

A study on Buying Preferences of Women with Reference to Online Shopping of Apparels and Garments in India

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Abstract: Ecommerce and Online shopping has become a way of life for most of the Indians especially women. Indian online market is estimated to grow 3.5 times to touch 175 million by 2020. The notable reasons of growing preference for online shopping are internet penetration, increasing number of e-tailors (online retailers), ease of shopping, flexibility in delivery, increasing purchasing power etc. According to a report online transaction of women has doubled in past two years. As per one Google study, it is expected to drive 25 per cent of the total organized retail sales in India by 2020 and is expected to reach \$60 billion in gross merchandising value. This study is an attempt to analyze online buying pattern of India women based on primary data. The study provides detailed analysis of various factors impacting the online purchase decision and most preferred e-tailors. The study provides an insight to online shopping of women customers but keeping in mind all the category of online shoppers.

Keywords - Online Shopping, women shoppers, e-retailers, e-commerce, online shoppers.

I. INTRODUCTION

Current population of India is 1.34 billion comprising of 48.5% females and 51.5% males. Women constitute a share of 48.1% in urban population and of 48.6% in the rural population (India Guide, 2017). According to International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Central Statistics Organization (CSO) India has emerged as the fastest growing major economy in the world, and is expected to be one of the top three economic powers of the world over the next 10-15 years, backed by its strong democracy and partnerships (IBEF, 2017). Indian economy is expected to grow at a rate of 6.7 per cent in the year 2017-18 and in the next financial year 2018-19 the economy is expected to grow at a rate of 7.2 per cent. Due to technological development, online business and application based online shopping in India has become a huge business with too many competitors offering almost all kinds of products required by people across the globe. India is projected to have 636 million internet users by 2021.

Figure 1 shows number of digital buyers in India from 2015 to 2020

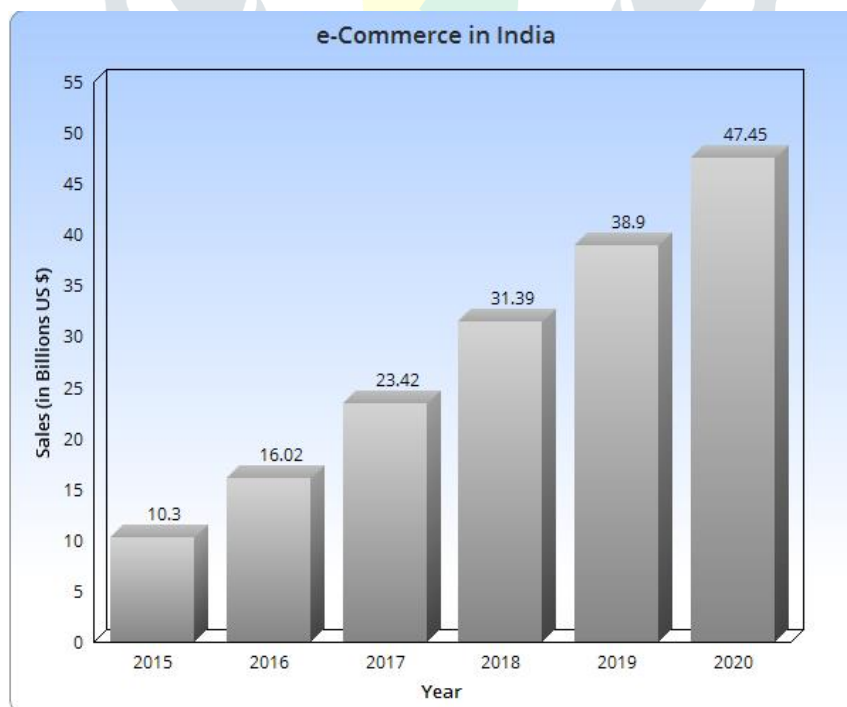


Figure 1: Retail e-commerce In India from 2015 to 2020

The sales related to women shoppers would be 35% of Indian e-commerce market estimated at \$8.5 billion by 2020. These projections were made due to growth in internet penetration through smart phones and women finding it easier and convenient buying online. Indian women will contribute to around \$3 billion worth of e-shopping. Out of all the online consumers women shoppers, being strong customer base have contributed to 40% of overall sales of Myntra in 2014 and are expected to contribute

