A Study on E – Commerce and Online Shopping: A Case Study of Indian Retail Market

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ABSTRACT

With the changing market scenario and economical growth, the demand for online shopping has increased. Explosion of e-commerce has changed the buying patterns and preferences of customers. The important brands are also moving towards e commerce technology for increased sale of their products. There is no doubt about it that ecommerce has made the transactions smooth, quick, faster and easier. Both the sellers and the buyers get benefited by his technology. As we all are aware that Commerce and Business are the backbones of a country's development, if they were supported by the electronic technology and tools like e-commerce, it will make wonders in the economical growth of the country. An important part of e –commerce is online shopping. It helps in many ways both parties, the buyer as well as the seller. The e –commerce technology and the usage of online shopping has increased in tremendous ways in India. Today almost every big company has adopted these technologies to increases sales, to make branding all over the globe. Online shopping in India saw a 128% growth in interest from consumers in 2012 as compared to the previous year, according to a new report. The growth was only 40% between 2010 and 2011, said the report compiled by Google and TNS Australia. The report used data from Google Trends and a sample survey of 800 users in November 2012. Consumers were most interested in apparels & accessories (30%) and consumer electronics (34%). Other categories that Indians searched for online were Books (15%), Beauty & Personal care (10%), Home & furnishing (6%), Baby products (2%) and healthcare (3%). The present paper is an attempt to study the recent trends, influences, preferences of customers towards e-commerce and online shopping and to give the suggestions for the improvement in online shopping websites.

KEYWORDS: e – Commerce, Internet, Online Shopping, Business

INTRODUCTION

E –commerce and online shopping in India is getting a noticeable growth. The urban and rural population both are using internet facilities. More usage of internet facilities, high educational standards, changing life style, more women employment and economical growth of the country are the few major reasons for the demand of e commerce techniques and tools. Among these techniques online shopping has a vital role. The top most companies and MNCs could not neglect the importance of online shopping for their product branding, promotion and increased sales. In the year 2011 to 2012, consumer interest in online shopping in India grew 128 percent compared to only 40 percent, the previous year. According to Rajan Anandan, Vice President and Managing Director of Google India "With approximately 8 million Indians shopping online in 2012, the online shopping industry in India is growing rapidly and will continue to see exponential growth," By looking at the trends in 2012, we expect 2013 to be a strong growth year for players who are focused on fast-growing categories like apparels and accessories, and niche product categories like baby products, home furnishings, and health and nutrition. We expect the

growth to come from outside of the top eight metros." People turned to the Internet to buy everything from diapers to books, houses and even groceries this year, pushing e-commerce revenues in the country to $14billion with the possibility of even higher earnings in 2013. "Increasing Internet penetration and availability of more payment options boosted the e-commerce industry in 2012. Besides electronics, customer traction grew considerably in categories like fashion and jewelery, home and kitchen and lifestyle accessories like watches and perfumes," Snapdeal Vice President (Marketing) Sandeep Komaravelly said. "Apparel, books and lifestyle categories (beauty, footwear and health) will drive e-commerce," HomeShop18.Com Founder and CEO Sundeep Malhotra said, adding that relatively stable and growing domestic economy will also be the major growth drivers. "The coming year looks promising for the industry." According to the owner of peppercloset.com, Sumeet Arora, e-commerce segment has doubled to $14 billon this year from $6.3 billion in 2011. This figure is likely to reach 38 million by 2015. So, what can one expect in 2013 from the thousands of e-commerce websites? According to homeshop18.Com, an innovation that will "revolutionize" e-commerce in India is cost optimization through warehouse and logistics management that will enable companies to do profitable business. According to a study by IMRB International and IAMAI, there were an estimated 137 million Internet users in the country as of June 2012. Of this, while 99 million were from urban parts of the country, the remaining 38 million were from rural India.

The rural areas are also taking participation in the usage of Internet in a wonderful way. According to a study by CRISIL and preliminary date released for 2011-12 by National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), the consumption of FMCG product, usage of technology is also enhanced in rural areas. According to a recent survey in December 2012 of IMRB and Internet and Mobile Association of India (IMAI), "the number of claimed internet users has witnessed a Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 73 percent since December 2010. As of June 2012 there are 3.6 million mobile internet users in rural India. This has grown 7.2 times in the past two years. The penetration of the computer literates among the rural population is 8.4 percent while the penetration of claimed internet users has grown from 2.68 percent in 2010 to 4.6 percent in 2012. E- Commerce which involves commercial transaction between seller and buyer over the internet, enables a new economic environment and new business practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW-

