

**INCLINATION TOWARDS ONLINE SHOPPING - A CHANGING
TREND AMONG THE CONSUMERS**

ABSTRACT

Shopping was once perceived as an activity of going out, exploring various stores and shops across the town, shifting through a myriad of options and finally settling down to purchase a product with full satisfaction. Now that the technology is skillfully trying to make a person think smartly, without exerting much physical energy, we see that even shopping has been engulfed under grip of changing lifestyle. With online shopping spreading its wings gradually, the experience of ‘touch and feel’ concept is slowly fading among the consumers. Online shopping or electronic shopping is a part of electronic commerce which allows consumers to directly buy goods or services from a seller over the internet. A survey was conducted in the Jorhat town of Assam to know the online shopping scenario among the consumers with the objective to identify the category of population inclined for online shopping and the factors influencing the consumers for online shopping. For the present research work, 120 samples were selected randomly from four wards of municipality area and a multistage stratified random sampling method was adopted in order to select representative sample. The findings of the study revealed that the young generations are very active in the activities of online shopping and most of them are females. The results of the study have given detailed information regarding the change in shopping behaviour of the consumers.

Keywords: Consumer, online shopping, shopping behaviour, factors.

INTRODUCTION

In simple words Online shopping is defined as purchasing items from internet retailers as opposed to a shop or store or the act of purchasing products or services over the Internet. It is a form of electronic commerce which allows consumers to directly buy goods or services from a seller over the internet using a web browser. The growing use of internet in India provides a developing prospect for online shopping. Internet is changing the way consumers shop and buy goods and services, and has rapidly evolved into a global phenomenon. Many companies have started using the internet with the aim of cutting marketing costs, thereby reducing the price of their products and services in order to stay ahead in highly competitive markets. Companies also use the Internet to convey, communicate and disseminate information, to sell the product, to take feedback and also to conduct satisfaction surveys with customers. The way in which many Indian consumers shop is fast changing, and there is a shift from offline

36 shopping (visiting a shop and purchasing items) to online shopping (browsing through virtual
37 catalogues and making purchases). Consumers are turning to the internet and online retailers to
38 improve the way they shop, whether it is for the wider selection of goods available online, the
39 deals and discounts offered or the ability to quickly compare prices. To the online shopper,
40 everything that they could possibly want is available at the click of a mouse. A shopping
41 expedition that might once have take a few hours to complete, is done and dusted within a matter
42 of minutes and all from the comfort of their own home, or the workplace. Many factors,
43 specificities and characteristics influence the individual in what he is and the consumer in his
44 decision making process, shopping habits, purchasing behavior, the brands he buys or the
45 retailers he goes. A purchase decision is the result of each and every one of these factors. An
46 individual and a consumer are led by various considerations and aspects which are may not relate
47 to any other's preference. One aspect may be highly valued by a person at the same time that
48 particular aspect may not be valued by another person. So it becomes important to learn about
49 the common aspects that are preferred by most of the consumers so as to improve the marketing
50 demand as well as product value. By identifying and understanding the factors responsible for
51 inclination that move today's consumers to purchase online, brands have the opportunity to
52 develop strategy, a marketing message and advertising campaigns more efficient and more in
53 line with the needs and ways of thinking of their target consumers, a real asset to better meet the
54 needs of its customers and increase sales. This study attempts to develop such a research to learn
55 the changes in the shopping behaviour which are identified with the following objectives:

- 56 1. To identify the category of population inclined for online shopping
- 57 2. To know the factors influencing the consumer for shopping online

58 **METHODOLOGY**

59 Jorhat district was selected randomly for the study. A multistage stratified random
60 sampling with proportionate allocation method was used to select the samples accordingly a total
61 of 120 online consumers from four wards of municipality area were selected for the study. A
62 structured schedule was prepared and interview method was applied to gather information. To
63 find out the reason of inclination for online shopping, a number of factors had been listed out
64 after consulting various research papers, articles, books and magazines. Research articles and
65 other publications were referred regarding the study area and after analyzing the scenario ten of
66 the factors had been selected for the existing study. Under each factors a number of statements
67 had been formulated to access the level of inclination for online shopping. The statements were
68 put into 3 point responses i.e., always, sometimes, never. The statistical measures used in this
69 study were frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