its apparel sale from 50-55% in the coming years. Research indicates that Indian women are accepting the online fashion trends which were not so earlier. Technology and gadgets like smart phones and tablets are facilitating more women to buying online, especially in private categories like jeans, lingerie. E-shopping market valued \$8.5 billion in 2016 and number of online shoppers has reached 40 million in 2016 from 20 million in 2013 increasing at CAGR of 25%. India has seen a considerable rise of middleclass consumers, with affordable smart phones which has become a most important medium of online shopping. Numerous applications owned by marketers offering various offers on having it have made online shopping popular amongst the new and old. From the above statistics, since online shopping is not new, this study focuses on understanding the online shopping behavior of women in India.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Trevinal, A. M., & Stenger, T. (2014) in their study “ Toward a conceptualization of the online shopping experience” conceptualized through four core dimensions: the physical, ideological, pragmatic and social dimensions. These Connections are established between the flow concept and the ‘traditional’ dimensions of experience, and specific shopping values are identified. Moreover, an appropriation process of commercial websites is revealed; beyond purchase intentions and rituals. The Onlione shopping experience is embodied by the use of online tools and patronage routines. Also the social interactions with Facebook friends are one of the new practices which are considered by the buyers.
- Li, N., & Zhang, P. (2002) in their study on “ Consumer online shopping attitudes and behavior: An assessment of research” found that internet has changed the way consumers purchase goods and services. Companies come out with various offers and schemes to attract the consumers.
- Pappas, I. O., Pateli, A. G., Giannakos, M. N., & Chrissikopoulos, V. (2014) in their study found that “Moderating effects of online shopping experience on customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions” found that experience has moderating effects on the relationships between performance expectancy and satisfaction and satisfaction and intention to repurchase. Theirs study empirically demonstrated that prior customer experience strengthens the relationship between performance expectancy and satisfaction, while it weakens the relationship of satisfaction with intention to repurchase.
- Hsu, M. H., Yen, C. H., Chiu, C. M., & Chang, C. M. (2006) in their study “A longitudinal investigation of continued online shopping behavior: An extension of the theory of planned behavior” found that attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control, are important factors in determining the acceptance and use of various information technologies. These factors, however, are insufficient to explain a user's continuance intention in the online shopping context.
- Darley, W. K., Blankson, C., & Luethge, D. J. (2010) in their study “Toward an integrated framework for online consumer behavior and decision making process: A review” showed that a paucity of research on a number of components of decision making, as well as inconsistencies in the way the online environment is characterized. They further emphasized that student samples are prevalent among the studies identified and the research method is biased toward the survey method as opposed to experimentation.
- Chiu, C. M., Hsu, M. H., Lai, H., & Chang, C. M. (2012) in their study “Re-examining the influence of trust on online repeat purchase intention: The moderating role of habit and its antecedents” found that Customer loyalty or repeat purchasing is critical for the survival and success of any store. Their study investigates the moderating role of habit on the relationship between trust and repeat purchase intention. Prior research on online behavior continuance models perceives usefulness, trust, satisfaction, and perceived value as the major determinants of continued usage or loyalty, overlooking the important role of habit. They defined habit in the context of online shopping as the extent to which buyers tend to shop online automatically without thinking. They found that repeat purchasing, acts as a moderator between trust and repeat purchase intention, while familiarity, value and satisfaction are the three antecedents of habit. The data also show that value, satisfaction, and familiarity are important to habit formation and thus relevant within the context of online repeat purchasing. The authors also discuss implications for theory and practice and suggestions for future research.
- A study on Critical Review on in store and online impulse behaviour by Sir Hindi in Oklahoma State University in 2010, said that online shoppers had more privacy than in store buyers, impulse purchase can happen due availability of internet connection , greater variety of products can be seen online, internet provides more of direct and personalized marketing offers, credit cards have increased online impulse purchases , prices are relatively lesser than in store and internet has become easier source to compare products on different website.
- Weng (2012) in their study to understand reasons for consumer apparel acquisition, stated that there were hidden reasons like peer pressure, self-identity, job requirement, price and convenience, retailer's role as factors influencing consumers to buy and acquire more of apparels. Sunil (2015), in his study found that offline and online stores have to understand the factors that influence customers and work hard to attract towards their stores. Varsha (2014) in their study have found that quality, style, fit and exclusivity among product attributes were important among both the genders. It was found that male consumers wanted to be associated to established brands while female consumers focused on aesthetic appeal, colour, shades and wider collection. The study also said that the sources of information to Generation Z was by watching movies, YouTube videos and award function to learn about latest fashions, along with reading fashion blogs, Twitter and fashion related articles. Shubham & Shagufta (2015), examined the influence of consumer-decision making on online

