

Changing Trends in Online Shopping of Indian Consumers in Apparel Segment (Special Reference to Kanyakumari District of Tamil Nadu)

¹Dr. R. Sivanesan, ²Ms. P. Anisha & ³T. Abisha

¹Head & Assistant Professor of Commerce St. Alphonsa College of Arts & Science,
Karinkal, Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu

^{2,3}III.B.Com St. Alphonsa College of Arts & Science, Karinkal, Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu

Abstract : In the last couple of years we saw the Indian ecommerce industry making it to news for all the funds it raised. Indian e-commerce industry has been growing at a scorching rate during the last few years with hundreds of million dollars being invested by venture capital funds in the sector. E-commerce has been around in India for more than a decade but has become main stream only in the last few years. Ecommerce was low in starting years due to initial inhibitions, but it is growing now with extraordinary pace as the confidence of Indian buyers is increasing day by day. By analysing the current behaviour of Indian buyers, experts estimated that the trend of e-shopping will become basic phenomena among buyers in coming years. The business model of the Indian ecommerce is taking a full circle flip to go back to where it started, though this time the infrastructure has changed and along with that the size and understanding of the market as well. The players are moving towards a model that they did not originally start with; hence the belief is that they have definite answers to the intricacies of the model and not just a me-too jump. The present study is to analyse the changing trends in online shopping of Indian consumers in the apparel segment. In the beginning stages of online shopping consumers were reluctant to buy apparels online as it has many limitations. But today the market is able to overcome many of the limitations and build confidence among the consumers to buy online. The last two years have seen considerable increase in online trade in the apparel segment.

Keywords: Apparel shopping, fashion retailing, online shopping, e-commerce, online marketing.

I. Introduction

Internet is playing a major role in removing business limitations of past. Today a sales representative of a company can directly reach to a client's doorstep and offer the most satisfying services in a click. Though internet marketing in India is low as compared to the western countries, it is growing at a fast pace. There is a huge online market in India as computer and internet is becoming an inevitable part of our life. The technology is developing day by day as it removes the misconceptions and limitations of the technology in the past. Advanced technologies and web applications with safe transaction assurance are giving enough reasons to the new age Indian buyers to shop online. The best thing about the e-business is that it never phase-out and it demands half of the amount which a retail business does. If the web promotion and up gradation of website are at place, it means you are there to survive in the business for many more years.

In last two years many e-commerce websites have come up and competing one another with striking deals like free shipping, coupons, free gifts, easy return policy, and many others. The latest data reveals that Flipkart, Amazon, Snapdeal, Paytm, Myntra, eBay, Jabong, Shopclues, Homeshop 18, and Infibeam are the top ten e-commerce websites in India. Flipkart is one of the biggest Ecommerce giant that arrived as the top among e-commerce websites in India.

II. Review Of Literature

The following are the important study related with the current topic

Cowart, Kelly O. Goldsmith, Ronald E. (2001), "The influence of consumer decision-making styles on online apparel consumption by college students". Apparel purchases now constitute one of the fastest-growing segments of e-commerce. Thus, there are strong theoretical and managerial reasons to better understand consumer characteristics associated with buying apparel online. This paper investigates motivations for online apparel consumption using the Consumer Styles Inventory. Data from a sample of college students showed that quality consciousness, brand consciousness, fashion consciousness, hedonistic shopping, impulsiveness and brand loyalty were positively correlated with online apparel shopping. Price sensitivity was negatively correlated with online spending.

Lee, Eun-Jung, Park Jung Kun Park, Jung Kun (2005), "Online service personalization for apparel shopping". This study explores the dynamics of online service personalization in the online apparel retailing context, with regard to customers' actual online shopping activities, this study empirically present the dynamics of online service personalization in the context of online apparel retailing. Also, the results show that customer

online shopping experiences may impact on their online service personalization attitudes. Theoretical and managerial implications are also discussed regarding online service management. Based on the results, Internet-based apparel retailers may benefit from developing various types of personalization services by enhancing shopping intentions of their customers, in particular, of those who are loyal to the retailers.

Jones, Christie, Soyoung Kim, (2009) *“Influences of retail brand trust, off-line patronage, clothing involvement and website quality on online apparel shopping intention”*, this study examines the influence of retail brand trust, off-line patronage, clothing involvement, and website quality on online apparel shopping intention for young female US consumers. Retail brand trust, off-line patronage, clothing involvement and two factors of website quality were found to significantly influence online apparel shopping intention. Off-line patronage was the strongest predictor of online shopping intention. Implications for multi-channel apparel retailers were discussed based on these findings.