ASSOCHAM Study (2015) found the highest growth rate in the apparel segment, almost 69.5 per cent over 2014, followed by electronic items, up 62 per cent, baby care products, up 53 per cent, beauty and personal care products at 52 per cent and home furnishings at 49 per cent. Rapid growth of digital commerce in India is mainly due to increased use of smartphones. Mobiles and mobile accessories have taken up the maximum share of the digital commerce market in India, noted the study. Moreover, almost 45 per cent online shoppers reportedly preferred cash on delivery over credit cards (16 per cent) and debit cards (21 per cent). Only 10 per cent opted for internet banking and a scanty 7 per cent preferred cash cards, mobile wallets, and other such modes of payment. The 18-25 years of age group has been the fastest growing age segment online with user growth being contributed by both male and female segments. The survey highlights that 38 per cent of regular shoppers are in 18-25 age group, 52 per cent in 26-35, 8 per cent in 36-45 and 2 per cent in the age group of 45-60. Nearly 65 per cent online shoppers are male and 35 per cent female.

Mitra Abhijit (2013) suggests E-Commerce has unleashed yet another revolution, which is changing the way businesses buy and sell products and services. New methodologies have evolved. The role of geographic distances in forming business relationships is reduced. E-Commerce is the future of shopping. With the deployment of 3G and 4G wireless communication technologies, the internet economy will continue to grow robustly. In the next 3 to 5 years, India will have 30 to 70 million internet users which will equal, if not surpass, many of the developed countries. Internet economy will then become more meaningful in India. With the rapid expansion of internet, Ecommerce is set to play a very important role in the 21st century, the new opportunities that will be thrown open, will be accessible to both large corporations and small companies. The role of government is to provide a legal framework for E-Commerce so that while domestic and international trade are allowed to expand their horizons, basic rights such as privacy, intellectual property, prevention of fraud, consumer protection etc are all taken care of

Chanana Nisha and Goele Sangeeta (2012) propose that the future of E-Commerce is difficult to predict. There are various segments that would grow in the future like: Travel and Tourism, electronic appliances, hardware products and apparel. There are also some essential factors which will significantly contribute to the boom of the E-Commerce industry in India i.e.

replacement guarantee, M-Commerce services, location based services, multiple payment option, right content, shipment option, legal requirement of generating invoices for online transactions, quick Service, T & C should be clear & realistic, the product quality should be same as shown on the portal, dedicated 24/7 customer care centre should be there. Awais Muhammad and Samin Tanzila (2012) indicate that use of internet has made the world a global village. The use of Internet has reduced the distances and brought the people together. A nation's back bone is commerce and it will be strengthened if backed by electronic tools in which e-commerce plays a vital role. The important feature in ecommerce is privacy which not only increases competitive advantage but confidence level also. E-commerce brings sellers and potential buyers at the distance of one click and it saves time as it is cost effective, as E-commerce is becoming key to success Internet banking, one among the innovative and significant internet based services has experienced explosive growth and led to transformation of traditional banking practice. Online banking or net banking in today's dynamic age of banking has made things much easier for the people and saves a lot of time for its customers. The traditional way of standing in the queues and filling up all the forms are well solved and now it is no hassle for making any transaction with the banks by virtue of internet banking. The financial institutions which operated traditionally are now able to lower their operational costs and increase the consumer retention by virtue of technology. Internet banking as a latest and potential means for banking now holds a similar importance as that of ATM's, phone banking and traditional bank branches. The works by ABA, 2004; Fox, 2005 suggest that an internet banking strategy may be effective, with reports of more profitable, loyal and committed consumers compared with traditional banking consumers (D'silva et al., 2010). Dutta and Dutta, (2009) found tangibles have the highest impact on overall customer satisfaction. The largest discrepancy between the customer expectations and perceptions is in terms of empathy which includes Bank locations and ATM machines in convenient places and telebanking and internet banking facility. The study regards this a major source of concern for Indian banking industry as a huge service quality gap exists for all the banks in this category. Kumar and Rajesh (2009) suggest that the facilities of the banks should be made more convenient for customer comforts. The ATM services should be extended with few more cabins. 8 The work also concludes that with sincere efforts and positive attitude, the needs of many customers can be satisfied when banks aim at 'customer delight'. Blasio (2008), in his study does not find the support for the argument that the Internet reduces the role of distance. Internet usage is much more frequent among urban consumers than among their non-urban counterparts. The use of e-commerce is basically unaffected by the size of the city where the household lives. Geographically remote consumers are discouraged from purchasing goods by the fact that they cannot inspect them beforehand. Leisure activities and cultural items (i.e., books, CDs, and tickets for museums and theaters) are the only goods and services for which e-commerce is used more in isolated areas. Finally, e-banking bears no relationship to city size. In choosing a bank, non-urban customers give more importance to personal acquaintance than do urban clients, partly because bank account holders in remote areas are more likely to have taken out a loan from their bank.