70 **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

71 The findings from the present study was presented and discussed in the following
72 sub headings.

73 **Category of population engaged in online shopping:**

74 It has been revealed from table 1 that most of the respondent (74.17%) belonged
75 to the age group in between 21-30 years. Mathur and Sharma (2014) also found that the age
76 distribution of respondents opting for 42% of online shopping falls in 26-30 years of age group.
77 Youngsters now days are very confident for online activities and they have ample amount of
78 information and knowledge regarding internet issues, so they have very little fear about it and
79 they like to take risk and have a tendency to adopt the new and emerging technologies and
80 facilities that are in trend. According to a news report published (2nd January 2016) on Press
81 Trust of India about India's e-commerce industry likely to touch \$38 billion mark in 2016 –
82 ASSOCHAM revealed that 38 per cent of regular shoppers are in 18-25 years of age group, 52 per
83 cent in 26-35 years of age group, 8 per cent in 36-45 years of age group and 2 per cent in the
84 age group of 45-60. From the above discussion it has been understood that young generation is
85 actively involved in online shopping.

86 It is observed from the data presented in Table 1 that more than half of the
87 respondents (53.33%) were female and 46.67% were male engaged with online shopping.
88 Women does more shopping, the real reason is sobering. In virtually every society in the world,
89 women have primary care-giving responsibilities for both children and the elderly (and often,
90 just about everybody else in-between). In this primary care giving role, women find themselves
91 buying on behalf of everyone else in their lives. Female shoppers are more likely to plan out
92 their shopping strategies and make their purchases based on future needs. Hernandez et al.
93 (2011) reported that in today's world the number of women using internet for online shopping is
94 increasing. While an article by Buyvoets expresses that “men tend to stick to their mission when
95 shopping online” this is in contrast to women who “expand the undertaking by wandering
96 among products and categories”. Thus, according to this research, women explore and men are
97 more goals orientated when shopping online. For all these reasons females are found to be more
98 active in online shopping than males.

99 The study also revealed that education plays a key role in shopping online. While
100 considering the educational qualification, it was observed that 49.17 per cent and 44.16 per cent
101 of the respondents were highly educated i.e. bachelors as well as masters and above
102 respectively. It may be due to the fact that educated people are more confident in online
103 shopping because they have all the ideas regarding various steps and procedures of online
104 activities and they are more fluent for generating ideas and information through internet. Teo,
105 2001; Zhao et al. (2002); Dillon and Reif (2004) also considered that educated people make
106 good innovators and early adopters of new technology. Less educated people tend to exhibit a
107 higher degree of computer anxiety towards computer technology (Parasuram and Igbaria, 1989).

108 The finding also indicates that majority of the respondents (62.5%) were students,
109 16.66 per cent of the respondents were professionals and the lowest percentage of the
110 respondents i.e. only 3.33 percent were housewife. The reason behind this can be considered as
111 the students are preoccupied with their programming and development work spending most of

112 their time in front of the computer, preferably the Internet. Another reason may be that they are
 113 more thorough and aware of online facilities, advertisements, offers and other features.

114 In case of monthly family income 46.67 per cent of the respondents belonged to
 115 families earning Rs. 50,001 and above. This shows that a large percentage of respondents from
 116 higher income group are involved in online shopping. Individuals with lower income tend to
 117 approach online shopping activity more cautiously and find this medium as a riskier place since
 118 their tolerance for financial losses are lower in comparison to consumers with higher income.
 119 However, once users have an experience their attitude is not affected by their income
 120 (Hernandez *et al.*, 2011).