Agrawal, Mohan Sandhir, Vidushi Gupta, Gaurav (2010), *“Emerging Profile of Online Apparel Shoppers in India”* Online shopping is most common these days in the developed world especially in the USA. Though rapidly rising, online shopping in the developing countries particularly in India is yet to become strong and diversified. The theme hasn't been researched strongly either. Towards researching the emerging profile and identifying differences between the American and Indian online shoppers, this study reports a survey and several other empirical tests. The study reveals a huge potential for converting Indian in-store consumers into online buyers. This study should facilitate retailers and brands in expanding their presence and impact through online portals.

III. Statement Of The Problem

The trends emerging within the Indian fashion market can be broadly classified into four categories, depending on their associations; these are discussed in the following sections. The sound growth of the fashion products market, driven by the 8-to-9% GDP growth and positive investment sentiment, looks like a thing of the past. The growth story of one of the largest emerging economies, India, has required severe revision. A growth rate under 5%, coupled with double-digit inflation, has dampened consumer demand for fashion items. As a result, the Indian fashion products consumer has become a cautious spender; demanding value for the money spent. In many cases, the Indian middle class has started trading down by shifting to either products available at a lower price-range or to lowering purchase volumes if within the same price range. The recent inflation in food and vegetables' prices has added to the woes of the Indian consumer. Food being an irreplaceable item has eaten into the share of non-food items in recent years. In addition to the weak economic sentiment, the worsening political environment and an increasing lack of confidence in governments and institutions has negatively impacted the country's overall business competitiveness. As a consequence, the retail market is also hit in terms of business growth. From the above observation the researcher has made an attempt to study and analyze changing trends in online shopping in the apparel segment.

IV. Objectives Of The Study

The following are the objectives of the study

- To examine the emerging trends in apparel shopping in India.
- To evaluate the scope and challenges of fashion in apparel in India.
- To study the trends of latest developments in the Apparel Industry in India and the awareness of the same amongst the people.
- To study the preferences of the people in online shopping.

V. Scope Of The Study

This study is confined only to Indian online users particularly Kanyakumari District of Tamil Nadu. This study has been conducted to analyze the changing trends in online shopping in the apparel segment, and the preferences of the consumers in online shopping and the changes happening in this sector over the past few years.

VI. Research Methodology

Both primary and secondary data has been used for the purpose of this study.

Primary data is collected with the help of a structured questionnaire the same is finalized after conducting a pilot study.

The secondary data is collected from various published sources such as books, journals, newspapers, websites etc.

Sampling frame: Individuals between 10 years to 60 years.

Sampling unit: People in Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu using online shopping.

Sample size: 200 respondents.

Sampling method: Simple random sampling

VII. Analysis And Interpretation

Researchers analyse the changes trends in online shopping of Indian in appeal segment:

I. Demographic profile of the respondents:

Demographic profile is playing very important role for analyzing the Changing Trends in Online Shopping of Indian Consumers in Apparel Segment. The Table 1 shows the demographic profile of Kanyakumari district consumers in apparel segment.

TABLE 1: DOMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Demographic Factor	Characteristics	Total (N=200)	
		Resp.	Perc.
Age	10-20	45	22.50
	20-30	100	50.00
	30-40	25	12.50
	40-50	25	12.50
	50-60	05	02.50
Total		200	100
Gender	Male	120	60.00
	Female	080	40.00
Total		200	100
Marital Status	Married	080	40.00
	Un-Married	120	60.00
Total		200	100
Education	Up-to HSC	50	25.00
	Degree	80	40.00
	PG Degree	40	20.00
	Professional	28	19.00
	Illiterate	02	01.00
Total		200	100
Occupation	Dependent	90	45.00
	Govt. Employee	20	10.00
	Private Employee	30	15.00
	Businessman	50	25.00
	Daily wage earner/Farmer	10	05.00
Total		200	100
Size of Family	Three	108	54.00
	Four to Five	43	21.50
	Six to Seven	27	13.50
	Eight to Nine	14	07.00
	Above Nine	08	04.00
Total		200	100
Monthly Income	Below Rs.10000	52	26.00
	Rs.10000 to Rs.20000	70	35.00
	Rs.20000 to Rs.30000	36	13.00
	Rs.30000 to Rs.40000	30	15.00
	Above Rs.40000	12	06.00
Total		200	100

Source: Primary data

It is clear from Table 1 that, 100 respondents (50 percent) are lies in the age group of 20 – 30, 45 respondents (22.50 percent) are lies in the age group of 40 to 50, 25 respondents (12.50 percent) are lies in the age group of 10 to 20, 25 respondents (12.50 percent) are lies in the age group of 30-40 and only five respondents (2.5 percent) are lies in the age group of 50-60.

