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THE PANDEMIC EFFECT: A CASE STUDY OF CHANGING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN ALAPPUZHA DISTRICT

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Keywords	Abstract
Online Shopping, Consumer behavior, COVID-19, Shopping Behavior, Post Covid, Pre Covid.	This article discusses the breadth of online shopping, which enables buyers to transact with vendors directly over the Internet using a mobile app or web browser. Online shoppers may locate things by going to the store's website or a shopping search engine, which compiles product details from several online stores and shows their prices and availability. Online shopping will be accessible from various devices, including desktop computers, laptops, tablets, and smartphones, as of 2024. Customers can peruse a vast array of items and services, as well as product pictures, detailed product descriptions, and prices, all from the convenience of an online shop. Customers may also utilize the "search" function to zero in on certain makes, models, prices, or products. Customers cannot finish their purchases without internet access or a legitimate payment mechanism like a debit, credit card, or even cash on delivery.

1. INTRODUCTION

The convenience and ease of online shopping have made it the preferred purchasing method in recent years. The advent of online shopping has revolutionized the business by removing the need for customers to visit stores to make purchases physically. Online shopping has grown in popularity due to the proliferation of smartphones, ubiquitous internet connectivity, and user-friendly website design. Online shopping is popular because it is convenient and simple for people to access [1]. Online marketplaces facilitate the buying, selling, and trading various goods and services. Online shopping



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allows us to read reviews of other companies' items and compare their prices and quality. Ads, deals, referral commissions, and discount coupons are just a few of the enticing ways online stores promote and advertise to drive sales. Artificial intelligence constantly gathers data and experiences to provide product recommendations based on the customer's preferences. There are instances when users receive recommendations for products they may be interested in buying while using social media or browsing the web. In India, the demand for things bought online is on the rise. Revenues of \$111 million are anticipated in 2024, with an additional projected \$200 million in 2026 [2].

2. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Many people have started buying things online in the last few years. Online shopping has been their main source of income during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many companies temporarily closed their doors in March 2020 since much of the globe was locked down. Several countries are easing restrictions, but how far this trend will go remains unclear. Businesses that have reopened, nevertheless, have rules in place that limit the number of consumers allowed in at once, require masks, and encourage social distancing. People are increasingly drawn to internet purchasing when they find conventional shopping challenging, if not terrifying. These have become standard fare due to the proliferation of related technologies. Shops from all over the globe have come to your desktop thanks to the convenience of plastic money, debit or credit cards, and easy access to the World Wide Web. People are quite picky about the goods they buy for themselves and will do whatever it takes to ensure they get their hands on the greatest stuff on the market. Individuals proficient in using the internet and active on social media platforms are likely familiar with online markets and have likely tried some of them. The study's ability to foretell developments in the Indian internet industry and related trends makes it very relevant.

3. OBJECTIVES

- To analyze people's shopping behavior in pre and post-covid periods.
- To examine the benefits of online shopping over offline shopping.
- To analyze the problems faced by people through online shopping.
- To analyze the comparison of changes in price and quality of goods in the online market and offline market.

4. METHODOLOGY

The current investigation makes use of both primary and secondary sources of information. The study's sample is drawn from the Cherthala thaluk in the Alappuzha district. Questioners were used to gather primary data from fifty individuals in the Cherthala thaluk. The individuals in question were chosen at random. Articles and the internet were used to gather secondary data. Several statistical techniques, including tables, graphs, and percentage approaches, were used for the study. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) aims to determine whether two or more groups or treatments vary significantly from one another.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

The use of e-commerce is more appealing to younger customers [3]. While fewer people in their