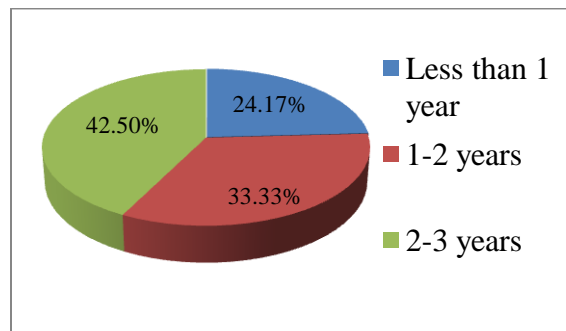
Table 1: Category of population engaged in online shopping			
Sl. No.	Characteristics	Frequency Number (n=120)	Percentage (%)
1	Age		
	Below 20 years	9	7.5
	21-30 years	89	74.17
	31-40 years	17	14.16
	41-50 years	2	1.67
	51-60 years	2	1.67
	61 and above	1	0.83
2	Gender		
	Male	56	46.67
	Female	64	53.33
3	Education		
	Up to matriculation	2	1.67
	Intermediate	6	5
	Bachelors	59	49.17
	Masters and above	53	44.16
4	Occupation		
	Student	75	62.5
	Service	8	6.67
	Business	13	10.83
	Professionals	20	16.67
	Housewife	4	3.33
5	Monthly family income		
	Less than 10,000	5	4.17
	10,001-20,000	8	6.66
	20,001-30,000	6	5
	30,001-40,000	10	8.33
	40,001-50,000	35	29.17

	50,001 and above	56	46.67
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122 **Experience of using internet for online shopping**

123 It is revealed (Fig.1) that a large number of the respondents (42.5%) were
 124 observed to be using internet for online shopping from 2-3 years followed by 33.33 per cent of
 125 the respondents using internet for online shopping from last 1-2 years and only 24.17 per cent of
 126 the respondents are using internet from less than 1 year for online shopping. Agarwal (2015)
 127 found that maximum people have an experience of 1-2 years of online shopping (43%). This
 128 supports the findings of the present study considering the time frame of the study conducted.



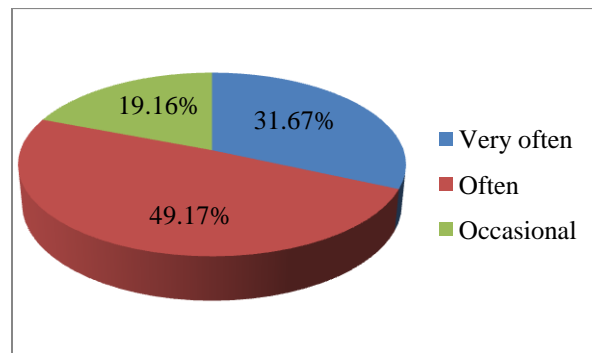
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130 **Fig. 1: Experience of using internet for online shopping**

131 Before the emerge of online shopping, the consumers liked to go to the market, to
 132 a number of shops, checking the available products and asking all the information to the sellers
 133 and thus they had compared the products. The consumers got the opportunity to check the
 134 products properly before purchasing it. It consumed a lot of time in moving here and there and it
 135 becomes very difficult to survey the whole market within a specified time.

136 **Frequency of online purchase**

137 It is observed (Fig. 2) that the highest percentage (49.17%) of the respondents
 138 does online shopping often and 31.67 per cent of the respondents were found to be engaged with
 139 online shopping very often. Only 19.16 per cent of the respondents occasionally do online
 140 shopping.