Among the selected respondents 60 percent (120 respondents) are female and 40 percent (80 respondents) are male.

Among the selected respondents 90 percent (180 respondents) are married and 10 percent (20 respondents) are unmarried.

Among the selected respondents, 50 respondents (25 percent) are qualified with up-to H.S.C, 80 respondents (40) are qualified with degree, 40 respondents (20 percent) are qualified with Post Graduate degree and only two respondents (1 percent) are illiterate.

Out of 200 respondents, 90 respondents (45 percent) are dependent, 30 respondents (15 percent) are private employee and only 10 respondents (05 percent) are daily wage earner /farmer.

Out of 200 respondents, 108 respondent (54 percent) have three family members, 43 respondent (21.50 percent) have four to five family members, 27 respondents (13.50 percent) have six to seven family members and 14 respondents (7 percent) have eight to nine respondents.

Out of 200 respondents, 70 respondents (35 percent) earned monthly income of Rs.10000 to Rs.20000, 52 respondents (26 percent) earned monthly income of below Rs.10000, 36 respondents (18 percent) earned monthly income of Rs.20000 to Rs.30000, 30 respondents (15 percent) earned monthly income of Rs.30000 to Rs.40000 and only 12 respondents (6 percent) earned monthly income of above Rs.40000.

Table 2: Respondents who search apparel online and buy in store

Rating	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Never	62	31
Rarely	46	23
Sometimes	60	30
Often	20	10
Very Often	12	06
TOTAL	200	100%

Source: Primary data

It can be inferred from the above table that 31% of the respondents do not search apparel online and buy in a store, 23% respondents rarely follow the above pattern, 30% prefer this option sometimes, 10% of the respondents prefer this option often and 6% of the respondents prefer this option very often.

Table 3: Respondents who search apparel in store and buy online

Rating	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Never	10	05
Rarely	30	15
Sometimes	50	25
Often	44	22
Very Often	66	33
Total	200	100

Source: Primary data

It can be inferred from the above table that 33% of the respondents prefer this option very often, 22% of the respondents prefer often, 25% of the respondents are neutral who prefer this option sometime, 15% consider this option rarely and the remaining 05% do not prefer this option at all.

Table 4: Average amount spent in online shopping per month

Rating	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Below 1000	44	22
1000-3000	70	35
3000-5000	58	29
5000 and above	28	14
Total	200	100

Source: Primary data

From the above table it can be concluded that about 35% of the respondents spend between Rs. 1000-3000, 29% of the respondents spend between 3000-5000, 14% above 5000 and 22% of the respondents spend below 1000.

Table 5: Promotional activities that attracts people to shop online

Promotional Activities	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Discounts	80	40
Extra Offers	40	20
1+1 Offers	24	12
Advertisements	56	28
Total	200	100

Source: Primary data

It can be inferred that discounts attracts 40% of the respondents, 28% are attracted by advertisement, 20% by extra offers and 12% by 1+1 offers. So the above table and chart says that more the offers the people are attracted to shop online due the financial benefits as they can save more because of offers.

Table 6: Reasons for online shopping of apparels

Reasons	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Ability to shop for a lower price	10	22	34	54	76
Flexibility of shopping hours	08	18	55	40	79
Ease of shopping from home	04	12	68	34	82
Ability to compare brands	12	22	56	41	69
Ability to purchase a gift and have it delivered directly to a friend/ relative	04	26	44	38	88
More merchandise options	13	33	56	21	77
Flexibility of delivery time and place	09	21	48	32	90

Source: Primary data

It can be inferred from the above table that people prefer to shop online because of the ability to shop around for a lower price and 25% of the respondents often shop online because of the flexibility of shopping hours, 35% of the respondents prefer to shop online because of the ease of shopping from home, 32% of the respondents sometimes prefer the ability to purchase a gift and have it delivered to friend.