shopping apparels stated that men shop online just as often as women, shoppers who are highly fashion and brand conscious are more inclined to buy clothes online than with consumers having different styles. Value-conscious buyers visiting websites would look for price benefits and best offers. Social influence as a factor influencing buyers also holds good for 'online' shopping. Vilasini & Monica (2016) in their study conducted in India on "Factors influencing online buying behavior of college students, : A Qualitative Analysis" found that the factors like friends/family/relatives, availability, convenience, best price, comparison, best promotion, ease of use, customer service, return policy, product information, trust, variety and visual merchandising were the influencing factors for online buyers.

The review of literature for this research shows the online shopping behavior of Indian shoppers. A qualitative research approach was used in this study to get an idea of the factors which influence the online buying behavior of women shoppers in India. This research helps to know the view of respondents, attitudes or experiences of the respondents and various factors which affect the shoppers to go for online purchasing.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the online buying pattern of women shoppers
- To study factors influencing online shopping in India
- To find the factors which help the companies selling products through online shopping

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is intended to study and analyze the online shopping behaviors of Indian women.

Primary data : Primary data has been collected through a structured questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha score of reliability test is 0.837. Questionnaire was prepared and filled using Google forms. The data collected was analyzed.

Secondary data: Secondary data was collected from various web sources, journals, magazines, articles. The questionnaire contained demographic questions asking for the participant's age, family income, education, marital status and occupation. In order to understand the buying pattern of Indian women questions were asked related to amount spent, device used in purchasing and method of payment. To analyze the frequency of purchase and use of major online platforms five point Likert scale was used {where 5=Almost Always; 4=Frequently; 3=Sometimes; 2=Occasionally; 1=Hardly Ever}. To understand how important are various factors like-brand, variety, return policy, style etc. are in influencing the purchase decision of women also Likert scale was used {where 5=Very Important; 4=Moderately Important; 3=Neutral; 2=Low Importance; 1=Not at all Important}.

Sampling

The data came from a survey of 242 respondents from India during November and December 2017. Sample size was considered sufficient considering 95% confidence level. The respondents belonged to the age group between 18 to over 65 years. The women participants belonged to undergraduates, postgraduates, professional degree and doctoral degree holders.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The analysis of the questionnaire showed that 60.6% (146) respondents belonged to age group of 18-24 years these are very important as they are young, more of technology oriented and represent greater Indian population, 26.6% (64) from 25-34 years, 10% (24) belong to 35-44 years and 2.9% (7) belong to 44-54 years of age group as shown in **Figure 2**. 18-24 yrs. This category of respondents constitutes a large percentage of India's youth population.

