

# Innovations

## Online – Retailing Preference and Profitability of Small and Medium Retailers in Tier II Towns in India

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### **Abstract:**

*This monograph examines the impact of online shopping on profitability and analyses various problems faced by small retailers in retail Industry in brief. This illustrative article inspects about the impact of internet shopping on profit of small apparel shops. In order to understand how aware clothing retailers are of online shopping, this research paper will look at how online shopping affects the profitability of clothing and retail stores. In a few Tier II Towns, it seeks to analyse the effects of online shopping on small and medium-sized apparel retail stores since the Covid Pandemic began. It also aims to examine the measures taken by small and medium apparel retailers to compete with online shopping. The Scholarly paper is based on a primary data based study obtained by questionnaire from the proprietors of 150 small and medium apparel retailers. With suitable statistical analysis it was deduced that almost 76% of the retailers agreed that online plat form has had an impact on their business. Majority of them feel that online shopping has increased competition. 55% of the retailers agreed that there exists an impact of internet shopping on sales. The researchers are of opinion that the traditional retailers' practices are ineffective and they largely use the tactics of home delivery, gifts & offers, and lower price. According to this study, 31% of the retailers want to transform their in-store shop to internet business in the near future. The study concludes that Retailing has revolutionized due to the recent advancement in the technology.*

**Keywords:** Apparel retailers, E-retail, online shopping, Retail, Profitability

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### **I. Introduction**

Up to 10% of the economy of India is contributed by the retail industry. A transformation is taking place in the Indian retail sector. With the arrival of information technology the internet has brought extreme change in the retail industry and purchasing behavior of consumers. As per Google in India there are over 100 million internet user, among them 50 million prefer online shopping and it is anticipated to increase in upcoming year. Even the conventional retailers such as Shoppers Stop, Westside and Pantaloons are moving towards internet shopping space for their perpetual growth. Emergence of e-store's attractive offers, big discounts, convenience, and ease to access makes the consumer to prefer online shopping to traditional shopping. The purchasing behaviour of the customer is growing considerably and retailers are encountering another major task in modernizing their businesses in order to remain competitive.

### **Apparel Industry:**

Companies that are involved in making different types of clothing are considered to be part of the apparel industry. Men's, women's, and children's apparel are among the garments made. Retailing of clothing is one of the key economic sectors in terms of investment, income, and job creation. The contribution of the apparel business to industrial productivity and the creation of job opportunities determine its significance.

Two general categories can be used to categorise the textile and garment industries: yarn and fibre and ready-made clothing. Generally apparel retailers buy clothes from wholesalers and market them to customers without altering. Apparel industry plays a significant role by contributing over 13% of the industrial output and 2% to GDP. It contributed 15% to export earnings in the financial year 2019.

### **Indian Retail Industry:**

India is a nation that practises retail democracy, with hundreds of thousands of weekly haats and bazaars spread out throughout the country and created by the people themselves. The livelihood of millions of people is derived from the bustling, secure, and lively streets of our city. In terms of economic viability, the current retail democracy model is the most suitable for a nation with a big population and high levels of poverty. In retailing, the producer and the lone customer making a personal purchase are connected. This does not include direct interactions between the manufacturer and institutional purchasers like the government and other large customers. Retailing is the process where the retailer stocks the commodities and engages in the act of selling them to the individual customer at a profit margin. Retailing is therefore the last link connecting the individual consumer with the production and distribution network.

The Indian retail industry has developed into one of the largest and fastest growing industries as a result of the entry of new businesses. The overall consumption expenditure is expected to increase from US\$ 1,824 billion in 2017 to about US\$ 3,600 billion by 2020. It generates about 8% of the country's employment and 10% of the GDP. India has the fifth-largest global retail industry.

### **The Organized and The Unorganized Retailing:**

The store industry is further subdivided into two categories:

- Both organized and unorganized shopping are forms of selling.

Licensed retailers started the current retail structure, which is referred to as organised retailing. Retail establishments that are authorised to collect sales tax, income tax, etc. are considered organised retailers. These include the privately owned, big retail chains and hypermarkets that are supported by corporations.