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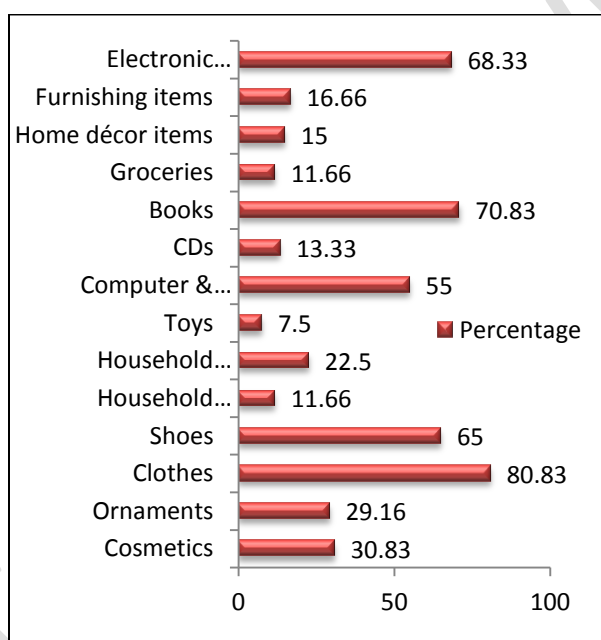
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Fig. 2: Frequency of online purchase

143 Khitoliya (2014) also revealed that 47% of the total respondent frequently goes
144 for online shopping followed by 30% who buy online seldom. Agarwal (2013) reported that 79%
145 people have been frequently using online stores for shopping.

146 **Products purchased by the consumers in online shopping**

147 In the present study the products are categorized into fourteen categories. The
148 distributions of the products preferred by the consumer to shop online are categorized and it has
149 been observed in the Fig. 3 that the highest number of respondents (80.83%) purchase clothing
150 online. The second product preferred by the consumers for online shopping is books and
151 purchased by 70.83% of the respondents. This is followed by electronic gadgets preferred by
152 68.33 per cent of the respondents. Very few (7.7%) of the respondents purchased toys from
153 online stores.



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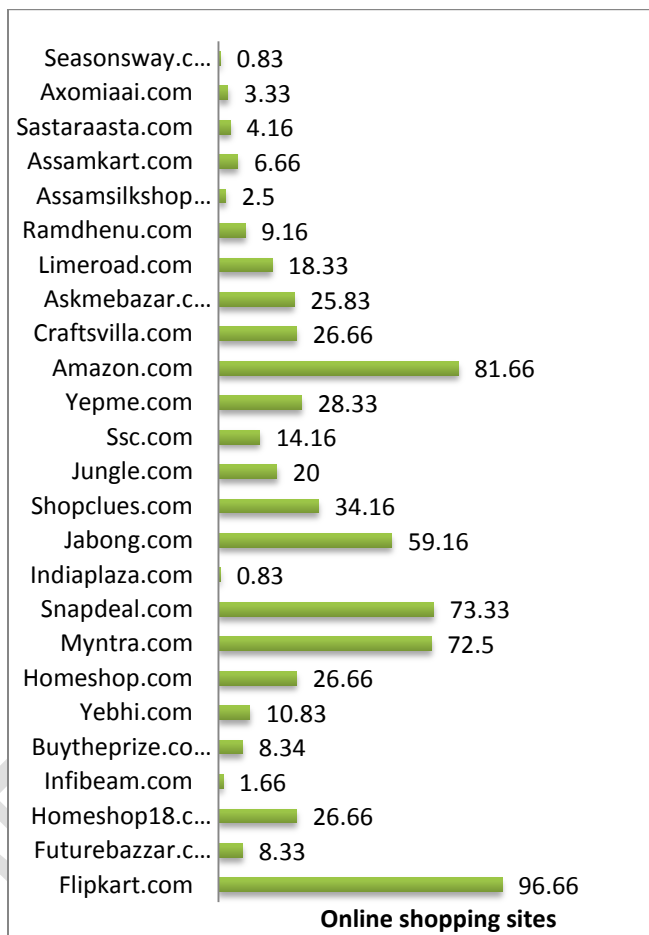
155 **Fig. 3: Products purchased by the consumers in online shopping**

156 The respondents had also mentioned that before the existence of online shopping,
157 they purchased from the market, where they had included one important fact that for each
158 category of product they had to visit a number of stores and move around the city. Initially for
159 some of the specific products like electronic gadgets, books, and clothing they checked internet
160 and they felt to make a try over it and after receiving the product they were satisfied which had
161 led them to purchase further.

