

# Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Online Shopping Pattern with Reference to Branded Apparels in Thane City

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**Abstract-**The trend of online shopping has gained immense benefits to the consumers in the present day world. Consumers all over the world are getting the services, through this type of platform, under one roof. The main aim of the paper is to test the impact of COVID-19 on online shopping patterns of the consumers in terms of branded apparels. The author has tried to highlight whether, due to this pandemic situation, there is any change in the pattern of shopping online by the consumers and how the marketers can have an upper edge in the digital competitive market, by adopting different online marketing strategies. For the present study 250 respondents across Thane region were chosen as the sample frame. The findings of the study reveal the fact that platforms such as Facebook and Instagram are more frequently used by the consumers. They generally see that the marketers are advertising the health care products and online courses very regularly, followed by the groceries, during the pandemic situation.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, Digital marketing, Social media platforms, online buying pattern, consumer preference

## I. INTRODUCTION

The person that is selling goods directly to the consumer is the retailers. The retail industry's place played a very important role in the GDP of the country. The retail industry contributes a very important role to the GDP of the country. And this industry is purely dependent on the consumer buying behaviour. The pandemic covid 19 has affected the entire world. The lockdown during this pandemic has disturbed people, communities and businesses. The pandemic has changed the process of buying. The people have shifted to online shopping as they were unable to visit the shops due to lockdown. People also started giving preference to the family and health so their buying was more towards these products. By staying at home people become more digital by online shopping, by

online streaming shows, etc. Most of them are being continued post covid19 pandemic.

During this pandemic situation, the peoples are living differently and they have changed their lifestyles and buying behaviour. Many people start online shopping from various companies like Flipkart, Mynta, Amazon, Meesho, JioMart, etc.

Thane city is one of the most populous cities of India. The apparels industry in India is one of the growing segments and its contribution to Indian GDP rate is 4%. This sector creates second largest employment opportunities which gives direct 51 million and indirect 68 millions in the Indian employment market. The ready-made trade growth is 30% increase in the textile market. For the past two decades many multinational brands influence our Indian consumers to purchase more variety and attract fashions branded apparels, based on the international competitions Indian branded apparels also empowering their design, quality, fashion, pricing, distribution and other aspects to compete at domestic and international level markets. After globalization Indian branded apparels products created a revolution for rural and urban people with cheap prices and varieties of apparels for men and women. Mid 80's people believe only the tailors to stitch their dresses including pants, shirts, chudidhar, blouses etc., but in the competitive branded apparels markets the players promote readymade brands in different categories of people dresses in the need of hour. Thane city is one of the most populous cities of India. In this city, the people are preferring to choose to buy their products online, which are promoted with the help of social media platforms. The main intention of these customers is to get a large variety of the products under one roof. The urban customers in Thane region prefer using the branded apparels as compared to the local products. The main margin of the customers belong to the service sector,

especially to the private companies. However, during the COVID period there was a shock to these customers when they had to lose their jobs. The impact of the same was directly felt on the type of purchases of their apparels. The same is discussed in the apparel below.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Halan (2020).** The market in India has been divided into organised retail sector and unorganised sector, where the organised retail sector is only 10%. Even after there is development in online marketing, the majority of people in India still have trust in the neighbourhood stores. The reason behind it was that Indian people prefer to touch and feel the product physically and then take the buying decision. It also gives a chance for bargaining to get the discount on the products.

**Reddy, (2020).** The Covid 19 pandemic has forced the customer to change their buying behaviour from traditional methods towards the online shopping method. The stores were empty due to improper supply in the Covid period, which created problems for the consumers.

**Arpana, D., (2020)** People were shifting to online shopping as well as their preference towards the product were also changing. People started to shift towards the branded products online. The reason behind it was a good amount of marketing online of those branded products. Around 50% of the customer has changed the shopping habits from traditional to online shopping

**Shashidhar, (2020).** The consumer were seen the day were giving opinion to other than the persons which were influencing the other consumers for buying those product online.

**Sheth, (2020)** The factors which are influencing consumer behaviour are cultural, subculture, class of the consumer, gender, age, occupation, economic power, family, background, lifestyle, personality, motivation, belief, learning, perception and attitude.

**Kotler et al., (2022)** In 2020 there is a change in routine of the consumer at the unpredicted rate. In Covid it was also seeing that there was panic buying behaviour among the consumer.

