

**AN EMPIRICAL ON RURAL CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TOWARDS ONLINE SHOPPING
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO (PULIPAKKAM) CHENGALPATTU.**

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ABSTRACT

India is now a market that all companies want to enter. The region is incredibly large, as is the population. Reaching all products in the back end of the market is a challenging task. These days, everyone is talking about online buying. Both sellers and purchasers can benefit from it in a variety of ways. Consumer markets are impacted. Online buying is a profoundly ingrained habit for people who live in large cities. In this study, Pulipakkam Village in the Chengalpattu district's rural consumer behavior of a sample of respondents was examined. According to research, there are differences between urban and rural consumers in terms of their occupations, how often they buy things, the challenges they confront while buying online, the strategies they employ to shop online, and other factors.

KEY WORDS: Internet shopping and rural consumer behavior.

INTRODUCTION

PERFORMANCE OF CONSUMERS WITH RESPECT TO ONLINE STORES

According to the consumer's point of view, online consumer behaviour describes the online purchase process. It is sometimes referred to as well as the analysis of trends, which includes the impact of internet advertising, link-clicking behaviour on the part of consumers, and the prevalence of comparison shopping, among other things. The way a consumer makes decisions when shopping online and in a real store differs significantly and Businesses are paying more attention to the behaviour of online shoppers as they try should adapt their sales and marketing strategies in order to attract internet customers. Online shopping and purchasing are changing, and it has quickly spread to become a global phenomenon. As a result of many businesses adopting the internet to decrease marketing expenses, their products and services are now available at lower prices.

Online shopping is just one way that consumers use the internet, but they also use it to evaluate the costs of other products as well as the features and after-sale support they will get from different retailers. The future of online commerce is viewed favourably by many analysts. Together the internet provides businesses opportunities thanks to the immense potential of the e-commerce sector. A special opportunity to connect with clients, both present and new, more effectively. The practitioners of while conducting business-to-business transactions, business to consumer commerce should keep their confidence. Account for the majority of online transaction revenue. Businesses to consumer online transactions have been around for more than ten years. In order to better understand consumer behaviour from various angles, academics and practitioners of internet commerce are continually working to expand their knowledge of it. Some of the

DEFINITION OF A RURAL AREA

In a town or city, a rural area is any territory that is not located in the most populated metropolitan regions. Rural areas are often broad, Compared to urban areas, which have denser populations, open landscapes typically have fewer buildings and inhabitants. As a result, they have never been included in the definition of an urban area. The distances between people's residences and places of business are bigger in rural locations where people live farther apart from one another. The majority of people either live on farms or ranches or work there as the predominant industry in most rural communities. Rural areas frequently surround tiny populations like villages, hamlets, or small towns. In rural locations, there are less people and buildings, which make wildlife considerably more prevalent.

The Census of India indicates, "urban India" is defined "all the places that fall within the administrative limits of a municipal corporation, municipality, cantonment board, etc. or have a population of at least 5,000 and have at least 75% of male workers in the non-primary sector and have a population density of at least 400 per square kilometre." On the other side, rural India includes all non-urban areas.

- At least 75% of men working in the labour force are employed in agriculture and related fields.

CONSUMER ACTION IN THE RURAL

Generally speaking, a rural area is a region that is apart from towns and cities. India is a diverse country where 70% of the people reside in villages. By the production of food crops, vegetables, fruits, and other goods, this community helps the country's economy grow. These agricultural products are exported, which generates money and foreign exchange earnings.

ADVANTAGES OF ONLINE RESEARCH

- The benefits of home shopping include time and effort savings, the availability of a wide selection of goods, and convenience.
- Reasonable price cuts or discounts.
- Obtain comprehensive information about the product and compare different models and brands.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The reviews cited here highlight about rural consumer behaviour towards online shopping with special reference to selected rural areas in Chengalpattu District.

Salehi (2012) found that the four characteristics of marketing, attractiveness, credibility, and uniqueness have no discernible impact on consumers' inclinations to shop online. These facts suggest that advertising doesn't significantly affect online shopping. The findings demonstrated that online shoppers generally regarded a website's security and legitimacy as being high. The least impact on propensity to shop online came from attractiveness. This demonstrates that customers don't care about or aren't able to believe any online advertising. The amount of spam advertisements bombarding internet users seems to be out of control.