The conventional form of low-cost retailing is referred to as unorganised retailing. All privately owned, individually owned, unincorporated businesses as well as households that produce or sell products and services are included in this category. With a total of fewer than ten workers, it is run on a sole proprietorship or partnership premise.

### **Types of Retail Format:**

Retailing is a distributing activity which involves selling of merchandises directly to the consumer. Different types of retail format are Departmental store which provides huge range of goods to the consumer in single place. Discount stores deliver variety of commodities to the consumer at a nominal price. Super markets are self-service stores that offer different variety of food along with household products. Mom and pop (Kirana) store are small store which are operated by local residents towards satisfy the demand of consumer who resides within their locality. Malls consists of different retail outlets in a single premise. E-tailers referes to the E-

Commerce retailers, who do business in online mode. E-tail refers Electronic retailing is the marketing of produce via online. In India 40% of the population use internet. Online websites allow shoppers to use “search” features to find particular products. Some of the well known E-Tail players in India are Flipkart.com, Amazon.in, Myntra, eBay.in, Snapdeal, Tatacliq, Limeroad: etc.

The acquisition of goods via the internet is known as online shopping. Following the end of the LPG era in 1991, most Indian consumers embraced E-commerce for a variety of reasons, including time savings and convenient purchasing without the need for extensive transportation. (Shahriari et al., 2015; Gunasekaran et al., 2002). Technology-based purchasing behaviour has increased due to a variety of factors such as a busy lifestyle, nuclear families, heavy traffic, and many more. (Shim and colleagues, 2000; Soyeon and colleagues, 2000; Harchekar and Kandalgaonkar, 2018).

Shopping has become a boon for Indian consumers, as evidenced by the fact that India places second globally for online purchases made using mobile devices (LOCO, 2015). Local small and medium retailers, on the other hand, face a variety of difficulties (Hsiao, 2009), including declining sales over the previous two to three years, lower profit margins, a rising debt load, and lowering prices due to fierce rivalry. Competition and the fear of closure (Hiwarkar, 2013; Siva, 2016). There are a number of tactics that retailers can employ to strategically lessen and ultimately neutralise the negative impacts of e-commerce to suit the circumstances. (WilliamsBharadwaj and Soni, 2007). Retailers must improve their degree of proficiency, and multi-channel managers must keep track of losses (Weltevreden, & van Rietbergen, 2009; Wilson, 2016).

## II. Review Of Literature

Saha, 2015 conducted the research on “The impact of online shopping upon retail trade business” has emphasized the influence of the growing trend of internet buying on numerous brick-and-mortar stores. Retailers are wary about the emergence of E-stores, which offer enticing deals and a vast range of products. This research has focused light on the situation and provided some practical solutions.

Karthikeyan, 2017 on “A study on retail trade business as an impact of online shopping with reference to Coimbatore” has outlined a number of issues faced by retailers as a result of customers' shifting preferences toward online purchasing. Retailers are having a tough time revamping themselves in order to remain competitive.

Archana Singh and Jyoti, Namdeorao Meshram (2016) on “The study of impact of online shopping on conventional shopping methods by today’s youth with respect to clothing and accessories” The influence of the developing shift of internet purchasing on various physical store sellers has been highlighted. The rise of webshop, by giving appealing perk and diverse offerings, had a negative effect on retailers. This study aims at determining the expanding number of e-stores affects retail firms.

Shantanu & Arvind, 2014 made a study on “An Overview of Changing Trend of Traditional Retailing to i-Retail” has centred on online retailers, highlighting the value of cultivating them as an efficient tool for business success and a source of competitive advantage conveyed in a modern business format. They contrasted online stores with conventional Indian retailers, finding them to be more irregular, disorganized, and in the formative stages of growth.

Cost's 2016 study, "Impact of online shopping on conventional retail stores in South Goa, India: an empirical study," The authors listed several factors that influence consumer choice of online buying, including time savings, availability of 24 hour shopping, convenience, lower prices compared to offline shopping, and the wide range of goods and options. Various variables, such as subpar product quality, the use of secondhand or replica goods, and the absence of middlemen, may be to blame for the low price of internet purchases.