**Kaur & Malik (2021)** There are various factors which can explain the reason for the panic buying behaviour of the consumer during the emergence of covid-19. The retailers face the problem of shortest supply of

product and this created the panic among the consumer that they might not get product of necessity during the lockdown phase. Various online business companies have taken the advantage of this situation and entered into online business by delivering the product in this situation.

**Asma, et. al (2018)** The companies are very much depending on such platforms to increase their profitability. According to the authors, social media marketing has even been beneficial to the consumers, who are having a wide range of choices to make their purchase. The marketing done through social media helps them to compare the products across the companies. This enables them to make the best decision in terms of buying the products.

**Deshpande, M. (2019),** The authors explore the promotional channels used by the electronic industry to advertise their products. There is huge competition in the market. The authors highlight the increase in technology to influence the buying behaviour of the customers. The study aims at creating awareness and building the perceptions among the consumers.

**Ceesay, et. al (2018),** in their paper on "The Impact of Digital Media Advertising on Consumer Behaviour Intentions towards Fashion and Luxury Brands: Case of the Gambia " are using the sample from Gambia. They try to explore the impact of digital marketing on consumer intention of purchase of fashion and luxury items. The study revolves around the usage of new methods implemented in marketing with the help of digital platforms. The author carries on the research by studying various factors such as familiarity of the brands, trust the consumers have in advertisers, privacy, how entertaining is the digital advertisement and interactivity among the consumers and the producers.

**Pallav (2016),** in his paper on "Impact of Media Advertising on Consumer Buying Behaviour", has highlighted how various factors of advertising like presentation of products to consumers affect the buying behaviour of consumers. In the paper the author explains how through effective tools of advertising consumers can be influenced to buy the products. Researchers had collected the primary as well as secondary source through observations. The main objective of the research is that factor which affects buying behaviour of consumers due to media influence. There are various types of media advertising.

**Haider, et. al (2018)**, in the paper on “A Study on the Influence of Advertisement on Consumer Buying Behaviour”, highlighted the implications of advertising on Consumer buying behaviour. The main objective of the paper is to study how effects of entertainment, familiarity, and advertisement and social media influence on consumer buying behaviour. Authors had pointed out some important factors such as entertainment, familiarity, social imaging and advertisement spending affects the consumer behaviour. If all these factors are considered before each advertisement will create an effective approach. Through a random sampling method data was collected from the people of Dhaka city. Through data analysis it is found that familiarity has the most powerful impact on Consumer behaviour, followed by entertainment and advertising spending. It is concluded that the advertising has the most crucial role in the buying behaviour of the consumers and what products they wish to buy for that it is advisable to companies to consider all the factors which make the advertisements.

## II.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

With the aim of understanding the Impact of COVID-19 on the online shopping preferences in terms of branded apparels by the consumers, the main objectives of the present study are –

- 1.1 To study the impact of Covid – 19 on online shopping patterns and its effects on buying patterns of the consumers in Thane Region.
- 1.2 To assess the change in the marketed and buying products/ services due to lockdown for Covid-19 pandemic in Thane Region.

## III.DATA AND METHODOLOGY FOR THE STUDY

For the present research paper, both primary and secondary data was used. Primary data was gathered from a structured closed ended questionnaire, which was circulated among 250 respondents via Google forms in Thane Region. The responses were collected by using a random sampling method in the month of November 2022. These responses were analysed using graphical description analysis and the results were presented in a tabular form. Further the secondary data was used to complement the findings analysed by

processing the primary data.

## IV.FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

For the present research study total 250 respondents across the Thane Region were surveyed with the help of Google form, of which 155 males and 95 females have responded to the survey. The respondents belonged to the age category of 18 to 55 years. The purpose of the study was to check the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on online shopping pattern of the consumers in the city of Thane with regards to the branded apparels. The study is trying to analyse the pattern of shift in the shopping behaviour in the post pandemic period.

Out of the total respondents, a maximum of the people belonged to the age group of less than 25 years (55 percent), Nearly 33 percent belonged to the age group of 26 to 35, 11 percent belonged to the age group of 36 to 45 and only 2 percent belonged to the age category of above 55. Similarly, it was found that these respondents were having an average range of income. Nearly 71 percent of the respondents were having an average family income of less than Rs. 30000 per month, nearly 17 percent are having income range of Rs. 30,000 to Rs, 60,000 per month, 8 percent respondents are having income range of Rs. 60,000 to Rs. 90,000 per month and only 4 percent are having income of more than Rs. 90,000.