Ozok et al (2007) identified ten items contributing to overall consistency in e-commerce customer relationship management. These items are consistency of transaction steps, consistency of Web site design, consistency of navigation, consistency of promotions, consistency of in-stock indications, consistency of product variety, consistency of fraud protection, consistency of product guarantees, consistency of overall site fairness, and consistency of return policies. This list of consistency items includes three usability items. It can be concluded that sites with good usability have a better chance of having successful CRM implementation in their business. Consistency of promotions, in-stock indications, product variety, fraud protection, guarantees, fairness, and return policies indicate mainly that customers in fact demand a high level of security-related information as well as trustworthiness and high ethics on the shopping site to become regular customers of evendors. Customers demand equal and consistent treatment concerning products and productrelated services. The findings indicate that the level of security and guarantees presented to customers has a significant positive effect on customer retention and customer acquisition.

Singh and Lalwani (2007) in their work on internet banking suggest that internet banking has facilitated the banking relationships with the customers . It is now widely accepted in the country because of the fact that it is the cheapest source of providing banking services. As more and more banks will succeed in online banking, a day will come when it will reach a common place as ATM's. It has not only increased the banking transactions but also has reduced the time and cost factor. It has brought revolution in the banking industry.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY-

The research paper consists of the following objectives:

1. To study the changing buying patterns
2. To analyze the growth of .e-commerce and online shopping
3. To recognize the factors to decide the success of online shopping
4. To throw light on the improvements to make the websites appealing for enhancing the number of buyers.
5. To study the impact of E-Commerce Market on Indian Retail Market.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For making this research successful and worthy, a questionnaire was structured. Through the help of the questionnaire, primary data has been collected. Interviews have been taken of 250 respondents. The research also includes secondary data which has been collected from various websites, books etc.

REASONS BEHIND THE GROWTH OF E – COMMERCE

1. **Busy Lifestyle**- The lifestyle of people is so busy that they are unable to go to the crowded markets every time for shopping. The customers prefer to shop in a relaxed environment at their own convenience.

2. **High Disposable Income:** With growing job opportunities the income sources have also increased. Because of high spending power, customers are willingly able to pay for the products online.

3. **Awareness of Products**: People are much more aware nowadays regarding the products available in the markets. They are quite aware about new products, product features, availability, price etc. through the help of media like television, radio, newspaper etc. Because of these reasons they feel confident while shopping online.

4. **Rising Computer Literacy Level**: Due to the efforts of Government and Private Educational Institutions in India, computer education is getting new horizons. People are much more aware regarding the tools and techniques of computers. Not only students of urban areas, students of rural areas, housewives and business persons are also attracted towards the advance technologies of computer like e – commerce and e-business. With the development of educational standards there is automatically a great demand to buy and use new products.

5. **Increased Usage of Internet Among the Masses**

- **With** more than 100 million Internet users, the country is beginning to achieve a critical mass of users who are familiar with web services. In addition, over the past few years, relatively sophisticated online travel agents ("OTAs"), such as MakeMyTrip – which started turning these initial Web users into Web consumers – have dominated Indian e-commerce. **Saves Money** – One another reason for adapting e- Commerce and online shopping technology is that the unwanted expe**nditure of petrol, parking** and toll etc. is considerably reduced.

6. **Convienence to find Review of Product–** It is quite easy to find the review of products by the help of online shopping. E–commerce has made it simpler to get information regarding the product and the customers can purchase the products after getting reviews and feedback of the product.

ESSENTIALS FOR MAKING ONLINE SHOPPING EFFECTIVE

1. **It must be Secure** – Every customer wants to make safe and secure transactions while purchasing online. If the website is secure, customers will tend to purchase more from it. Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) is a standard security technology for establishing an encrypted link between the web server and a browser. E – commerce websites with the SSL certificate are able to prevent and protect the users' information when customers access their websites.

2. **Easy and Understandable Content** – The website must be in easy language and understandable. While making the website, the language must be kept simple and if possible the translation of the content must be given on the website in other languages.

3. **Combination of Branded Products and Non Branded Products** –An online shopping website must be a combination of branded products as well as of non- branded products. Customers' preferences and taste are different and even sometimes customers change their buying patterns because of many reasons such as price, utility of the product, purpose behind buying the product etc.

4. **Create Awareness** – An online website must create awareness among the customers regarding the products. The website should include all the latest news about the products, innovations of the market, new product features, revised pricing, new price list, information about the gifts and discounts etc.

5. **Deliver High and Quick Quality Services** – One

of an important feature to make your online shopping websites better than others is to deliver high and quick quality services. The processing on the website must be quick in regards of payments, home deliveryservices etc.

6. **Appealing and Informative Design of Website** – The website which has designed for online shopping purpose must be designed in such a way that it will attract more and more customers towards it by the offers, patterns, quick services etc. The content of the website must be understandable. Some important icons like shopping cart, payment system icons, social media links and icons, store location along with map, phone /contact number in case of any problem, login box, search box etc. must be on the website for making online shopping experience better and enjoyable.