162 **Preferences of online shopping sites**

163 A total of twenty five online sites were listed and the percentages of the preferred
164 websites were shown (Fig. 4). It is clear that a large majority of the respondents (96.66%) shop
165 from Flipkart.com. Amazon.com is preferred by 81.66 per cent of the respondents and this was
166 followed by snapdeal.com, myntra.com and jabong.com preferred by 73.33 per cent, 72.50 per

167 cent and 59.16 per cent respectively. Some of the online shopping sites were found to be least
 168 used by consumers such as indiaplaza.com, seasonsway.com and assamsilkshopping.com (0.83
 169 per cent, 0.83 per cent and 2.50 per cent respectively). Consumers have a tendency to show
 170 importance to the things for which they get reference from their friends and family members. So,
 171 this may be the fact that due to low popularity of the sites consumers don't prefer to shop from
 172 those sites. Kanchan *et al.* (2015) reported that the most popular website for online shopping was
 173 flipkart.com. This is in conformity of findings of the present study.



174
 175 **Fig. 4: Preferences of online shopping sites**

176 For online purchasing the consumers are mostly influenced by the surrounding i.e.
 177 from friends and the family members. The respondents were informed about the sites by their
 178 friends and family members and they have gathered preliminary information such it is
 179 advantageous than the other sites, relevancy and its usability. They check the sites for various
 180 needs and then the reviews help them more to learn about the site appropriately.

181 **Reason for inclination: Factors influencing consumer for online shopping**

182 After assessing all the ten factors the findings of the study revealed that 99.17 per
 183 cent of the respondents always consider cash on delivery as one of the most important reason to

184 choose online shopping and the highest number of respondents had informed that due to the cash
 185 on delivery they became interested for it. A consumer is well aware of the fact that cash on
 186 delivery is hassle free and it eliminates the identity theft. It is very simple, and there is no fear of
 187 losing money. Interestingly 89.79 per cent of the respondents always concentrate on the website
 188 design/ feature, it may be due to the reason that well designed and user friendly websites attract
 189 more buyers and encourage them to make a purchase decision and more likely to return for
 190 repeat purchases, so the website design/feature has a strong influence while shopping online.
 191 Knowledge on internet was ranked third among the ten factors and 90 per cent of the respondents
 192 always consider that knowledge on internet plays an important role in pushing consumers
 193 towards shopping online. It is not only the influential factor for the online shoppers but also an
 194 influential factor for all the people who tends to go for surfing internet. A proper knowledge on
 195 internet helps the user to get the information correctly and also it helps the user in various ways
 196 regarding asking question, checking reviews, checking details of a product etc.

197 Table. 2. List of factors influencing consumer for online shopping

Factors	Always	Sometimes	Never	Wt. score	Rank
Convenience	84.69	10	5.31	279.38	VI
Safety and security	69.17	22.83	8	261.17	X
Time	79.56	12.66	7.76	271.80	VIII
Website design/ feature	89.79	7.82	2.39	287.40	II
Lifestyle	81.45	12.5	6.05	275.40	VII
Knowledge on internet	90	7.08	2.92	287.08	III
Trust	73.89	18.89	7.22	266.67	IX
Price	86.16	10.50	3.34	282.82	V
Cash on delivery	99.17	0	0.83	298.33	I
Offers and discounts	88.83	8.83	2.34	286.50	IV

