



“A Study of The Changes in the Buying Behavior during the ongoing Covid – 19 Pandemic”

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Abstract:

Consumers are relying on the digital world more than ever and industries are required to adjust their strategies and change towards digital transformation with much more urgency than before. Spending and buying habits amongst Indian consumers have transformed during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This study used descriptive data analysis through online questionnaire. In India online shopping market has a difficult start but in recent years started growing rapidly.

Key words: Covid 19, Buying Behaviour and Digital transition.

Introduction:

The world is witnessing drastic changes in the market conditions, as well people's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are seeing a dramatic shift from visiting store and buying products to transition in digital shopping. Consumers are trusting more into the digital transition than ever and industries are forced to adapt their strategies and shift toward digital transformation with far more urgency than before. Shopping behaviour amongst Indian customers has changed through the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the initial phases, a large number of Indian consumers were also in containment zones or there were limited options available for making their necessary and discretionary purchases. This forced consumers to try new techniques in purchase of goods and brands, which in turn has caused changes in consumer's shopping habits and their path to purchase. Recent studies show that there has been a four-fold increase in broadband business during the last pandemic year.

Pre – Pandemic

In India, before this COVID-19 crisis, everything was dependent on the fluctuations of Stock exchange. For example, Pre pandemic times, food business was generating enough money. The street vendors were constantly engaged specially during evening time. The bigger restaurants contributed a lot towards the monetary growth of the country through paying taxes. This growth is obvious by witnessing the evolution of the FMCG companies. Individuals preferred to buy their daily-need products from visiting the store and enjoying the shopping experience in normal days. E-commerce in the business sector was also growing while other business sectors were having a bull run. Every has the ability to earn money in spite of their strength and weakness.

During Pandemic

Once the Covid crises set in, the Indian stock market became bearish, Nifty 50 and BSE Sensex fell down. From the starting of the year, the total market capitalization lost by 27.31%. In the last few months, companies are stepping back because of the negligible growth experienced by them – this in turn have also affected the compensations of employee and multiplied the layoff. More than 40% of stocks have

plummeted and adverse impact is also observed in the sectors like entertainment, tourism and hospitality. Although low-income families felt the effect of slowdown early on, more wealthy households highlighted the lack of accessibility as the biggest restriction on expenditure - most stores remained closed and lockdown transformed a lot in the market particularly the buying behaviour of the consumers.

Change in buying behaviour in Pandemic

In India, by offering services such as no delivery charges, discounts, buy 1 get 1 free and exchanging offers, a significant majority of B2C e-commerce retailers attract online shoppers. Shoppers in India are conservative and cost-conscious and count them as the part of their value system or culture. Still online shopping is growing rapidly in the market. The best way to avoid Covid disease is by staying home as it spreads when a person comes in contact with the infected person or it can also spread by touching a place which has a virus. It was also observed that there is a rise in number of first-time-e-commerce-users in India. It is no surprise that more customers have turned to online shopping to buy the goods they need and want, as many brick-and-mortar stores have shut their doors for the time being and shoppers have a tendency to reduce danger by remaining in their homes.

Objectives:

- To study the consumer buying behaviour in the pandemic phase.
- To study the changes to consumer's shopping habits and their preference to online shopping
- To study whether shopping in physical stores have undergone any transformation and will it make a comeback in near future.

Statement of Problem:

- There is increasing preference of consumers towards Online shopping in the Covid -19 pandemic phase.

Literature Review:

Niharika Lal (2020), 'Online grocery shopping is clicking with consumers amid pandemic' The research paper discusses the growth of online grocery shopping in India and the increasing impact it has on the lives of the country's citizens during the pandemic. The ever-increasing consideration for health safety has led to a booming e-grocery market with a 76% rate of growth over the year 2019. This has led fast food servicing companies joining the bandwagon and provide essentials as a part of the product mix. The availability of fresh and organic produce in online stores has increased the consumers' appetite towards living a healthier life than before and furthermore contributing to the growth of online grocery purchases. As the pandemic surges, consumers are choosing to stay at home, especially the senior citizens who are more susceptible to the virus. This change in consumer behaviour has also led to households increasing their online grocery shopping budgets as multiple orders are now being placed by users of the service. To conclude, it is highly probable that online grocery shopping and its benefits have been clearly showcased in the current pandemic and it is a marketplace that is here to stay for a while, Anupama Ambujakshan, (2012), 'Changing Buying Behaviour Patterns of Indian Consumers: A study towards instant food products with special reference to Ahmedabad city, in this paper the author has studied that more and more industrialisation, growth of service sector and better employment opportunities have increased consumer's income developed new lifestyles and awareness and a drastic change are often seen in their buying behaviour. Their preferences have changed from home-cooked food to fast and prepared in no time and easy to serve, the young consumers want food in the restaurant with nutriment values, besides these processed foods are widely accepted as cooked food due to convenience. To understand the factors the author has studied the various factors affecting changing buying behaviour of Indian consumers, awareness among the consumers towards the branded ready-to-eat food preference, and reasons for instant foods.

Subrato Dey, (2017), A Study on Changing Buying Behaviour of Indian Customers, the paper focuses on the current years, the way Indian consumers are spending their money on several items has changed. The penetration of the internet and social media has improved as a result, the purchasing behaviour of Indian

consumers has changed drastically. Development is a constant phenomenon in India and is influencing the lifestyle and buying behaviour of consumers. The study is focussing on the perception, buying behaviour and satisfaction of Indian consumers.

Abhishek Chilka and Sandeep Chauhan, (2018), "Study on Recent Trends in Online Shopping", The researcher has studied the current trends in online shopping in India. According to the author, online shopping is much better than going into stalls and shop to buy goods and ask for service to be rendered- it saves a lot of time. One can easily browse through various online shops and e-commerce stores to choose whatever they want within a second. There is a lot of arguments why customers today prefer shopping online.

Kantar & Amazon Advertising conducted a study in July 2020, to understand the impact of COVID-19 on buying preferences of Indian urban active internet users. In this survey, one can see the change in buying behaviour among consumers. Almost 42% of Indian urban consumers are actively following online shopping during the COVID-19 pandemic, with nearly half of those being first-time online shoppers. 46% of these 'new to online shoppers' reside in Tier-1 and 2 cities.

Razaullah Khan, (2021), A Study of Changing Consumer Behaviour of Four Metro Cities in India during Covid-19 Pandemic, the author has studied on the fast and extensive spread of the Covid-19 pandemic has become a major distraction in the life of the people as well as in the buying pattern. The government is taking several efforts to control the spread of Covid-19. This paper studies the change in consumer behaviour on food habits and dietary patterns, health and hygiene; work patterns, social interactions based on key demographic factors like age and household income. After conducted an online survey the results confirm that COVID-19 impacted and changed the behaviour of city-based consumers based on their income level and age about concerning buying well-being products by using digital mode has increased promptly.

Dr. Deepak Halan, (2020) 'Impact of COVID-19 on online shopping in India' Amazon – one of the leading e-commerce players in the country, and the world, has announced on the site that the purchasers are counting on them like never before in their social distancing and self-quarantine efforts. The Indian retail market also includes a huge share of the unorganised sector, about 13.8 million conventional family-run neighbourhood stores. Then came the highly contagious COVID 19 pandemic with its unique set of challenges - Since it spreads primarily through contact with an infected person (when they cough or sneeze) or when an individual carrying virus touches any surface the virus begins to spread, the best way to guard against it is to stay at home. This has effectively restricted offline shopping and increased online shopping usage, globally. It has increased in the number of FTUs or first-time-e-commerce-users in India, who had been so far inhibited to shop online. The SARS outbreak that infected over 2700 people in 2002, is known to have intensively transformed people's shopping habits as they were scared of shopping outdoors.

Van kin Pham (2020), 'A study on the COVID-19 awareness affecting the consumer perceived benefits of online shopping in Vietnam', This paper described how online shoppers adapted their purchasing behaviour during Covid-19 time in terms of perceived benefits. Covid-19 plays a moderating part in buyer's awareness of utilities, which encourages buyers towards Online shopping. Social Distancing norms and safety concerns during the Covid-19 pandemic forced companies to adopt marketing policies that influenced online shopping significantly. These outcomes can contribute to understanding consumer behaviour, help businesses to deal with similar conditions as well as recommendations for the government to support businesses effectively in the future.