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twilight years purchase online, those in their twenties and thirties make up the bulk of e-commerce users [1]. There is a stronger correlation between e-commerce usage and younger customers than older ones [4]. For millennials, purchasing online is the most convenient, hassle-free, and quick option [5]. Most consumers are elderly and prefer to use conventional means [3]. Compared to younger customers, the elderly are less likely to utilize e-commerce [1] and show enthusiasm for it [4]. The convenience of online shopping, the widespread use of personal computers and other electronic devices, the large amount of time individuals spend online, and other factors all contribute to the widespread adoption of e-commerce. Among consumer goods, books are the most popular [1], clothing is the most popular among females [2], and electronics and accessories are purchased by both sexes [7]. Amazon, Flipkart, and other e-commerce sites are the most popular among consumers [8]. Another consideration when utilizing e-commerce is the ease of navigation and the availability of the internet [1]. Age, family size, marital status, income, racial identity, education level, and internet use frequency are some of the demographic variables that impact customers' propensity to shop online. The main draws for consumers to shop online are the ease, cheap prices, high quality, and reviews left by other buyers [4] and [9]. According [11] customer happiness with online shopping. Regarding socioeconomic variables, customers' perceptions of e-commerce are impacted by time-saving convenience and thriftiness, among others [12].

The ease of navigation and financial and product risks hurt customer behavior [14]. As per a study model, consumers' perspectives on online shopping are influenced by four aspects: knowledge, confidence, perceived simplicity, and practicality [15]. Meanwhile, online shopping in India is showing no signs of slowing down. Most shoppers prefer traditional retailers' traditional, in-person shopping experience [16]. Problems with dependability, transaction risk, and a preference for more conventional shopping methods all work against e-commerce in India [17]. The advantages of e-commerce are not accessible to those with modest incomes [12]. Online shopping is being seen more positively by customers in India, which bodes well for the future of e-commerce [18]. The e-commerce and m-commerce sectors have grown in recent years.

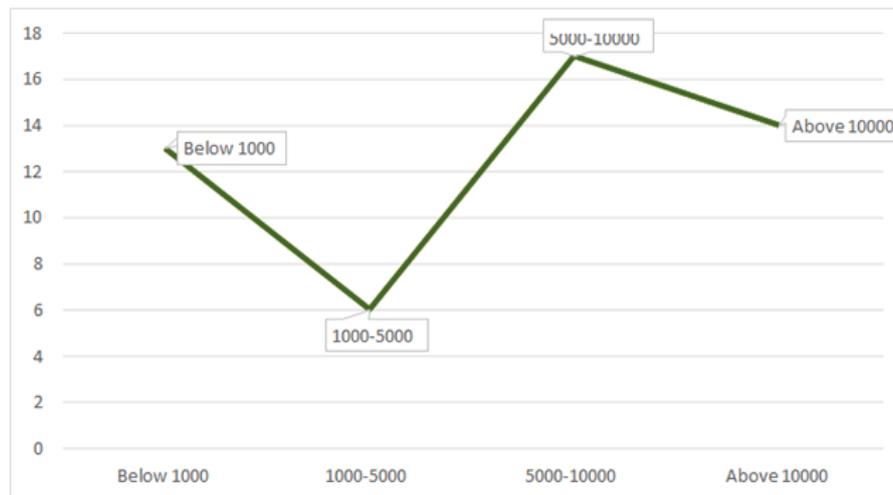
Additionally, the scenario surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic benefited online businesses worldwide [10]. Online shopping creates effortless efforts and makes it easy to buy. Consumers are more likely to make an extra purchase following the COVID, which led to a 46% shift in purchasing attitude towards e-commerce sites [8]. If businesses are serious about making it in the online market, they need to figure out who they are selling to before they can devise a strategy to attract new clients or keep the ones they already have. In order to effectively promote e-commerce, policies should be customized to meet the unique demands of various e-customers. This will help establish distinct attitudes among the target consumers [19].

6. DATA ANALYSIS



K.P. Binil, U. Hari, Albert T Abin (2024). The Pandemic Effect: A Case Study of Changing Consumer Behavior In Alappuzha. International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Reviews, 3(1), 169-184.