According to Dahiya (2017)'s "Study on E-Commerce and its Impacts on Market and Retailers in India," Because of the numerous advantages offered by e-commerce, our lives have become more practical. E-commerce, on the other hand, has a negative effect on offline businesses because it requires them to spend more money on stock upkeep in large warehouses as well as more money on advertising to meet their survival costs.

Impact of technology on the retail grocery company in Pune, J. S. Harchekar & S. R. Kandalgaonkar, 2018 it was discovered that in offline business, there is a long chain of middlemen, which leads to an increase in cost. As a result of changing consumer buying habits, merchants are turning to new technology.

In his research titled "E-Commerce Impact on Indian Market: A Survey on Social Impact," Hiwarkar (2013) researched this problem. The potential use of e-commerce as a tool to ensure complete growth has been found. As a result of the growth of online shopping, the traditional business model is experiencing a major change. Developing and promoting innovations like mobile commerce as well as safe and secure payment methods are crucial, according to more study.

In their study entitled "The implications of e-shopping for in-store shopping at various shopping locations in the Netherlands," Weltevreden & van Rietbergen (2009) found that shop accessibility and journey time are two important factors that affect a buyer's choice to go in-store shopping or not.

Local shops vs. online retailers: competition or synergy?" Schiffing et al., 2015. In their study, they looked at the effects of increased virtual mobility on retail outlets and concluded that there should be a balance of online and physical buying that benefits both consumers and shopkeepers. They also advocated for greater inter-business collaboration in order to strengthen small retailers' competitive situations and, as a result, their capability.

Anthony d. Miyazaki and Ana Fernandez, 2017 have detailed the issues that consumers face when purchasing online, as well as proposed solutions for protecting their personal information.

Chayapa Katawetawarak & Cheng Lu Wang, 2011 explained that people's attitudes are shifting as a result of online shopping. Consumers like online purchasing because it is a matter of dignity and reputation in society.

The retail industry makes an outstanding addition to the Indian economy, contributing up to 10% of GDP, according to Kavya (2016) in "A Conceptual Study on the Impact of Online Shopping towards Retailers and Consumers." Because of its operational flexibility, online purchasing has grown rapidly in recent years. This research investigates the advantages of online shopping for consumers, the implications of escalating trends, and the difficulties and dangers faced by fixed-store businesses.

The distinctions between traditional selling and online retailing were highlighted in Saha, Rathore's 2014 article "An Overview of Changing Trend of Traditional Retailing to E-Retailing." The most effective online retailers are those who can successfully adapt a component of traditional retailing to the internet. The document represented an innovative effort to acknowledge the idea of e-commerce. The paper's primary objective was to advance the retail online market.

Cattell, K.S. Michell, K.A. McGaffin, R. (2019) on "The Impact of Online Buying on Cape Town Shopping Centres: A Survey of Shoppers" according to the report, online will be a natural trend that will effect shopping mall developers and conventional shops. Consumers' willingness to accept online buying is one example. The convenience of online buying was found to be appealing, and it is expected to develop in lockstep with customer perceptions of Internet transaction security.

Grashaw (2010) in his paper shown that traditional brick-and-mortar shops confront the difficulty of store sales cannibalization when considering using the Internet as an extra channel for offering products.

Broad bridge and Calderwood (2002) inferred that, the traditional retailers' ability to survive rising competition from large organised retail outlets is largely dependent on their dedication and desire to address local community requirements.

The most adversely impacted stores by the emergence of organised retail stores, according to Radhakrishnan (2004), are confined stores with small shop areas, lower sales volumes, fewer staff members, and isolated stores that do not work with other companies.

According to the study, Anuradha Kalhan (2007) stated that malls have impacted the sales of small stores and street hawkers in Mumbai. Fruits, vegetables, processed food, consumables, clothing, and electronic products sales have plummeted at these places, with the majority of them closing or declining in operation.

Traditional retailers, despite dominating the Indian retail industry, are falling behind organised retailers in terms of diversity and selection, and are losing sales volumes in certain parts of the country, according to Vijayraghavan and Ramasurya (2007).

The impact of supermarkets on unorganised retail businesses was studied by Hamil and Priyadharshini (2014). The most important effects are found to be reduced profit, reduced sales volume, and a devoted clientele.