Difference between Online Shopping and Traditional Shopping

The world is moving fast and one of the greatest reasons behind the demand of online shopping is busy lifestyle and economic growth. Online Shopping is different from Traditional Shopping in many ways like the product descriptions gifts, home delivery, payment modes, etc. are easy to access online now a days. The difference between boththe modes is more defined in the following ways –

Online Shopping vs. Traditional Shopping

Traditional Shopping	Online Shopping
Sales clerk service	Product descriptions, information pages, gift services, search function, clerk on the phone/e-mail
Sales promotion	Special offers, online games and lotteries, linksto other sites of interest, appetizer information
Store window displays	Home page
Store atmosphere	Interface consistency, store organization,interface and graphics quality
Aisle products	Featured products on hierarchical levels of thestore
Store layout	Screen depth, browse and search functions,indices, image maps
Number of floors in the store	Hierarchical levels of the store
Number of store entrances and store outlets/branches	Number of links to a particular online retailstore
Checkout cashier	Online shopping basket and/or order form
Look and touch of the merchandise	Limited to image quality and description, potential for sound and video applications
Number of people entering the store	Number of unique visits to the online retailstore
Sales per period	Sales per period

Source: Lohse and Spiller (1999)

SAMPLE SIZE

The respondents in the sample consisted of urban consumers. 250 (two hundred fifty) respondents of Lucknow, the capital city of Uttar Pradesh were interviewed. These respondents have certain exposure to the online shopping. The samples are further presented in the tabulation form with their responses.

INFERENCES

Through the help of structured questionnaire, the study has been done. Each of the questions cover the valid reasons to find out the online shopping factors, influences and demands. The analysis of the table is as follows:

**Table 1 Age of Respondents who prefer to Shop Online**

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 20 years	62	24.8
21 – 30 years	90	36
31 – 40 years	49	19.6
41-50 years	25	10
50 years above	24	9.6
Total	250	
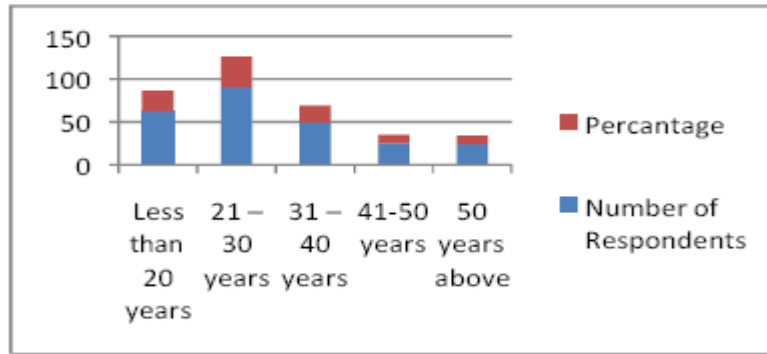
The first question was designed to find out the age of the respondents, who preferred to shop online. The above table and the graph reveals that 32.5% of age group 21-30- years were mainly involved in the research work for concluding the influences, demands and improvements in online shopping.

**Table 2 Gender of Respondents Participated in the Study**

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Male	70	28
Female	180	72
Total	250	
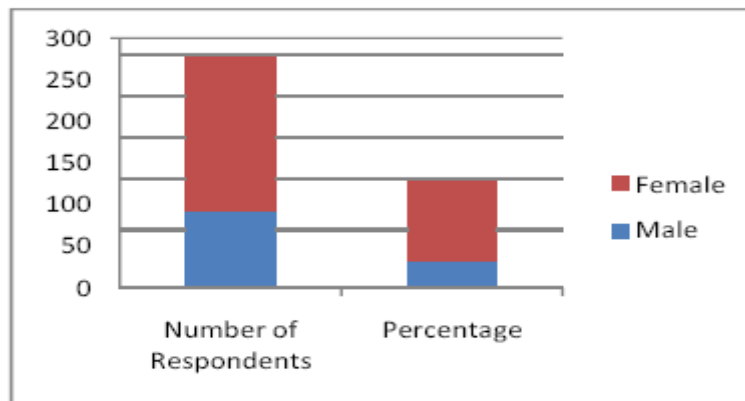
The table and graph 2 reveals that female respondents were 180 higher than the male respondents 70. Online Shopping is preferred by the females rather than males.