Chart 4.1: Income

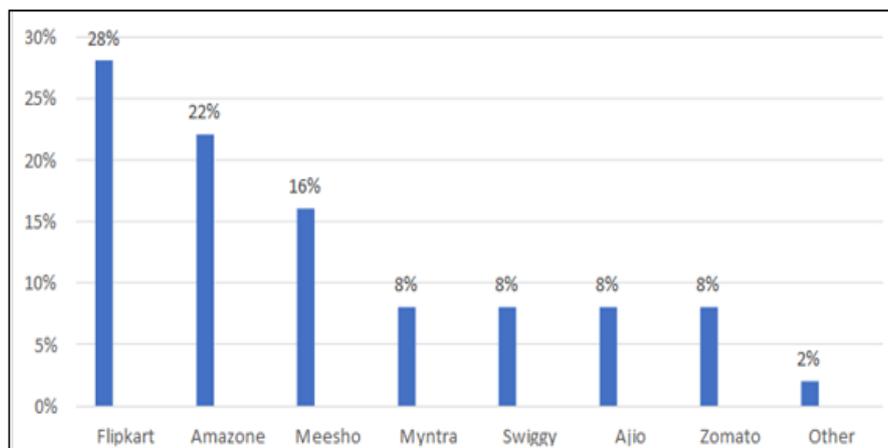


Source: Primary data

INTREPRETATION

According to the results, 26% of people have an income of less than \$1,000, 12% have an income of \$1,000 to \$5,000, 34% have an income of \$5,000 to \$10,000, and 28% have an income of \$10,000 or more.

Chart 4.2: Most Favourite Shopping App



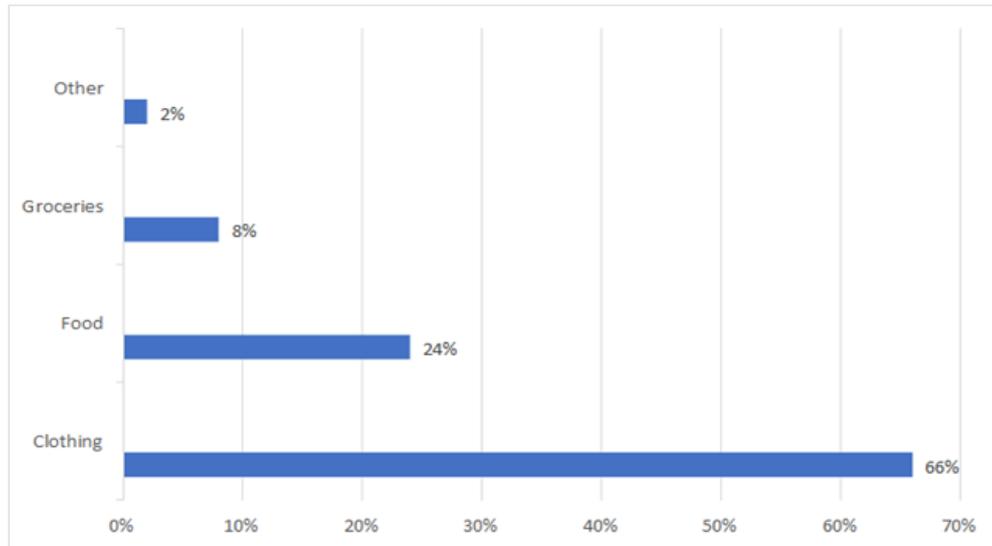
Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION

According to the data in the table, 28% of customers buy from Flipkart, 22% buy from Amazon, and 16% buy from Meesho. At least 2% of customers use other applications or websites, while 8% use Myntra, Swiggy, Ajo, or Zomato.

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Chart 4.3: Mostly Purchased From Online Market



Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION

The data reveals that the majority of online shoppers (66% of the total) buy apparel, while a small percentage (24% of the total) buy food, 8% buy groceries, and a pitiful 2% buy anything else.