### **III. Statement of The Problem:**

For retailers who run a small store with a constrained selection of products and depend on it as their primary source of income, the sudden rise in virtual purchasing and customers' adaptation to it is a serious source of concern. Customer's online buying has great impact on offline retailers. Offline retailers spent many years to stabilize their business but the online sites offering diversified products at lower cost and offers has a major impact in buying behaviour on in-store shops.

Though the development of internet has been a notable driver for the retail industry, it has altered the tactics of retailing and also the buying habits of consumers. As the amount of control, convenience, product availability, speedy delivery, ease to use are in the hands of consumer they prefer online shopping to retail shops and it has a greater impact on the profitability of the retail stores.

### **IV. Objectives:**

Following are the objectives laid down to carry out the study:

1. To analyses the effects of internet shopping on profit of apparel shops.
2. To know apparel retailer's awareness on online shopping.
3. To evaluate the actions done by clothing retailers to counter the competition from online trends.
4. Examining the impact of online shopping on apparel retail outlet since COVID pandemic.

### **V. Research Design & Methodology:**

#### **Sources of data:**

Both fundamental and supplementary information are used in this study. Fundamental information is to be obtained by a survey questionnaire with the owners of different apparel retail stores. Websites theses, journals were used for the collection of supplementary information.

**Sampling unit and size:**

The Sampling unit consists of apparel retail outlets whose shops are located in kumbakonam town. The sample size of the study is 100 apparel retailers.

**Sampling technique:**

In this research availability sampling method is employed to obtain data.

**Data research tool:**

The instrument's dependability is assessed using the Cronbach's Alpha metric. Descriptive statistics, Percentage, Mean, StandardDeviation, t-test were carried out using SPSS software.

**VI: Findings from Data Analysis:**

Table 1: Statistics for Reliability

Alpha Cronbach's	Number of Items
.951	22

Source: Primary Data

Table 1 uses the Cronbach's Alpha measure to display the findings of the reliability test for the instrument's variables. The final Cronbach's Alpha score was 0.951, which indicates that the instrument's variables are more reliable and is favourably significant.

Table 2 shows the profile of the retailers considered in the study. It was found that 70% of the retailers were running a small size business. Around 63% of the retailers have started their business as per the advice of their friends and relatives. Another 58% of them were doing the business as it was their family business. 30.00% of the business was having a life of 5-10 years. 22.00 % of the establishments have 10-15 years of life. 24.00% were continuing their business for 15-20 years.

62.00% of the establishments were found to have 1 – 5 employees in the shops and another 30.00% were having 6- 10 employees. Major establishments (62.00%) found to have invested Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 lakhs as their initial capital and around 70% of them were earning a profit of Rs. 1 Lakh per annum.

**Table 2: Retailers Profile**

Factors	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Size of the shop	Small size	106	70.67
	Medium size	44	29.30
Reason for doing this business	Family business	87	58.00
	Advice from friends/relatives	38	63.33
	Previous work experience	13	8.67
Age of the business	High demand	12	8.00
	Less than 5 years	12	8.00
	5-10 years	45	30.00
	10-15 years	33	22.00
	15-20 years	36	24.00
Number of staffs employed	above 20 years	24	16.00
	1-5 employees	93	62.00
	6-10 employees	45	30.00
Amount invested initially	above 10 employees	12	8.00
	UptoRs 1 lakhs	19	12.67

	Rs. 2 lakhs – 3 lakhs	93	62.00
	Above Rs. 3 lakhs	38	25.33
Annual profit	Rs.10000-50000	19	12.67
	Rs.50001-Rs.100000	64	42.67
	Rs.100001- 150000	41	27.33
	Rs.150001 and above	26	17.33

Source: Primary data

Table 3 the percentages of the respondents for various aspects, such as the effect of online purchasing on their small and medium companies. Small- and medium-sized retailers (85%) agree that there has been a drop in turnover, which has led to a decrease in earnings for the business (87% of respondents agree). The competition has been gradually increasing since the emergence of the online shopping trend, according to 76% of retailers. According to 80% of merchants, customers who shop online want additional discounts. Window browsing has increased, according to 92 percent of retailers. 84% of respondents said that customers are more informed, and 74% said that retailers need to maintain a wide variety of inventory on hand to survive.