198 The findings revealed that 88.83 per cent of the respondents always think that
 199 offers and discounts have a positive impact on consumers to move for online shopping and it was
 200 ranked forth. Offers and discounts acts like a catalyst in online shopping. It attracts consumers
 201 easily by offering or selling at a reduced price. It means a reduction from the full or standard
 202 amount of a price or value. Most of the consumers purchase only when the online site offers
 203 various discounts. Because people prefer buying things on sale, discounts serve as a ploy to
 204 attract more people to the online store. Price as a factor for online shopping ranked fifth.
 205 Majority of the respondents (86.16%) always consider price as an important factor for inclination
 206 towards online shopping. Most of the online stores offer prices that are much lower than the
 207 price in the physical stores. The advanced innovation of search engine allows consumer to easily
 208 check and compare prices with just a few mouse clicks. Even one can compare prices in physical
 209 stores as well, but it will take more time. It requires to go there or more traditional shops in order

210 to compare the price. But in online shopping, one hour or less is enough to compare and buy the
211 products with cheaper and best price.

212 Convenience is the major advantage of online shopping compared to the
213 traditional store and 84.69 per cent of the respondents always consider it as a reason to move
214 interest towards online shopping. Many unwanted situations can be skipped by shopping online.
215 The process of purchase can be completed with a few mouse clicks. It allows switching stores
216 and product within a few minutes. For this people go for shopping via internet and thus it
217 influences consumers to shop online. Lifestyle as an influencing factor for online shopping
218 ranked seventh and the findings of the study revealed that 81.45 per cent of the respondents
219 always consider it as a valuable reason for making the consumers move for online shopping. Net-
220 oriented people are interested in and make use of internet applications. The lifestyle of an
221 individual includes all of its activities, interests, values and opinions. The more experience online
222 consumers have with the internet, the more money they are likely to spend shopping online.

223 Time is an important factor for shopping and it was ranked eight among the
224 factors influencing consumer for online shopping and 79.56 per cent of the respondents were
225 found to be responding always for this as an influencing factor. Browse or search an online
226 catalogue can save time and patience. People can save time and can reduce effort by shopping
227 online. According to Rohm and Swaminathan's (2004), one possible explanation that online
228 shopping saves time during the purchasing of goods and it can eliminate the travelling time
229 required to go to the traditional store. Trust was considered as an important factor for influencing
230 consumer for online shopping by 73.89 per cent of the respondents and ranked ninth among the
231 factors listed above. Trust is an expectation about individuals' behaviour within the society
232 where they are living or by which they are ruled. Present of trust will increase the consumers'
233 belief that the e-retailers will not engage in opportunistic behaviour. It has been demonstrated in
234 the extant literature that trust beliefs positively influence customer online purchase intention.
235 According to the McCole and Palmer (2001), online purchasing necessitates online customer
236 trust. The findings of the study catches the eye when it has been observed that 69.17 per cent of
237 the respondents considers always for it as an important factor that influences consumer for online
238 shopping. Safety and security was considered as the least influential factor. While since there is no
239 direct contact with the seller, so sometimes people feels difficulties regarding asking queries as it
240 may take time. So they don't feel that security as a factor influencing consumer for online
241 shopping. Cassell and Bickmore (2000) opined that online trust is at lower level than the face-to-
242 face interactions in the physical store.

243 **Conclusion**

244 Online shopping is very popular and is in trend in young generation. When a
245 purchase has to be made online, a consumer is affected by various factors. The study revealed
246 that "cash on delivery", "website design/ feature", "knowledge on internet", "offers and
247 discounts", "price", "convenience", "lifestyle" etc are the important influencing factors to move
248 consumers for online shopping. Customer believed that online shopping is better option than

249 manual shopping. The study has revealed that since the reach of internet is expanding and it
250 covers almost the entire country, the reach of online sellers are also expanding and Jorhat though
251 situated in the north eastern zone of India yet the craze for online shopping is very much present
252 in the region and with the changes in time as per the findings, it can be understood that online
253 shopping is surpassing traditional shopping idea even in remote and far flung areas of the
254 country. As the young generation is found to be actively involved in online shopping so this kind
255 of study will help the marketers to design their marketing strategies and progress in the business.

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