Chart 4.4: Reason For Online Purchase



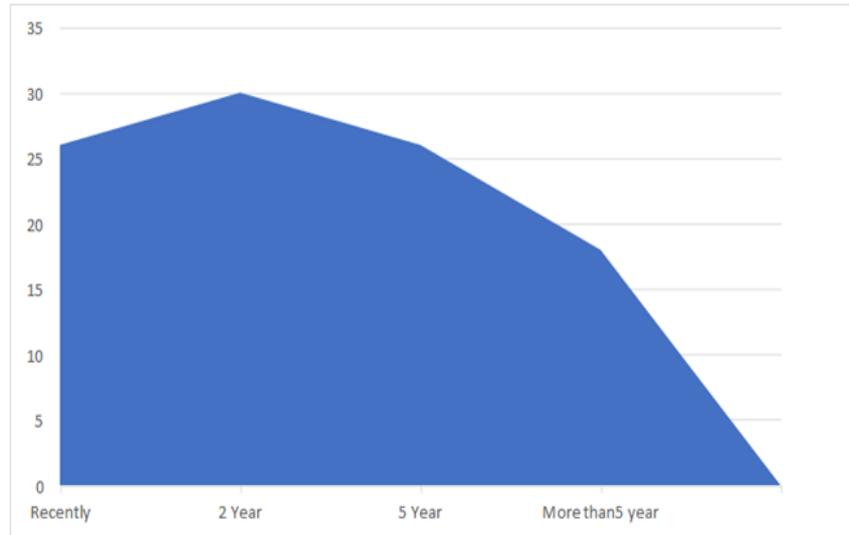
Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

It reveals that when people purchase online, 48% think about the price, 30% on the product's quality, 18% about the product's uses, and just 4% about the product's durability.

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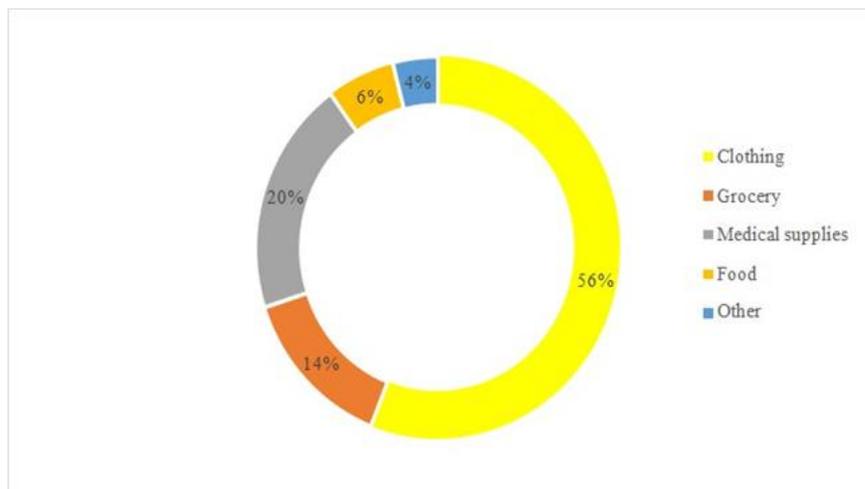
Chart 4.5: Online Shopping Started



INTREPRETATION

Table 4.6 reveals that 26% of respondents had shopped at an online market in the last month, 30% in the past two years, 26% in the past five years, and only 18% in the past six years.

Chart 4.6: Products Purchased Before Covid

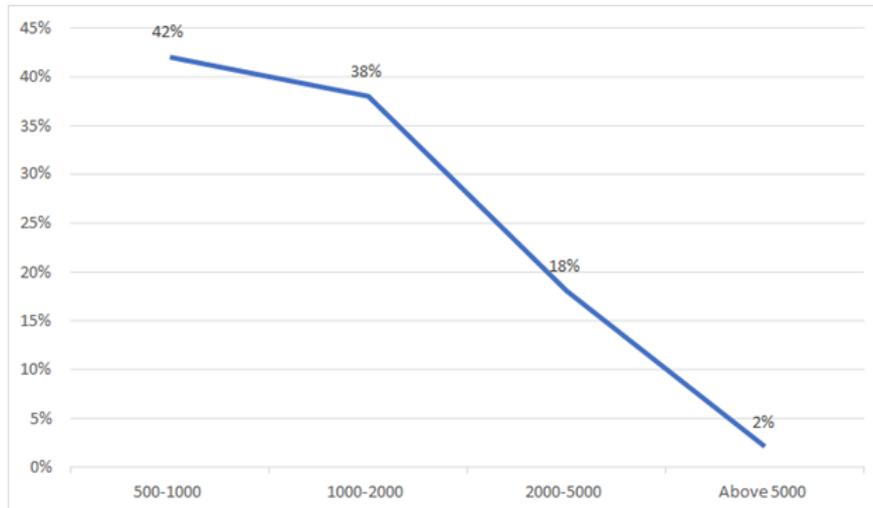


INTERPRETATION

Results reveal that 56% of people bought clothes before COVID-19, 14% bought groceries, 20% bought medicine, 6% bought food, and 4% bought all other kinds of stuff.

