoption depends on the ability of business owners to select suitable digital platforms, use them consistently, develop relevant digital skills and evaluate the results of their promotional activities. With appropriate training, institutional support and effective use of available digital tools, small businesses in Sri Vijaya Puram can further integrate digital marketing into their regular business practices and pursue sustainable business growth.

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