Table 3 Monthly Income of Respondents

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 10,000	5	2
Rs . 10 ,001 - 20,000	14	5.6
Rs . 20 ,001 - 30,000	22	8.8
Rs. 30,001- 40,000	34	13.6
Rs.40,001- 50,000	116	46.4
More then 50,000	59	23.6
Total	250	
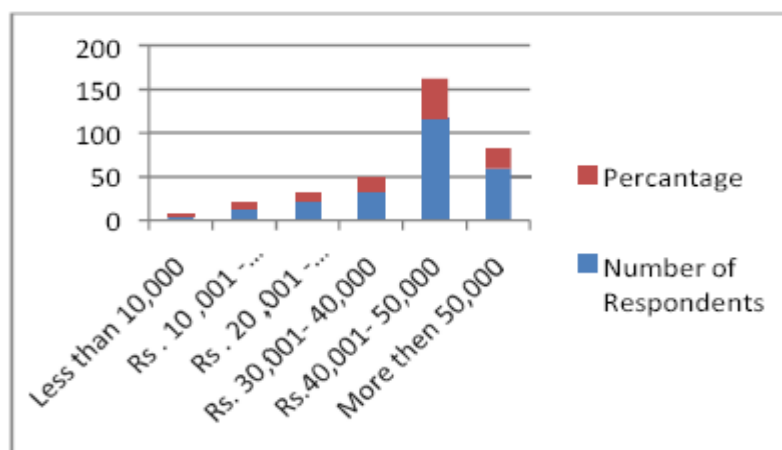
It is analyzed that the monthly income of maximum people who shop online is in the range between of Rs.40,001-50,000, which indicates that the respondents are willing to make expenditure on online purchase of products and that they have the buying capacity.

**Table 4 Education Level of Online Buyers**

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Less than Vth	0	0
Upto VIIIth	5	2
Upto Xth	10	4
Upto XIIth	39	15.6
Graduate	75	30
Post Graduate	121	48.4
Total	250	
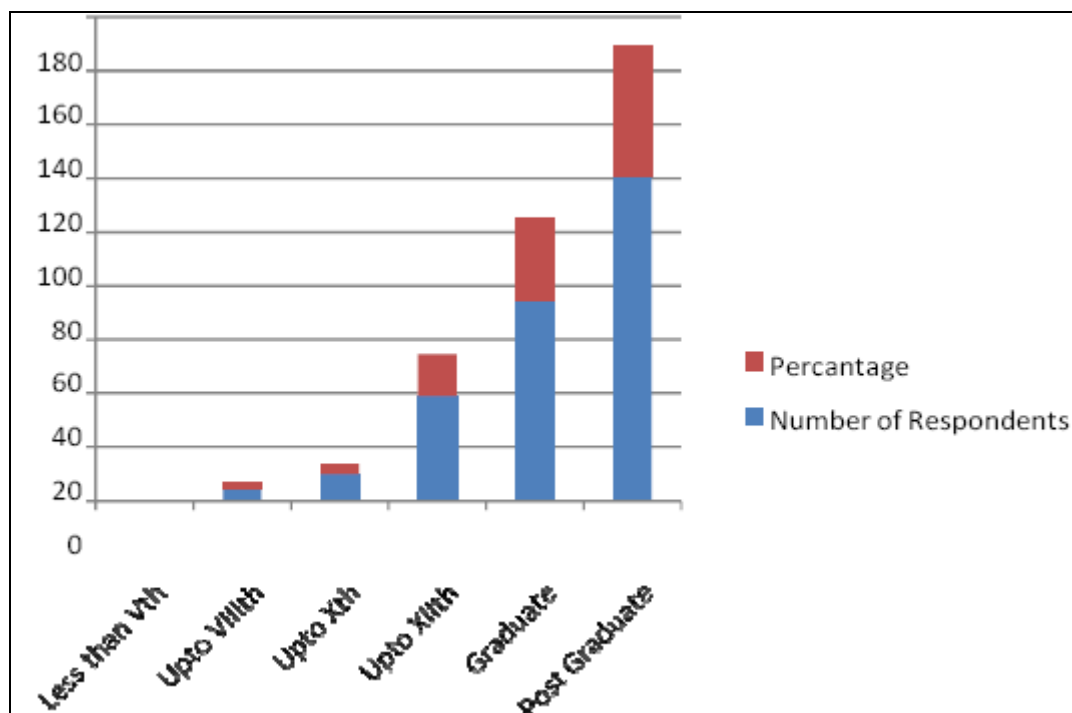
The said table analyzed the education level of the online buyers (respondents) who have been involved in the research. It clearly shows that most of the respondents are having education up to Postgraduate level. So it can be concluded that they are able to understand the language, content, terms and conditions of the product while shopping online.