Table 7: Problems with buying apparel online

Problems	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Can't Touch And Feel	50	25
Can't Check Fitting	70	35
Offline Buying Is More Fun	10	05
Poor Return Policy	40	20
Low Payment Security	30	15
Total	200	100

Source: Primary data

It can be inferred from the above table that 35% of the respondents face the problem of the difficulty to check the fitting, 25% of the respondents face to problem of not able to touch and feel the apparel while shopping, 20% feel there is no proper return policy, 15% feel there is low payment security and 5% feel that offline shopping is fun.

Table 8: Most important criterion while choosing an online retailer for buying apparel

Criterion	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Product Availability	08	34	42	54	61
Price	04	26	55	40	75
Easy navigation	06	18	68	34	74
Good return policy	12	25	56	41	66
Product Quality	10	18	44	38	90

Source: Primary data

It can be inferred from the above table that all the criteria's are important while shopping but the most important criteria for buying apparel online is the product quality which is preferred by most of the respondents, and the second important criteria is easy navigation followed by price and product availability.

Table 9: Opinion on the changing trends in online shopping impact on the Indian economy

Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Change the economy	196	98
Don't change the economy	004	02
Total	200	100

Source: Primary data

It can be inferred from the above table and chart that 98% of the respondents think that changing trends in online shopping has a good and positive impact on the economy whereas 2% of the respondents think that there's no positive impact on the economy.

VIII. Findings Of The Study

This study is conducted to find the changing trends in online shopping in the apparel sector in Kanyakumari district. This analysis was done through statistical tools based on primary data acquired through survey conducted with questionnaires distributed at the stores and online.

- ❖ People who belong to the age group of 20-30 shop online more often than people of other age groups.
- ❖ Amongst the respondents the number of female respondents is more than the male respondents.
- ❖ People who are undergraduates shop online more often than a post graduate or any other qualified person.
- ❖ Almost all the respondents who shop online have access to internet except a very few who do not have direct access to internet.
- ❖ In the survey conducted almost all the respondents have had previous experience in shopping online and have purchased apparel online previously.
- ❖ People prefer to search apparel in store and buy online rather than search apparel online and buy in a store, the respondents prefer the option of searching apparel in a store and then buy online is to assure the quality and fitness.
- ❖ The respondent's family income affects the online buying behavior.
- ❖ Various offers attract large number of online apparel shoppers as it leads to saving of money.
- ❖ According to the responses given by the respondents most of the people are aware of the new trends in online apparel shopping, this says that respondents adapt easily to the changing trends which encourages the online retail to experiment with new trends.

- ❖ People prefer a lot of options while shopping online and the respondents prefer to shop online because of the ability to shop around for a lower price and the flexibility of shopping hours.
- ❖ Amongst all the other facilities quality of apparel is the most important variable preferred by the respondents as the quality matters the most, also with the quality the respondents look into a better customer service from the online retailers while buying apparel.
- ❖ Along with product quality as the important criteria for apparel online shopping the respondents prefer easy navigation facility followed by price and product availability.
- ❖ While shopping apparel online the respondents prefer that online retailer who has a better return policy and the ability to compare the products in the website that is the online site should be user friendly.
- ❖ One of the major problems faced by the respondents while buying apparel online is the buyers cannot check the fitting of the apparel, for which the alternative is found by few of the online retailers that a facility called true-fit which lets the buyers to check their fitting.
- ❖ Changing trends in online shopping is affected by the services provided by the online retailers. Majority of the respondents feel that Flipkart has the best customer service and they have all the best facilities needed by the customers, the next online retailer for apparel preferred by the respondents is Myntra and amazon.
- ❖ Online shopping or E-commerce being one of the fastest growing areas in India has an impact on the economy. The study found that the changing trends in online shopping in India has a positive impact on the economy.
- ❖ It is also found that there is considerable improvement in the online shopping trend and the respondents agree that they can easily adapt to the change and the change enables them to buy apparel online very often.