Data and Methodology:

The Methodology is an important characteristic of any research study. It enables the study to look at the problem inefficient, systematic process. The present study is descriptive and analytical.

Primary data is also known as raw data as the data is collected first-hand by the reviewer or researcher himself for the specific research purpose or project problem.

Secondary data is the data that is collected by someone else than the user or surveyor himself to derive newer information, that is, the collected data is not original, is second-hand information, and has gone through statistical analysis before.

The data for this study were collected by referring to few research papers related to the topic.

The research design applied in this study is of descriptive in nature, which focuses on the change in consumer buying behaviour during the ongoing Covid 19 Pandemic.

Sampling method:

The present research study has applied the Simple Random Sampling method for data collection - the questionnaire was circulated among the consumers.

The respondents of the present study involve online and offline consumers.

Data Collection:

The sample is random with limited respondents,

For the collection of data, the questionnaire was created with the help of Google form and circulated within among consumers.

Limitations:

The sample is limited in this study, the researcher can study in depth by using more respondents.

Analysis and Interpretation:

From the random sampled data, it is observed that the 66.7% respondents are from the two-age group 18-25.

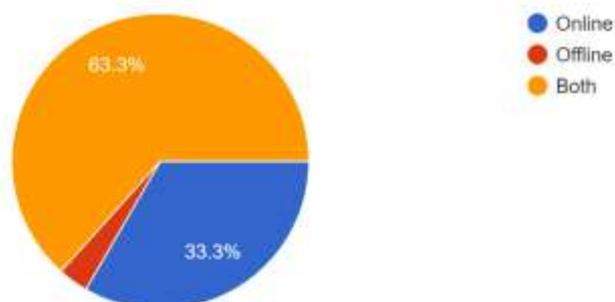
It is observed that 70% of the respondents are Female and the remaining are Male respondents.

66.7% of the respondents are working full-time while 13.3% are from home whereas 50% of the respondents fall in Rs.40000 & above income group.

50% and 36.7% respondents are graduates and post-graduates respectively, while 10% of the respondents have acquired 10th to 12th standard.

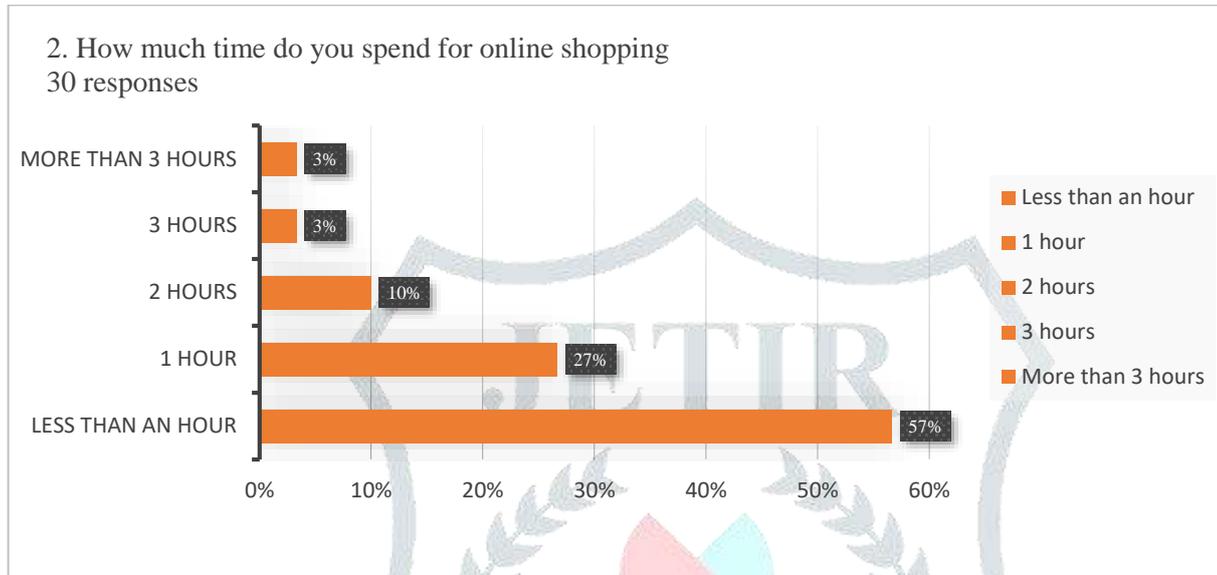
1. In pandemic which mode of shopping did you prefer?