**Table 5 Preferred Websites for Online Shopping**

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Flipkart	20	8
eBay	25	10
Jabong	26	10.4
OLX	38	15.2
Homeshop 18	59	23.6
Snapdeal	31	12.4
Myntra	27	10.8
Zovi	6	2.4
Naaptol	9	3.6
Yebhi	5	2
Yepme	4	1.6
Total	**250**	
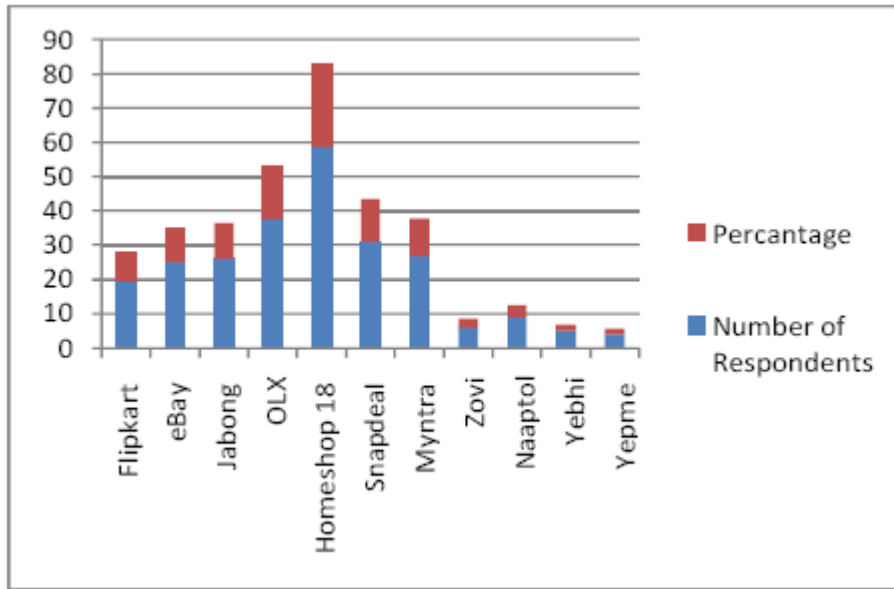
The table and graph 5 reveals that the most preferred website for online shopping isHomeshop18, according to the respondents.

Table 6 Online Shopping Duration of Respondents

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Daily	2	0.8
Weekly	74	29.6
Every Six Months	32	12.8
Occasionally	41	16.4
Monthly	59	23.6
Yearly	37	14.8
Never	5	2
Total	250	100
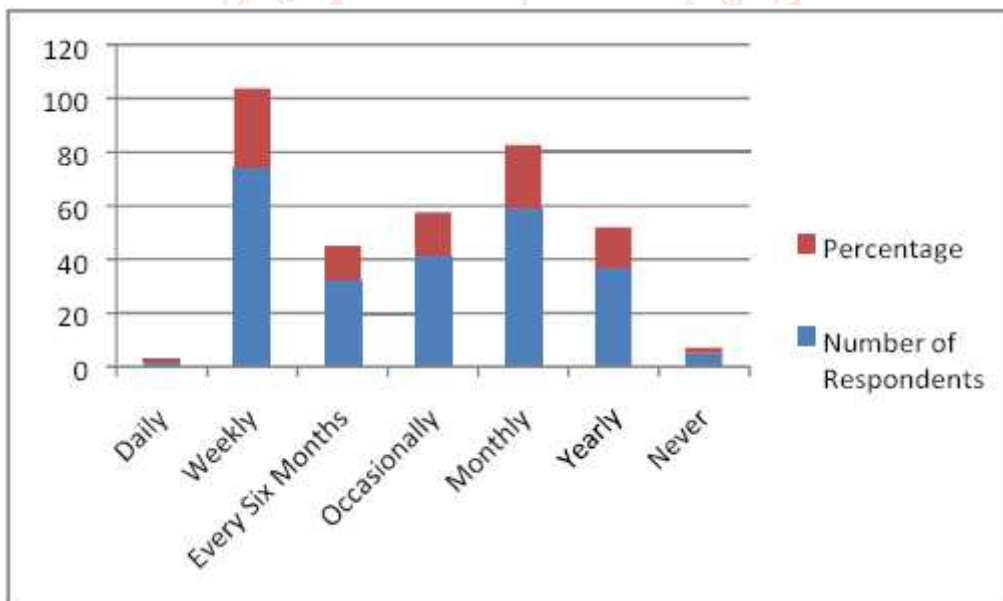
The table and graph no.6 highlights the duration period of online shopping by the respondents. It can be clearly observed that most of the respondents prefer to buy onlineweekly. 74 respondents among 250 agreed that they purchase weekly although it is not clearly told by them as to what they purchase every week.