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Chart 4.7: Spend To Online Market Before Covid

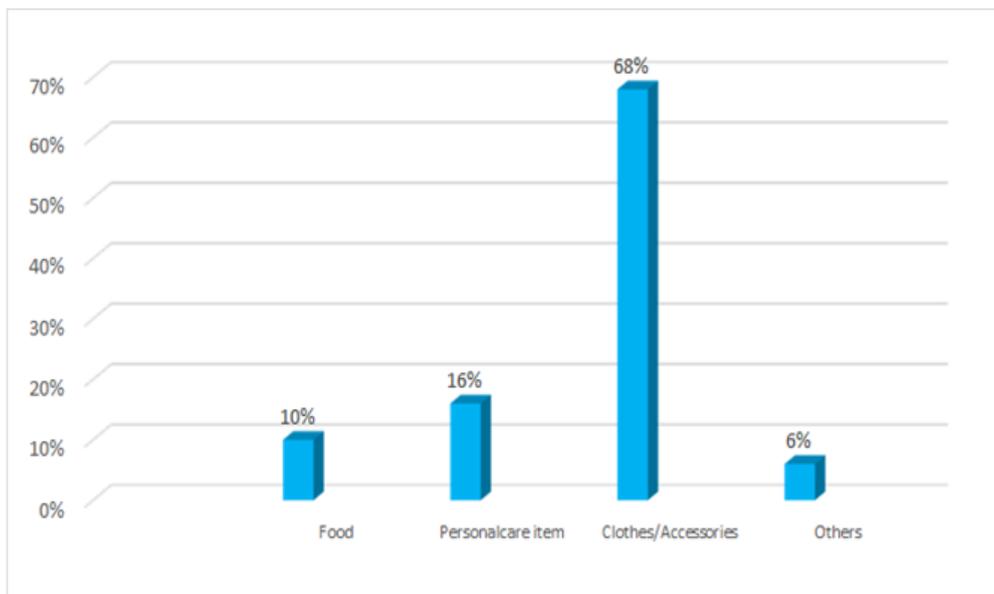


Source: Primary data

INTREPRETATION

The results reveal that 42% of respondents spend 500-1000 on online buying before COVID-19, 38% spend 1000-2000, 18% spend 2000-5000, and a mere 2% spend five thousand or more.

Chart 4.8: Products Purchased Since The Start Of Outbreak



INTREPRETATION

It shows that 68% of the respondents purchase clothes/ accessories from the online market since the start of outbreak of covid pandemic, 16% purchase personal care items, 10% purchase food items and 6% purchase other items.

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Table 4.1: Spend On Products After Covid

Money	No. of respondents	Percentage
1000-4000	37	74%
4000-7000	8	16%
7000-10000	2	4%
Above 10000	3	6%
Total	50	100%