A successful web business, according to Ashish Pant (2014), emphasises relationship-building with clients in addition to having a visually appealing website with cutting-edge technical features. Forging a relationship with clients, it is crucial to comprehend their requirements and desires. Customers have a reason to return to businesses when they keep their promises, and they stay with businesses when they live up to their expectations.

Many kinds of goods and services are sold over the websites, according to Mohana Priya and Anusuya (2014). Online shopping is also a viable option for purchasing goods and services, consumer durables, books, audio and video cassettes, and services like airline tickets. Online shopping is on the increase and has a great deal of promise for future growth as a result of the internet's tremendous progress.

According to Shadi Altarifi et al. (2015), cultural and technological factors have a much greater impact on customer purchase decisions than marketing factors do. The experts advise using preventive e-business networks built on the Internet as well as rigorous awareness campaigns that highlight the benefits of using online retailers.

According to Gaikwad (2015), the main goal of the study is to discover and analyse the variables that influence customers' decision to shop online. The study also examines the demographics of online shoppers in addition to the factors that influence them.

Suresh Kumar (2017) discussed the attitudes of rural residents towards online purchasing and their reasons for doing. Rural markets are characterised as those portions of an economy's overall market that are separate from other forms of markets, such as the stock market, commodities markets, or labour economics. There are other names for this type of store, including.

According to Santhi & Gopal (2018), marketers now face a difficult problem in trying to understand customers' wants and preferences for online purchasing. Marketing professionals can obtain a competitive edge over their competitors by specifically comprehending customer attitudes around online buying, making improvements to the elements that drive consumers to shop online, and focusing on those factors.

In their study, Singhal & Patra (2018) discovered that a preference measurement check was done to learn how consumers felt about the top e-commerce websites, including Flipkart, Amazon, Snapdeal, Jabong, Shopclues, and others. The main factors influencing how they perceived things were a variety of discounts, simple payment options, simple return options, and prompt and quick delivery.

RESEARCH GAP

Determine the internet purchasing habits of a sample of rural Chengalpattu district consumers. The scope of this study is limited to a quantitative examination of the chosen internet users in the rural areas of the Chengalpattu district. Because of this, this study includes this research.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To research and evaluate the online shopping habits of rural consumers.

HYPOTHESES

- H₀₁: Respondents give equal importance for purchasing products in online.
- H₀₂: Satisfaction level of factors related to online shopping differs significantly with average level

PROBLEMS OF CONSUMERS IN RURAL AREAS

Rural consumers have a low standard of living as a result of their limited bought strength, less per capita income, and few literacy price. Compared to their metropolitan counterparts, rural residents earn less per person. Rural markets have a higher proportion of residents who live in poverty.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is supported by both primary and secondary data. The Primary data used in the main study were gathered from respondents in Pulipakkam Village in Chengalpattu Town using a well-structured questionnaire. For this study, convenience sampling is used to get responses from the respondents. The secondary information was gathered from books, journals, and websites that have been published on the subject.

SAMPLE SIZE

The study used a structured questionnaire to gather information from the Chengalpattu rural districts. 60% respondents made up the study's sample size. Data was gathered from Pulipakkam villages' rural areas.

SAMPLING DOMAIN

The study's focus was on the online buying habits of rural consumers in Pulipakkam Village.

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The research tool for this study on rural customer online buying behaviour was a well-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into two sections: section A deals with consumer demographics, and section B examines rural customers' attitudes on online purchasing in Pulipakkam Village, Chengalpattu District.