The retailers were able to maintain their position in the competition thanks to some corrective measures they took. In this respect, 78% of retailers have increased the existing discount rates, and 50% of retailers agree to offer door-delivery of the purchases made. 70% of them have increased their advertising spending. 72% of stores now offer post-purchase services like minor fitting adjustments, etc. Retailers now know more about the history of shopping and are more conscious of consumer tastes and demands, according to 88% of them.

58% of retailers anticipate transitioning from in-store to online sales in the immediate future. Another 58% of the merchants, however, concurred with the idea of starting their own wholly online company. A tie-up or association with emerging online stores was supported by 48% of retailers. According to 78% of survey participants, competition in their industry is heightened by internet shopping. Retailers make up 52% of those who disagree that selling products at online rates is not profitable and that most of them will eventually shut down their physical stores. In another 4 to 5 years, according to 52% of retailers, they must switch to e-tailing because conventional marketing strategies like free shipping and discount sales will not benefit them in the long run.

**Table 3: Impact of online shopping on merchants from different angles**

Factors	Variables	%
Influence on Business	Reduction in Turnover	85%
	Reduction in revenue	87%
	Rise in competition	76%
	Accumulative demand of Discount	80%
	Increase in window shopping	93%
	Growing customer awareness	84%
Corrective Measures	Stock more variety of apparels	74%
	Offer home delivery	50%
	More discount rates to offer	78%
	Increase Advertisement	70%
	Offer after sale services	72%
	Increase in awareness and knowledge	88%
Future Action	Change In-store to Online business	58%
	Make own Online business	28%
	Linked with other online shopping	48%
	More competitive	78%
	Lucrative to sell at Online Prices	30%
	Closing down of In-store business	52%

Source: Primary Data

**Table 4: One-Sample t Statistics**

	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Reduction in Turnover	150	2.87	.547	.076	35.037	.000
Reduction in revenue	150	2.28	.482	.067	40.367	.000
Rise in competition	150	2.77	.659	.092	27.562	.000
Accumulative demand of Discount	150	2.86	.684	.096	26.753	.000
Increase in window shopping	150	2.55	.434	.061	45.775	.000
Growing customer awareness	150	2.47	.635	.088	29.639	.000
Stock more variety of apparels	150	2.65	.785	.110	22.032	.000
Offer home delivery	150	2.32	.862	.121	19.148	.000
More discount rates to offer	150	2.26	.751	.105	23.625	.000
Increase Advertisement	150	2.05	.816	.114	22.726	.000
Offer after sale services	150	2.65	.762	.107	24.831	.000
Change In-store to Online business	150	2.62	.912	.129	18.360	.000
More competitive	150	2.62	.735	.105	23.625	.000

Source: Primary Data

Table 4 indicates that there is a substantial difference between retailers' responses to how online shopping has affected their business in different ways, as indicated by the significance value of p.05. The majority of the factors were found to be significantly significant in the research, and their effects on the apparel retailers that were selected for the study varied. RetailersThe biggest threat to retailers is that more people are window shopping in brick and mortar stores before making an online purchase of the same item, as evidenced by the highest mean in the table, 2.88, which also indicates a growing tendency in window shopping.

Since customers are making repeat online purchases of the same kind of product, as reported by 93% of merchants, retailers should focus on generating repeat business. Retailers are advised to offer more variety when they go online because customers have bought a wide range of products from some of the retailers' online sales in the short time that these sales have existed. More post-sale services could be offered, and customer satisfaction goals could be attempted to be met. Retailers should be aware of the duplicate or used goods delivered via online shopping as more companies want to convert their brick-and-mortar stores into online stores, and more direct delivery can be tried to prevent it. By providing value-added services and prompt dispatch, retailers should modernise their selling strategies in order to compete with online shopping.

## VII. Conclusion

In today's market, where people are heavily influenced by internet shopping for a variety of reasons, retailers face intense competition. Retailers must therefore adapt to the new environment by altering their established sales techniques. Retailers are able to provide superior services and start their own online businesses. If not financially viable, small and medium-sized merchants can at least affiliate with the top e-tailers like Mesho, Shopsy, For companies like Flipkart, etc., to operate effectively and endure in a competitive market.

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