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION

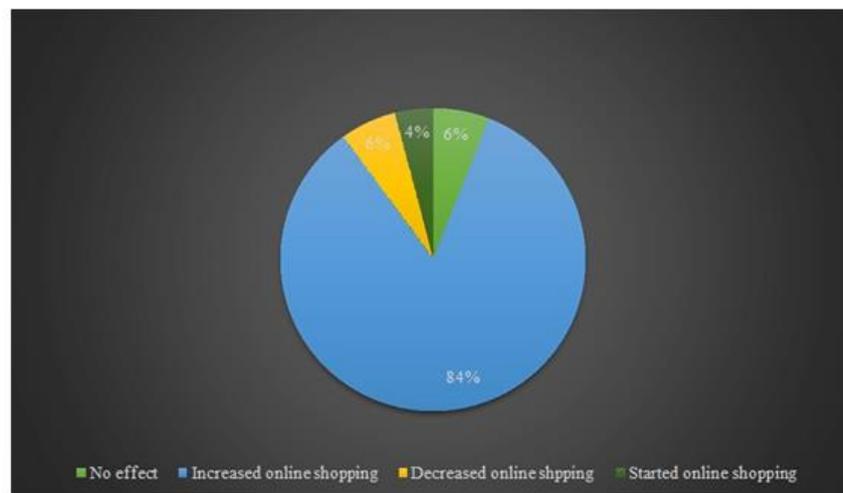
The above table shows 74% of the respondents spend 1000-4000 for online shopping after covid 19 outbreak, 16% spend 4000-7000, 4% spend 7000-10000 and 6% spend above 10000 after covid 19 outbreak.

Table 4.2: The Effect Of Covid 19 Online Shopping

Effects	No. of respondents	Percentage
No effect	3	6%
Increased online shopping	42	84%
Decreased online shopping	3	6%
Started online shopping	2	4%
Total 50 100%	50	100%

Source: Primary data

Chart 4.9



INTERPRETATION

It shows that 84% of the respondents increased their online shopping due to covid outbreak, 4% has started online shopping, 6% has decreased and 6% has no effect.

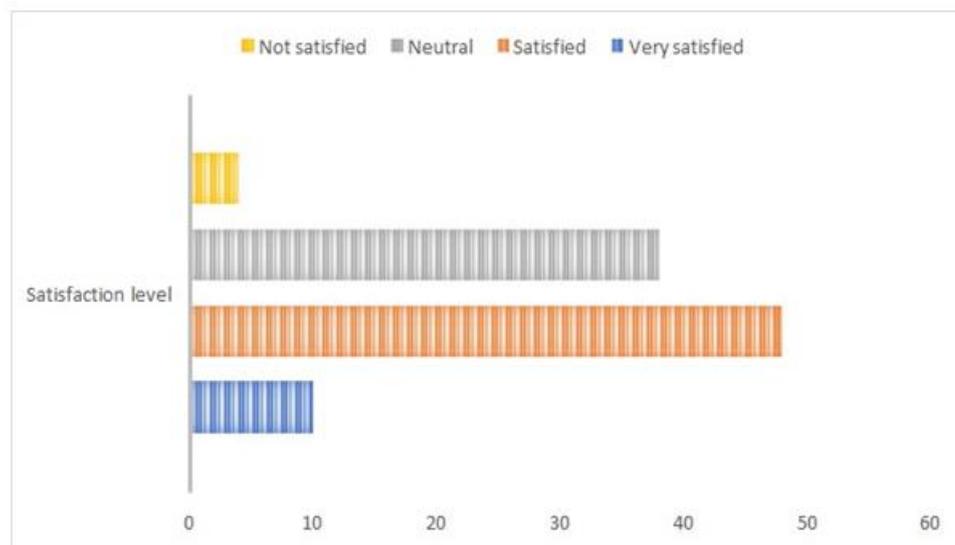
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Table 4.3: Satisfied With Services

Satisfaction level	No. of respondents	Percentage
Very satisfied	5	10%
Satisfied	24	48%
Neutral	19	38%
Not satisfied	2	4%
Total	50	100%

Source: Primary data

Chart 4.10



INTERPRETATION

It shows that 10% of the respondents are very satisfied with quality and services of online shopping, 48% are satisfied, 38% have neutral effect and 4% are dissatisfied.