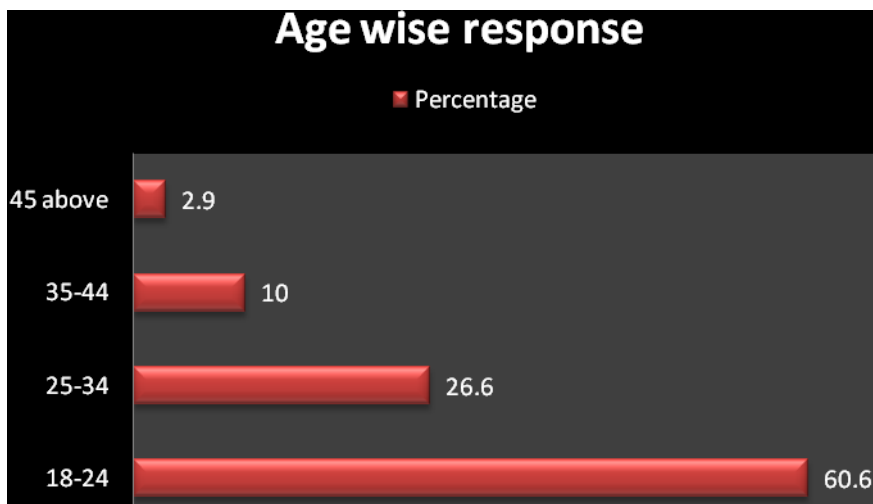


Figure 2: Age wise Classification Of Respondents

Figure 3 shows occupation of respondents. It shows majority of the respondents 44.8% are students, followed by 32.4% belonging to service/employed group, 13.3% being self-employed and 9.1% being homemakers. This shows young generation is more into online shopping.

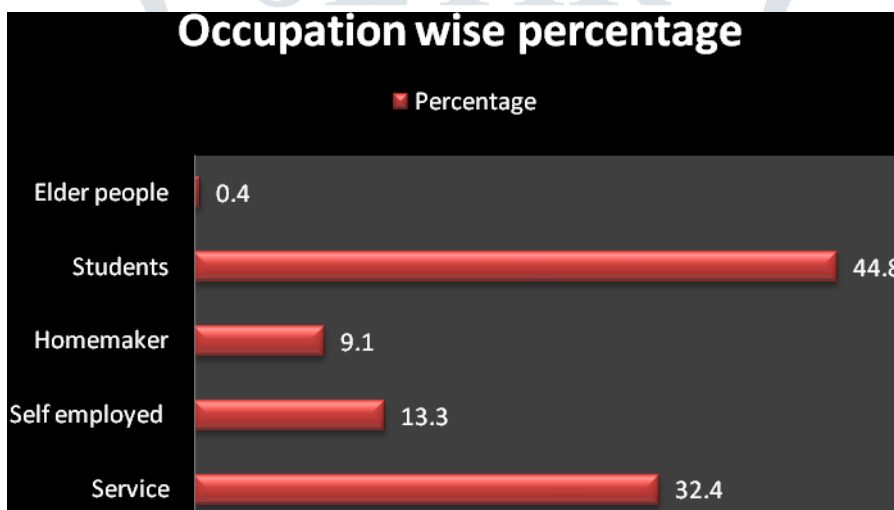


Figure 3: Occupation of the Respondents

Figure 4 shows a major percentage, say, 34% belong to family annual income lesser than INR 5,00,000, closer to it, i.e., 32.8% belong to annual family income between INR 5,00,000 to 10,00,000, followed by 14.1% between 10,00,000 to 15,00,000, 14.1% greater than 20,00,000 income per annum and a less percentage of 5 belonging to 15,00,000 to 20,00,000. This shows that a good percentage of middle class and upper middle class are more into online shopping. 14.1% belonging to greater than INR 20, 00,000 per annum can be potential buyers. If these are happy buying online, may further buy more online. Thus, marketers should attract these customers by increasing offers, return policy, ease and convenience of exchange.