### 4.1 Preference of Shopping Online in the post pandemic period

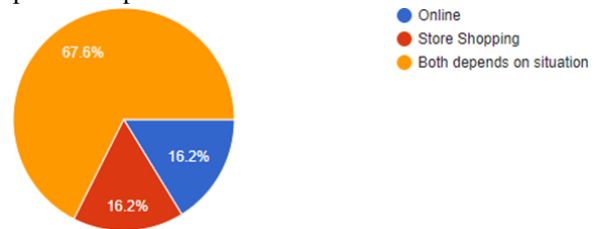
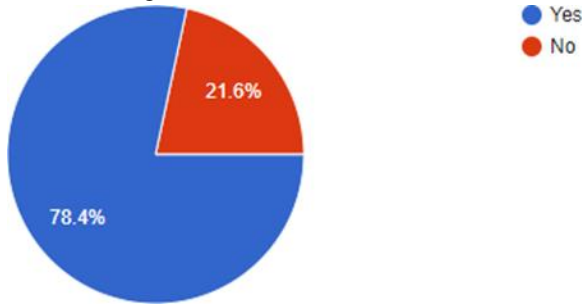


Figure 1 - Preference of Shopping Online

Out of 250 responses 67.6% responded that they depend on both situations for shopping that is online as well as store shopping, while 16.2% responded each said they depend on online shopping or store shopping respectively. The situation is of post pandemic period. However, when the respondents were enquired about their shopping preference during the pandemic period, they said that maximum time they have to rely on online shopping only as the entry to malls and shopping centres were restricted in the lockdown

period.

#### 4.2 Sacrificing brand



**Figure 2 - Sacrificing brand**

When they responded whether they had sacrificed any brand during the Covid-19 and preferred to buy something which is more reasonable just to avoid expenses, around 78.4% responded said yes and the remaining said no.

#### 4.3 Motivation for Shopping at Store



**Figure 3 - Motivation for Shopping at Store**

When the respondents were asked about their motivation for shopping at a store in person, around 43.2% responded that they usually prefer checking the product that they purchase. A similar percentage of the respondents said that shopping is a social activity and they enjoy going out with their friends or family to malls and shopping centres. While 8.1% respondents say that shopping is a stress buster for them and the remaining 2.4% each said that they mostly go shopping alone for entertainment and to get help from sales assistants or shopkeepers.

#### 4.4 Negative factors affecting Shopping at Store



**Figure 4 - Negative factors affecting Shopping at Store**

When the respondents were asked what discourages them from shopping at stores in person, around

32.4% responded that it is an individual social responsibility (to prevent myself and the society from the risk of COVID-19), while 27% said It is an activity that consumes their time and effort. About 21.6% said, Low variety (similar themes and patterns at most of the stores)

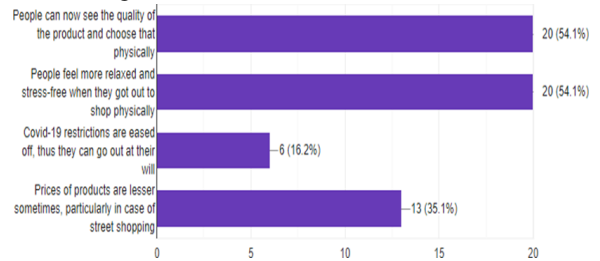
#### 4.5 Motivation for Shopping Online



**Figure 5 - Motivation for Shopping Online**

When the respondents were asked what gives them motivation for shopping on an online platform, about 29.7% responded that due to online shopping it is easy to search and compare the product online. Around 24.3% responded and said online shopping saves that time and effort, similar percentage of response and also said online shopping is giving better safety during the covid-19 pandemic. While 21.6% responded said it is easy to search and compare product online

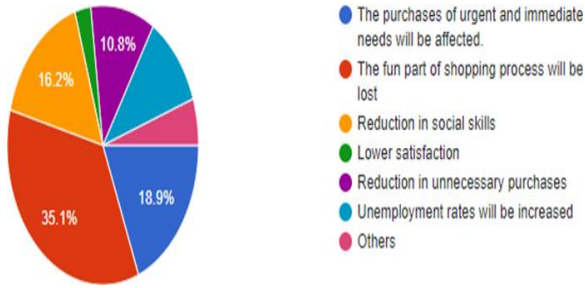
#### 4.6 Shifting of Preference back to the Offline mode



**Figure 7 - Shifting of Preference back to the Offline mode**

When the respondent were asked for the main reason/s for people having preference of shifting back to retail shopping after the COVID-19 restrictions got over, 54.1% respondent said that, People can now see the quality of the product and choose that physically and also similar percentage of respondent said that People feel more relaxed and stress-free when they got out to shop physically. About 35.1% respondent said that Prices of products are lesser sometimes, particularly in case of street shopping and 16.2% said that Covid-19 restrictions are eased off, thus they can go out at their will.