30 responses



RESPONSES	Number of Respondents	% Respondents
Online	10	33.3%
Offline	1	3.4%
Both	19	63.3%

Interpretation - In the sampled data, 63.3% of the respondents stated that they use both mode for shopping, while 33.3% of the respondents stated that they use online shopping. 3.4.% of the respondents were of the opinion that they like to use offline shopping.



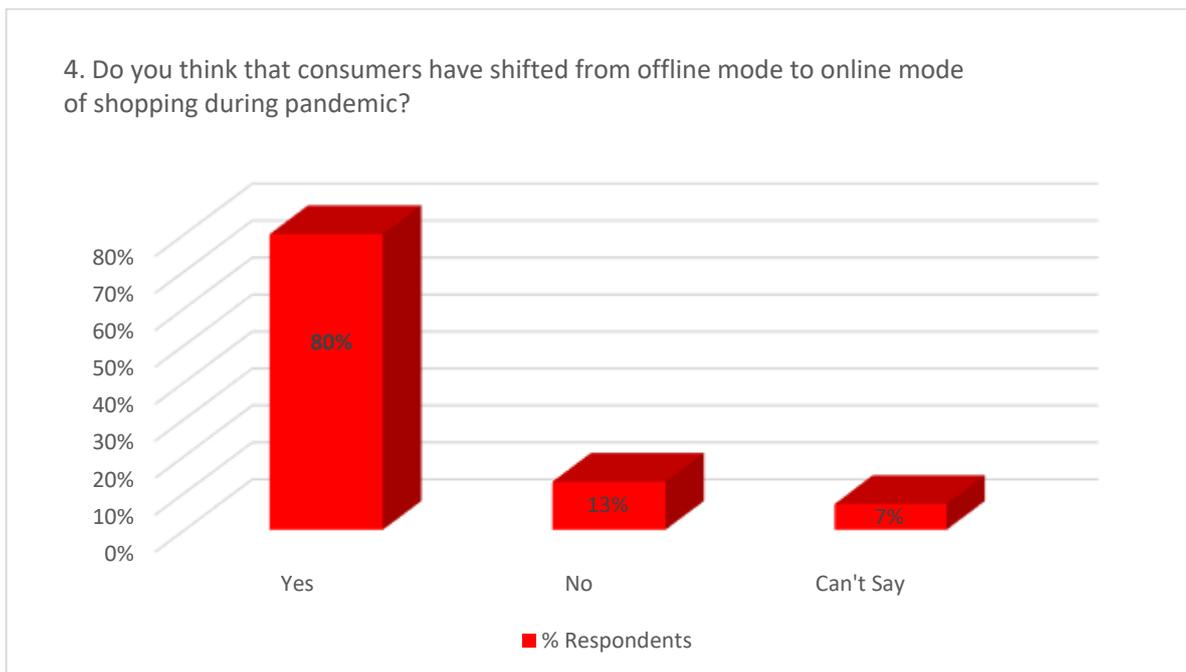
RESPONSES	Number of Respondents	% Respondents
Less than an hour	17	57%
1 hour	8	27%
2 hours	3	10%
3 hours	1	3%
More than 3 hours	1	3%

Interpretation : In the sample data, 57% of the respondents stated that they spend less than an hour, while 27% stated that they spend an hour to shop online. 10% of the respondents were of the opinion that they spend two hours, only 3% of the respondents stated that they spend more than 3 hours to shop online.