IX. Suggestions And Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following suggestions are given by the researchers to overcome the problems associated with online shopping of apparels:

- ✓ The online retailers should give first preference to the quality of the apparel than any other factor, as the quality of the apparel is preferred by the customers.
- ✓ About the range of the apparel in the online shopping sites there should be a range of designer clothing added, the online retailers can tie-up with the designers so that there will be easy access to designer clothing too.
- ✓ The online retailers can also bring international brands such as Louis Vuitton, Dior which are not easily available to their sites as many of the international brands are not found everywhere, so that the Indian customers can get their favorite international brands from anywhere in the world.
- ✓ The online wardrobe should be updated according to the changing fashion in the country as the customers are updated in the changing fashion.
- ✓ Since the fittings are important the online retailers should have a policy where you can try the product as soon as it is delivered and then return it there itself if the customers are not satisfied.
- ✓ The apparel bought online, since it is going to be delivered to the customer's address the exact delivery date should be specified when the apparel is ordered.
- ✓ Online retailers can try drone delivery technology may be tried to delivery costly items.
- ✓ Online retailers should concentrate on prompt delivery and supply of non-defective products which enables to remove the misconception about online shopping of apparels.

X. Conclusion

The Indian fashion online apparel industry encompasses a plethora of opportunities. But tapping these opportunities, and converting them to business value, requires a holistic understanding of the industry, starting from fiber-to- online fashion retail. Online Fashion retailers have to go beyond the boundaries of sales, marketing, merchandising, and category management, and have to explore upstream and allied industries with accuracy. Online apparel retailers in India have to continue realigning and restructuring their models to cater to the evolving needs of this dynamic market. The opportunity in the online fashion market is immense, but this opportunity exists only for those who can visualize the future and reinvent themselves in order to address the associated challenges. The retailers should spend on online marketing as the rural areas are not aware of the online shopping facilities. They should also indulge in cost cutting, reach their customers, target markets, build long term relationship, available at all hours, low cost and better quality apparel and increase sales. We are now living in a digital age and thus need to keep up with new trends in the online apparel shopping and where new norms are created over time; many challenges evolve that we need to keep up with the new updates in the market creating value along with delivering delight to the customers. It can be concluded that the online retailers operating in India have this major responsibility of keeping their customers updated with facilities as e-commerce is the fastest growing industry and has a lot of innovation to be made in time. The variables that keep

online shopping of apparel are the facilities, time factor, offers, advertisements, price, services, impact on the economy, flexibility to adapt to new changes are all the aspects of the changing trends in online shopping of apparel amongst Indian consumers and has influence on the economy and these factors are said to have a strong impact on the changing trends.

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**Changing Trends in Online Shopping of Indian Consumers in Apparel Segment
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Questionnaire**

- 1. Name : _____
- 2. Gender : (a) Male (b) Female
- 3. Material Status : (a) Married (b) Unmarried
- 4. Educational Qualification : (a) School Level Degree
(c) Post Graduate (d) Professional
- 5. Nature of Family : (a) Joint (b) Nuclear
- 6. Occupation : (a) Farmer/Daily wage earner
(b) Businessmen Government employee
(d) Private employee (e) Dependent
(f) Others _____
- 7. Monthly Income : (a) Below Rs.5000 (b) Rs.5000 to Rs.10000
(c) Rs.10000 to Rs.20000 (d) 000 to Rs.40000
(e) Above Rs.40000
- 8. Sources of Awareness of online shopping : (a) Newspaper ads (b) vision Ads
(c) Social Media ads (d) Friends and relatives

(e) Others _____

9. Average amount spent in online shopping per month:

- (a)Rs.400 – Rs.800 (b) Rs.800 to 1200
 (c)Rs.1200 – Rs.1600 (d)Above Rs.1600

10. Are you search apparel online and buy in store

- (a)Never (b)Rarely (c)Sometimes
 (d) Often (e) Very Often

11. Are you search apparel in store and buy online

- (a) Never (b) Rarely (c) Sometimes
 (d) Often (e) Very Often

12. Promotional activities that attracts you to shop online

- (a) Discounts (b) Extra offers
 (c) 1+1 offers (d) Advertisements

13. Reasons for online shopping of apparels:

Reason	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Ability to shop for a lower price					
Flexibility of shopping hours					
Ease of shopping from home					
Ability to compare brands					
Ability to purchase a gift and have it delivered directly to a friend/ relative					
More merchandise options					
Flexibility of delivery time and place					

14. Problems with buying apparel online:

Problem	Rank
Can't Touch and Feel	
Can't Check Fitting	
Offline Buying is More Fun	
Poor Return Policy	
Low Payment Security	
Low Quality	
Color difference	

15. Most important criterion while choosing an online retailer for buying apparel

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Product Availability					
Price					
Easy navigation					
Good return policy					
Product Quality					

16. Opinion on the changing trends in online shopping impact on the Indian economy.

- (a) Yes (b) No

17. Suggestions to improve online shopping of apparel segment.