#### 4.7 Expectation about the future



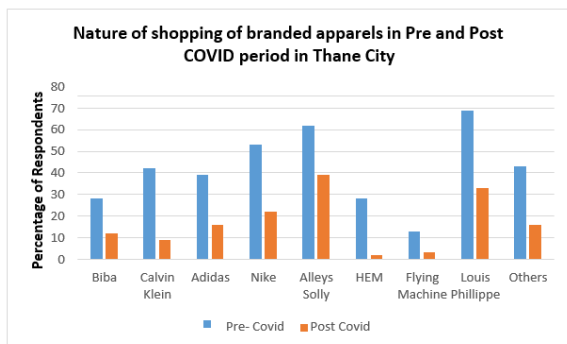
**Figure 8 - Expectation about the future**

When the respondents were asked about their expectations about a future with fewer physical stores and shopping centers, about 35.1% responded that The fun part of the shopping process will be lost, while 18.9% said that The purchases of urgent and immediate needs will be affected due to this. About 16.2% said this will reduce social skills. While 10.8% respondent said it will bring Reduction in unnecessary purchases.

4.8 Nature of shopping apparel in Pre and post COVID period.

Brands	Pre- Covid (Percent to total)	Post Covid (Percent to total)
Biba	28	12
Calvin Klein	42	09
Adidas	39	16
Nike	53	22
Alleys Solly	62	39
HEM	28	02
Flying Machine	13	03
Louis Phillippe	69	33
Others	43	16

\*Source: Primary data collected by the author



**Figure 9 - Nature of shopping apparel in Pre and post Covid period.**

From the above graph it is interpreted that post covid norms the apparel companies were facing losses because the consumer (both online and retail

shoppers) were switching the shopping pattern. Not only there was sharp reduction in the purchases of the apparel during covid-19 period but those who were making their purchases switched to comparatively cheaper brands. This way they could save more of their money.

4.DISCUSSION

It is clear from the above study that people shifted their purchases to less costly brands and were even trying to cut short on their purchases. This is mostly because many of the respondents of the study are the young customers, whose income is less than Rs. 30,000 per month and buying costly products, particularly in the pandemic period when the job security was minimum was not rational according to them. During the pandemic period many of the new brands also came in the market. People stopped purchasing the products from the branded apparels and started switching their purchases to these products. These new companies had an immense chance to advertise their products and step into the market through online platforms. For a new company it becomes difficult to gain the position when selling through retail stores.

However, online marketing was much comfortable for these companies. They initially started selling their products at a much cheaper rate and that's why people have also switched their purchase preference to these new cheaper brands.

Another reason that the author have encountered is that there wasn't a need for a very high quality product by the customers. They were having the idea that if they are not suppose to move out during the lockdown period, why to purchase very good quality products those are very costly. Thus, the consumers started preferring the brands which were a bit of lower quality and thus have lower prices. It simply means people started sacrificing the quality of the products to the prices. However, this is not the case with all the consumers, some of the well-to-do consumer preferred shopping with the branded apparels only.

5.CONCLUSION

It is concluded by the author that the consumer is driven by the situation when it comes to making their purchases. Socio-economics, cultural and political factors influence the purchases of the consumers. Social media has happened to be a platform that may



be useful for the new brands to establish themselves when the high class brands are not chosen by the consumers due to financial crunch. But the study also shows that irrespective of the impact of Covid, some consumers were not much affected financially and thus they preferred the branded product even during and after- Covid period. Social media marketing attracts not only a large number of consumers but even the marketers who continuously try to find their establishment dealer for their growth. The author also concludes that the consumers are preferring brands only when they are able to manage their daily expenses. At times, when it is seen that due to some situation they are not able to meet their basic needs, they tend to compromise on their choice of brands. It is even noticed that they will be able to choose higher brands in case they get a hike in their job postings. Thus, all that depends on the consumer's choice is monetary control and not basically the choice of brand or quality.

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