STATISTICAL TOOLS USED

- ❖ Chi-Square analysis
- ❖ Percentage analysis

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table I-Profile of the Respondents

		Number of respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	27	45.0%
	Female	33	55.0%
	Total	60	100%
Level of Education	Up to 12 th std	7	11.7%
	UG	19	31.7%
	PG	25	41.7%
	Professional	9	15.0%
	Total	60	100%
Occupation	Agriculture	10	16.7%
	Daily wage	26	43.3%
	Businessman	9	15.0%
	Student	6	10.0%
	Housewife	8	13.3%
	Government Job	1	1.7%
	Total	60	100%
Monthly Income	Less than Rs.25,000	48	80.0%
	Rs.25,000-50,000	8	13.3%
	Rs.50,000-75,000	1	1.7%
	More than Rs.75,000	3	5.0%
	Total	60	100%
Amount spend in online shopping	Less than Rs.2000	49	81.7%
	Rs.2,000-5,000	5	8.3%
	Rs.5,000-10,000	2	3.3%
	More than Rs.10,000	4	6.7%
	Total	60	100%

Source: Primary Data

Male respondents make up 45% of the sampled respondents, while female respondents make up 55%. Of these, 11.7% are in school, 31.7% graduate, 41.7% are postgraduates, and 15% have professional degrees. In terms of occupation, 10% and 13.3% of people fall into the categories of housewives and government workers, while 10% and 15% of people work in agriculture and receive daily salaries, respectively. , 80 percent of them have monthly incomes of less than Rs. 25,000, 13.3 percent have incomes between Rs. 25,000 and Rs. 50,000, 1.7% have incomes between Rs. 50,000 and Rs. 75,000, and 5% have incomes over Rs. 75,000.

Table II
Sources for Awareness about Online Shopping

		Number of respondents	Percentage
Idea of buying specific brand/product through an online shopping	Through Family and Friends	9	15.0%
	Online Advertisement	27	45.0%
	Newspaper Advertisement	2	3.3%
	Through social media	12	20.0%
	TV Advertisement	5	8.3%
	Others	5	8.3%
	Total	60	100%
Shopping Website do you most prefer for online Shopping	Paytm	2	3.3%
	Snapdeal	1	1.7%
	Amazon	3	5.0%
	Flip kart	40	66.7%
	Others	14	23.3%
	Total	60	100%

Source : Primary data

Table: II reveals that the respondents acknowledged 15% of them had an idea. In addition to Family and Friends, 45% of respondents said they acquired ideas from online advertisements, 3.3% from newspaper advertisements, 20% from social media, and 8.3% from other sources.

For the majority of their online purchasing, 3.3% of them use Paytm, 1.7% use Snapdeal, 5.0% use Amazon, 66.7% use 3.3% use Flipkart, and 23.3% use other websites.

Purchase of products through online

A select group of respondents ranked the things they typically buy online. Friedman's test for k-related samples was used to assess the significance of various product purchases made online in order to examine the connection between these purchases.

Null hypothesis H₀1: Respondents give equal importance for purchasing products in online.

Table III
Purchase of Products through Online

	Mean Rank	Chi-Square
Fashion Products	2.50	127.767** (p=.000)
Electronics	5.96	
Baby Care Products	6.73	
Jewellery	6.59	
Beauty Products	5.25	
Grocery	7.91	
Books	7.74	
Home Appliances & Furniture	6.15	
Food & Health Supplements	7.60	
Toys & Video Games	7.92	
Handmade Products	7.98	
Tickets & Recharge	5.67	

****Significant at 1% level**

The findings in Table III demonstrate a 1% level rejection of the null hypothesis H01. Respondents are not prioritising online shopping for goods equally. Also, the mean rankings in Table III clearly demonstrate that respondents place a higher priority on buying "Fashion Items" as opposed to "Beauty Products" and "Tickets & Recharge." Online purchases of "Handmade Goods," "Toys & Video Games," and "Grocery" are receiving less attention from the respondents.