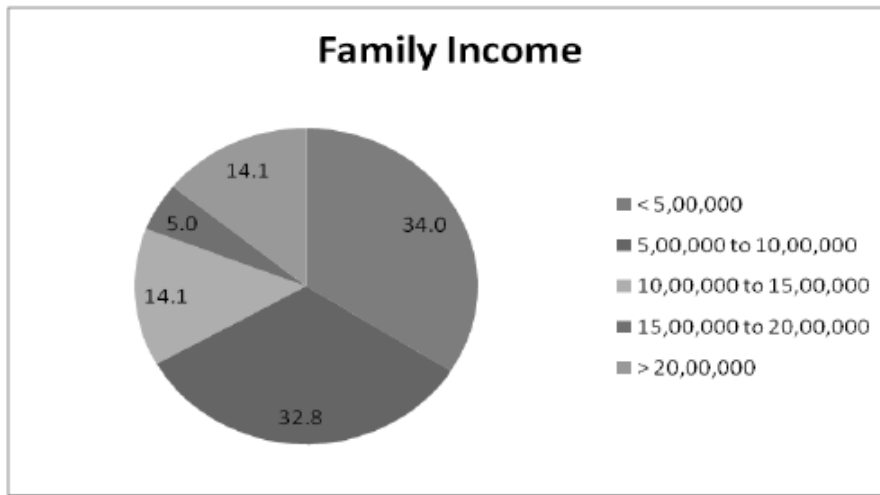


Figure 4: Family Income

Figure 5 shows a greater number, 49% spend INR 2,000 per month on online shopping, while 40.2% spend between INR 2000-4000 per month, 6.2% spend between 4000-6000 per month and the remaining 4.6% spend greater than INR 6,000 per month shopping online.

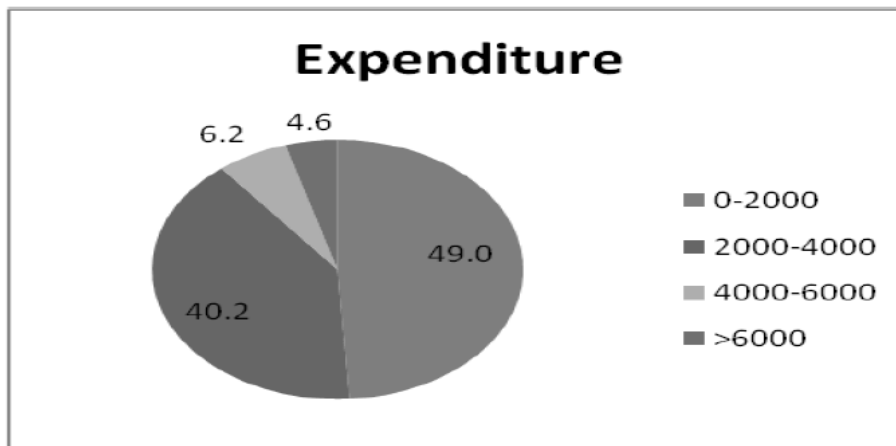


Figure 5: Expenditure on Online Shopping Of Clothes

Figure 6 shows Mobile phones have become the most preferred some electronic gadget to shop online as 82.2% belong to this category, while 13.7% use personal computers to buy online. This shows the quick shift in adapting to technology from personal computer to smart phones. Very less use tablets for online shopping.