Table 7 Preferred Products to Buy Online

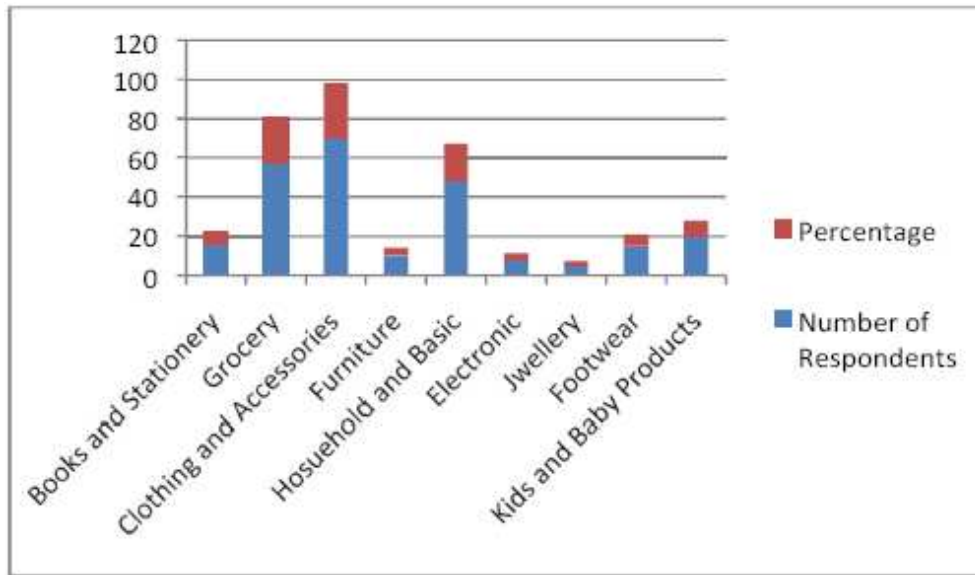| Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Books and Stationery	16	6.4
Grocery	58	23.2
Clothing andAccessories	70	28
Furniture	10	4
Household and Basic	48	19.2
Electronic	8	3.2
Jewellery	5	2
Footwear	15	6
Kids and Baby Products	20	8
Total	250	

Table and graph no.7 analyzed that respondents were interested to shop Clothing and Accessories online. Among 250 respondents 70 respondents buy clothes and accessories.One more reason behind the high number of Clothing and Accessories is also that most of the buyers (respondents) are females who shop online.

## Table 8 Security while Shopping Online

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Positive	163	65.2
Negative	87	34.8
Total	250	
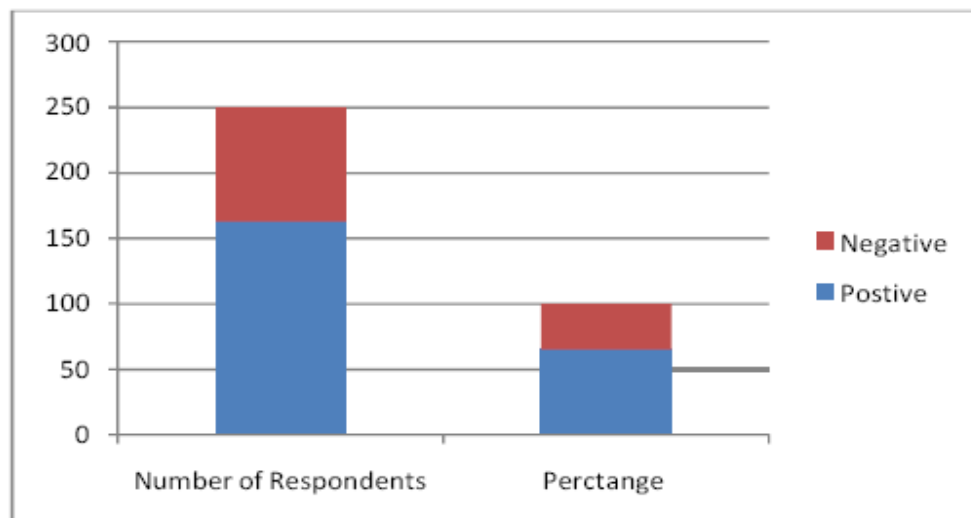
The above table and graph 8 reveals that the number of respondents is higher and positive in regards to the safety and security factors. Customers find online shopping safe and secure in context to give their details and payments.

Table 9 Preference of Payment Mode

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Cash on Delivery	69	27.6
PayPal	15	6
Credit Card	48	19.2
Debit Card	62	24.8
Online e-Payment	30	12
Mobile Payments	15	6
Bank Transfer	11	4.4
Total	**250**	
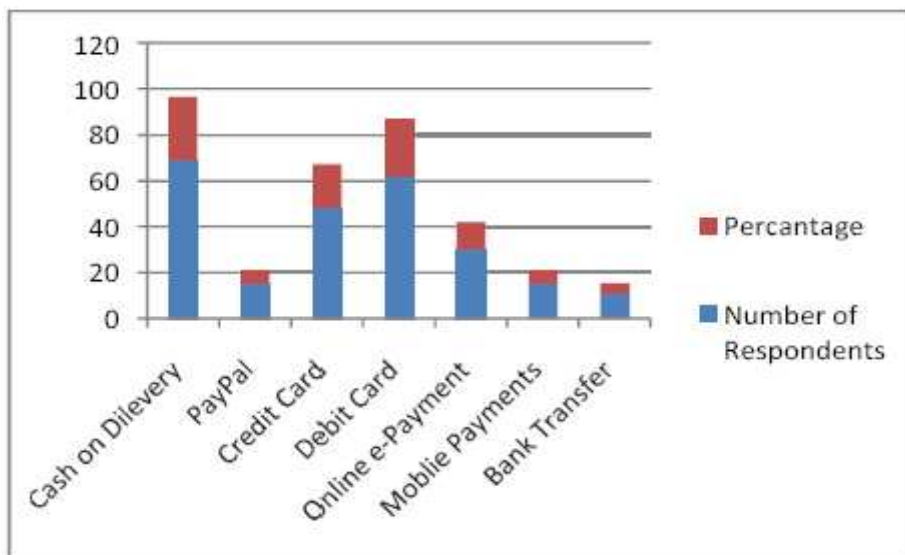
The last table and graph number 9 shows that most of the respondents prefer Cash on delivery while making online shopping.