Table IV

Information related to Rural Consumer Buying Behaviour

Table IV-Information related to Rural Consumer Buying Behaviour

		Number of respondents	Percentage
Important elements that influence your choice of products at the final stage	Best Price	25	41.7%
	Convenience& Timesaving	10	16.7%
	Not available in Local store	2	3.3%
	Price Comparison	14	23.3%
	Product Review	4	6.7%
	Others	5	8.3%
	Total	60	100%
Which form of payment do you prefer to use while shopping online?	Credit card	1	1.7%
	Debit card	5	8.3%
	Net Banking	12	20.0%
	Others	42	70.0%
	Total	60	100%
Reason for Choosing Online Shopping	Time Saving	20	33.3%
	Convenience& Safety	21	35.0%
	Variety of Products	2	3.3%
	Product Comparison	17	28.3%
	Total	60	100%
Access the Online Shopping Platform	Website	2	3.3%
	Mobile app	56	93.3%
	Both	2	3.3%
	Total	60	100%
Do you prefer specific devices to access online shopping?	Laptop	2	3.3%
	Smart Phone	56	93.3%
	Tablet	1	1.7%
	others	1	1.7%
	Total	60	100%
Factors do you like in online Purchase	Easiness of order	4	6.7%
	Availability of Options	11	18.3%
	Discount offer	9	15.0%
	Home delivery facility	36	60.0%
	Total	60	100%
Factors you don't like in Online Shopping	High Price	19	31.7%
	Poor return Policy	16	26.7%
	Lack of after sales service	3	5%
	Inability to touch and feel-	22	36.7%
	Total	60	100%

Source : Primary Data:

Table IV shows that the majority of respondents (41.7%) cited the best price, followed by 16.7% who cited convenience and time savings, 3.3% who cited the lack of availability in local stores, 23.3% who cited price comparison, 6.7% who cited product reviews, and 8.3% who cited other factors as the most important factors influencing their decision to buy a product..

While purchasing products online, 1.7% use credit cards, 8.3% use debit cards, 20.0% use net banking, and 70.0% use alternative payment methods.

When asked why they prefer online shopping, 33.3% of respondents cited time savings, 35.0% cited convenience and safety, 3.3% cited product variety, and 28.3% cited product comparison.

3.3% of them indicated using a website, 93.3% indicated using a mobile app, and 3.3% indicated using both to access an online shopping platform.

3.3% of them indicated PC (Laptop, Desktop), 93.3% indicated Smart Phone, 1.7% indicated Tablet, and 1.7% indicated other as the preferred devices for online shopping.

Ease of Order was mentioned by 6.7% of respondents, and 18.3% of respondents indicated.

Null hypothesis H₀2: Satisfaction level of factors related to online shopping differs significantly with average level

Table V
Factors related to Online Shopping

	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Comfortable are you while buying products online	3.06	1.087	0.475	.637
Payment System's Security	3.75	.985	5.898**	.000
Satisfied with Online Shopping	3.88	.884	7.734**	.000

****Significant at 1% level**

The t-values of 5.898 and 7.734 are significant at the 1% level, and H₀2 is thus rejected, as can be seen from Table V. The t-value of 0.475 is not significant at the 5% level, hence H₀2 is acceptable in this situation. This demonstrates that the mean values for Payment System Security (3.75) and Satisfaction with Online Shopping (3.88) are considerably different and higher than the average level, demonstrating that customers are satisfied with both services. Yet, the respondents' level of uneasiness when making an online purchase was low (3.06).

SUGGESTION AND RECOMMENDATION

- Improvements should be made to rural communication infrastructure, including telephony, to ensure that there is no communication gap between rural customers and marketers.
- For products to easily reach rural consumers, the government should build infrastructural amenities in rural areas, such as roads and railroads.
- Consumer education is necessary for rural customers in areas such as product usage, product research, consumer law, consumer rights, and more.
- The distribution system should be effective, which implies that items should reach the final customer as quickly as possible at the lowest cost. Marketers should work to earn the trust of rural consumers by offering high-quality products.

CONCLUSION

The study makes it obvious that a wider range of products has the greatest favourable influence. Rural clients are encouraged to shop online by online retailers' low prices.

Consumers are pleased with the deals and discounts they receive from numerous online retailers, including Amazon, Flipkart, and Paytm. We learned through this survey that there are a number of negative elements that deter buyers from making online purchases.

- Due to the lack of a "touch and feel" aspect, customers can only "see" a product on a computer screen without having the ability to touch or feel it, which does not satisfy the psychological needs of the conventional consumer.
- No high-speed internet access Several villages still do not have reliable internet access, which makes it difficult for them to make online purchases.

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