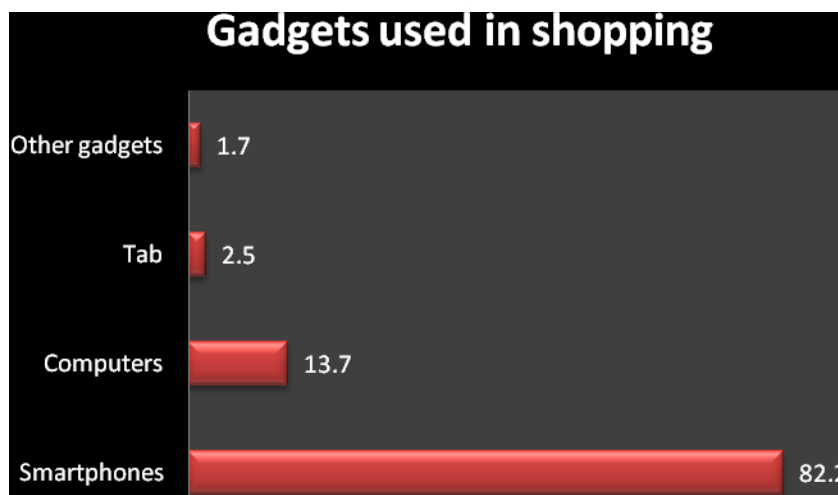


Figure 6: Device Used To Shop Online

Figure 7 shows the various modes of payments used by respondents. Most of the respondents, 55.2% pay by COD, 39.4% pay by using Debit/Credit card, 3.3% use bank transfer, while 2.1% prefer paying through wallets. Due to the increase of mobile penetration and increased usage of internet, India is expecting a huge growth of digital payments-wallet has a share of 38%, with the launch of Google wallet and Apple Pay; it is expected to streamline and standardize digital payments and thus offer better life to customers in India. This 2.1% of payments through mobile wallet, may grow bigger, if the marketers create more awareness and make the customers feel safe in transaction as it is highly preferred in future due to governments initiative of going digital.

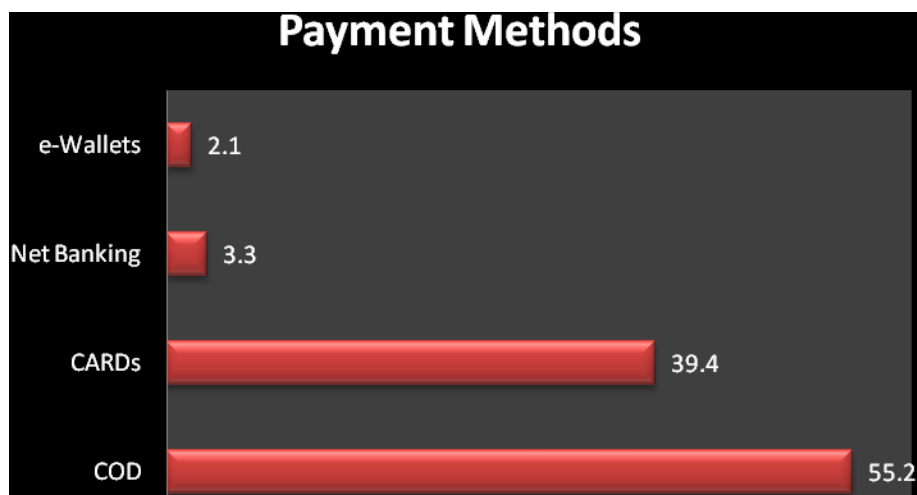


Figure 7: Payment Methods

There are number of websites for shopping but only a few well known websites which the customers prefer. The responses shows Amazon and Flipkart are most preferable sites for buying apparels.

Table 1 show how frequently major platforms are used for online shopping.

Table 1:

Frequency of purchase	Mean	Standard Deviation
How often do you purchase clothes from Amazon?	2.04	0.972
How often do you purchase clothes from Myntra?	2.29	1.251
How often do you purchase clothes from Flipkart?	1.84	1.086
How often do you purchase clothes from Zivame?	1.52	0.907
How often do you purchase clothes from Jabong?	1.70	1.071
How often do you purchase clothes from clubfactory?	1.48	0.889
How often do you buy clothes online?	2.63	1.150
How often do you compare clothes on different websites before buying?	2.81	1.331
How often do you go through the reviews of others before buying?	3.42	1.389
How often your purchases are planned?	2.49	1.202
How often your purchases are impulsive?	2.68	1.182
How often do you purchase Western wear?	3.06	1.382
How often do you purchase Traditional wear?	2.32	1.105
How often do you purchase party wear?	2.39	1.204