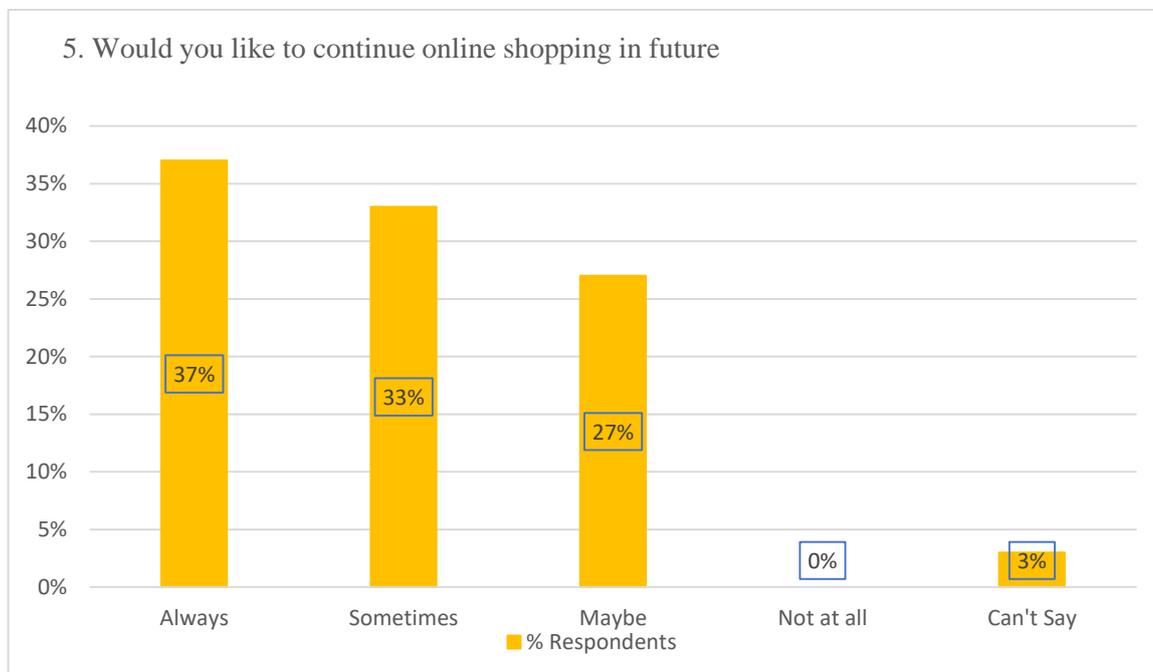
RESPONSES	Number of Respondents	% Respondents
Very happy	4	13%
Happy	18	60%
Not at all	3	10%
Sometimes	5	17%
Can't say	0	0%

Interpretation : In the sample data, 60% of the respondents were of the opinion that they are happy with the hassle-free payment in online shopping, while 17% respondents stated that sometimes they are happy. 13% of the respondents stated that they are very happy with the payment, only 10% of the respondents stated that they are not at all with the payment in online shopping



RESPONSES	Number of Respondents	% Respondents
Yes	24	80%
No	4	13%
Can't say	2	7%

Interpretation : In the sample data, 80% of the respondents were of the opinion that people have shifted from offline to online shopping, while 13% stated that they no they aren't shifted. 7% of the respondents stated that they can't say whether the shift is happened or not.



RESPONSES	Number of Respondents	% Respondents
Always	11	37%
Sometimes	10	33%
Maybe	8	27%
Not at all	0	0%
Can't say	1	3%

Interpretation : In the sample data, 37% of the respondents were of the opinion that they are satisfied with the quality while they shop online, while 20% stated that they can't say about the quality. 10% of the respondents stated that they are very satisfied with the quality, only 3% of the respondents stated that they the items which they are looking for are not available

Findings:

- Study includes limited respondents.
- 63.3% opted to shop online and offline, out of which 33.3% respondents were shopping online
- 40% of respondents feel that it is safe to shop online.
- 30% of respondents were buying clothing and 57% respondents spend less than hour to shop online.
- 60% respondents stated they are happy with the hassle-free payment in online shopping.
- 80% respondents stated that people have shifted from offline shopping to online shopping.
- 37% respondents confirmed that they would like to continue online shopping in future.

Conclusion:

One can state that consumers' purchasing behaviour will not be same like pre-pandemic and businesses need to adapt accordingly. It can be concluded that the purchasing behaviour of the consumers is rapidly changing and it is hard to predict. In addition, every individual consumer has different perspective for every other business. The study indicates that Online shopping is growing rapidly at the expense of other sales process and would continue to grow in India. Whether online shopping would sustain this pace of growth after pandemic crises is over, is very hard to predict and needs further studies. Future scope involves a more comprehensive research study to understand the impact of pandemic over the purchasing behaviour.

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