Challenges of E-commerce in India

E-commerce sectors have been facing multiple challenges in their business operations like taxation issues, incidents of fraud, and issues with cyber security, intense competition and preference for payment in cash (COD) by customers, inadequate infrastructure and low digital literacy. There is no uniform tax structure across various states and there is ambiguity with respect to categorization of offerings into 'goods' or 'services'.

Guidelines on taxation of certain transactions like e-wallets, cash on delivery, gift vouchers etc. are not clearly defined. Some of these challenges are expected to be resolved after the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). Incidents of distribution of counterfeit goods through E-commerce platform have also been increasing which has added to the woes of both consumers as well as E-commerce companies. This is mainly because of the absence of a trustworthy mechanism which can allow consumers to authenticate sellers or their products.

Data/cyber security is another major challenge faced by the players as they deal with huge volumes of customer information, a lot of which is shared with third parties such as logistics providers raising concerns about exploitation by external entities.

Another challenge is payment by customers in cash. Receiving payment in cash (COD) makes the process laborious, risky and more expensive for the companies as their working capital requirement increases. Higher return ratio for goods sold online is also proving expensive and presenting challenges for companies. Incidentally, return percentage of orders in COD is much higher compared to online payments. The E-commerce industry in India has seen intensified competition in the sector, which in turn has forced companies to adopt aggressive pricing policies, offering heavy discounts to customers and high commissions to vendors and other parties. This has exerted a lot of pressure on the profitability of the companies.

As far as e-commerce is concerned it is still in an infancy stage in India. The environment exist today is not much suitable for the fast growth of e-commerce. We can list out the important challenges one by one as follows

1. One of the important challenges faced by this sector is the lack of adequate infrastructure for IT technology and Internet. The penetration of personal computers in India is as low as 3.5 per thousand of population compared to over 6 per thousand in China and 500 per thousand in USA.

2. Another important reason for not developing e-commerce is the high tariff rate charged by Internet Service Providers [ISPs] Speed and connectivity is also poor.

3. Another problem faced is that e-commerce sites are one of the favourite targets of hackers.

4. the most serious drawback is the absence of effective cyber law at the moment. 5.commerce is governed by the UNCITRAI model code, but this is not binding on any country. It is expected that all WTO member countries will soon enact laws to govern

5. The reason low growth of e-commerce is the privacy and security issues. Measures like digital signatures, Digital certificates, and fire walls can be adopted to secure safety and protection over the message passed on internet.

6. Payment related problems also continue to block the e-commerce activities. Electronic cash, credit cards etc. are some of the popular payment method used for e-commerce transactions. But unfortunately penetration of e-cash and credit cards not only low, but Indian consumers are suspicious about the threat of fraud played by unscrupulous hackers. In order to minimize this problem, experts suggest the use of digital certificate along with credit card to secure their payment activities.

7. Electronic commerce is also characterized by some technological and inherent limitations which have restricted the number of people using this revolutionary system.

CONCLUSION

The research reveals that most of the people who are engaged in making the decision of purchasing, are in the age group of 21-30 years. While making the website for online shopping it must be designed in a very planned and strategic way. The websites for shopping were mostly visited by the females. The study also highlights that most of the time customers prefer to shop clothing and accessories from online shopping websites. The study also throws a light that most of the customers (respondents) like to make payments on delivery of the products at their places. By the present study it can be concluded that online shopping and e- Commerce are an important part of B2B in the present world. To make products globally recognized every small or big, National or International company needs to focus and start selling their products online. It doesn't matter whether the product is an FMCG, Jewelry, Books and Stationery, Health and Medical, Electrical or Electronic. There are several opportunities for online shopping websites if designed and processed in the quick, secure and qualitative way. Marketers need to concentrate properly on the requirements of the e- Commerce and online tools and techniques to make wonders and hype their sales. Branding, Product Positioning, Awareness of new features in the products etc. all were supported by the help of online websites. Not only this, the undue advantages which the fake retail stores were enjoying can also be stopped through online shopping websites.

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