How often do you purchase sports wear?	1.94	1.035
How often do you purchase clothes and apparels?	1.95	1.142

From the above data after the analysis it is found that a most of respondents prefer comparing clothes on different websites and also look for reviews on websites. Hence, websites must encourage customers to review their process and products by adding some points in customer account which can be used in next purchase. It is seen that western wear is preferred the most while buying online. The reason is that most of the respondents were from a young age group, with more disposable income. The companies should add varieties in western collections. Companies which are into traditional and sportswear should adopt try and buy options.

Table 2 indicates that comfort is the prime requirement by buyers. A majority of the respondents get influenced by value for money, style and variety in clothes offered. Other factors are timely delivery of the product; return policy, durability of the clothes, discount and offers and brands. Thus the marketers in online business for apparels must consider these influencing factors to attract women customers.

Table 2:

Factors Considered While Making Online Purchase	Mean	Standard Deviation
How much brand influence your online purchase?	3.88	1.094
How much durability influence your online purchase?	4.16	0.994
How much styles influence your online purchase?	4.43	0.927
How much comforts influence your online purchase?	4.57	0.843
How much ease of delivery influence your online purchase?	4.23	1.033
How much varieties for money factor influence your online purchase?	4.42	0.953
How much values for money influence your online purchase?	4.50	0.908
How much return policy of e-tailor influence your online purchase?	4.27	1.107
How much discounts and offers influence your online purchase?	4.08	1.024

Suggestions from various online shopping for improvement

Suggestions were taken from respondents and the same are categorized under 5 areas: quality, wrong product display, information, product, service and availability, promotion and price (**Table 3**).

Factors	Suggestions
Quality	Product Quality should be checked before dispatch, Quality of raw material to be improved, Better quality of stitching
Wrong product Displayed	Products displayed on website differ with actual product, Color of fabric,
Information	Customer ratings to be displayed, Wash care, Varieties of products and brands
Product	Customized products, Provide well-known brands, Varieties of products and brands, Customized products, Variety in sizes of clothes
Service & Availability	Delivery on time, Faster delivery, Encourage customer feedback, Trial option, live chats, Customer care, Return policy should be made more simpler, Better description of the product, Clothes sizes vary with different brands and difficult to pick the right size of clothes, Customer care service has to be improved
Promotion and offers	Discounts, Free shipping, Customer loyalty program, Offers on online purchase
Price	Products purchase should provide value for money, Free shipping

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the routine life most of the people feel that they are not having enough time to go to the market for purchasing. Internet and other forms of gadgets are being used on a large scale. Due to this reason people have started to shop online. Indian shoppers are very much inclined towards online shopping even though they prefer traditional shopping. It has been seen that majority of the women spend around 2000 Indian rupees on an average in online shopping. Most of the women prefer buying clothing online using smart phones. The youths comprise of a majority of percentage in online consumers. Out of the regular online customers, 62% of women buyers represent the youngest age group between 18-24 years, Along with this age group, 25-34 years age group category is most attractive, since they constitute a greater percentage of India's youth population. Therefore, to attract these segments, retailers/vendors should promote their products through shopping malls, college events, café etc. Retailers can provide offers on Credit/Debit usage and e-wallets.

The retailers must not charge for shipping charges if the products are above a certain price on total bill rather than individual products. The e-commerce companies must find ways to give benefits to regular customers. The retailers must also ensure that the wrong products delivered spoil the image of the seller and also the e-commerce provider. Some of the products are available at a higher price online, while they are available at a lower price in the market and vice versa. So this difference also spoils the online buying pattern. The companies must also look forward to offer branded and quality products at a lesser price. Usually such products are rejected products or the one which remain unsold in the local market. This practice should be stopped and make way for a fairer market for not just women shoppers but for all.

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