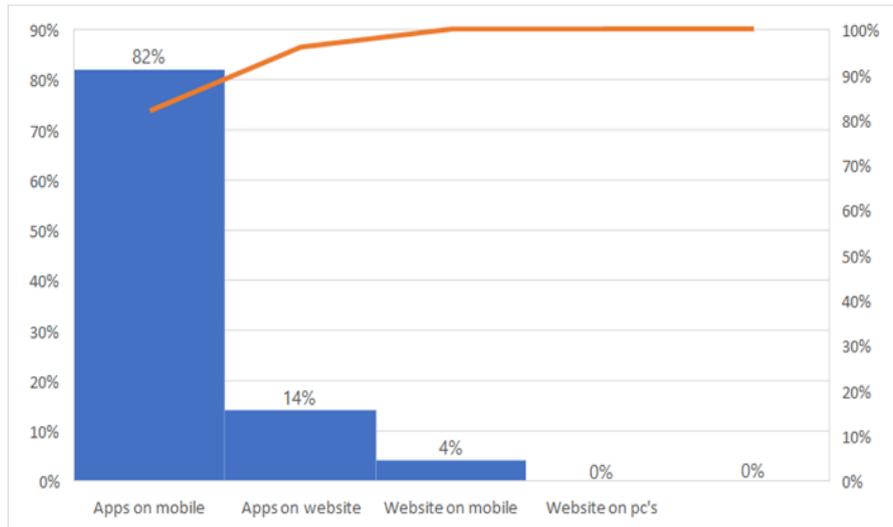
Table 4.4: Most Often Shop Online

Site/Apps	No. of respondents	Percentage
Apps on mobile	41	82%
Apps on websites	7	14%
Websites on mobile	2	4%
Website on pcs	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Source: Primary data

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Chart 4.11



INTERPRETATION

It shows that 82% of the respondents purchase from Apps on the mobile, 14% are from the apps on website and only 4% from the website on mobile.

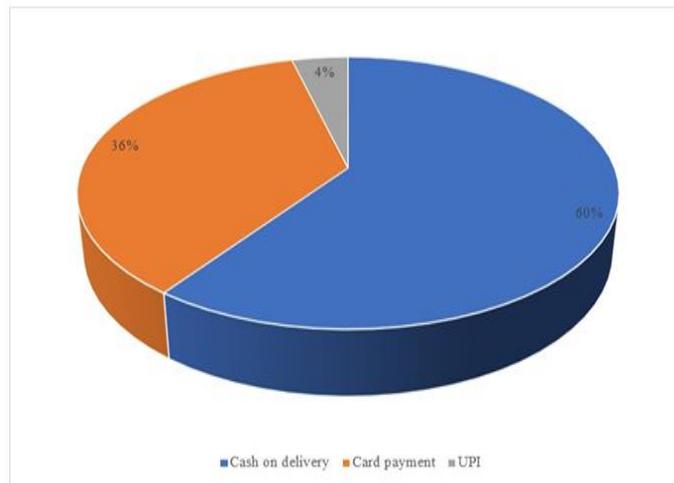
PAYMENT METHODS

Table 4.5

Methods	No. of respondents	Percentage
Cash on delivery	30	60%
Card payment	18	36%
UPI	2	4%
Total	50	100%

Source: Primary data

Chart 4.12

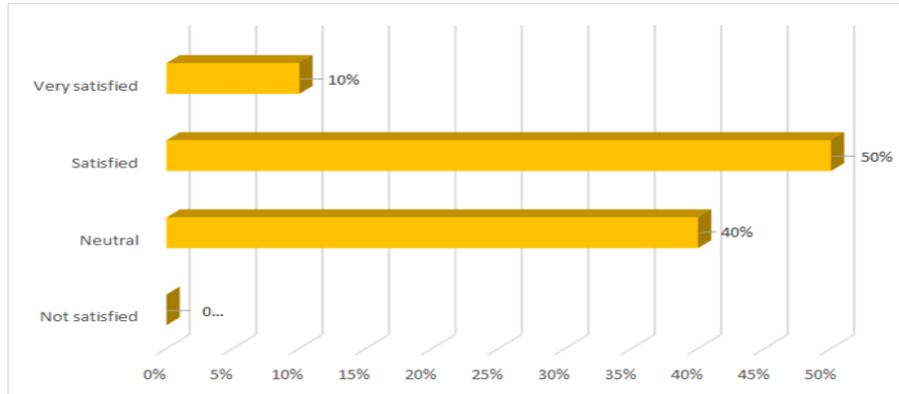


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INTREPRETATION

It shows that 60% of the respondents use cash on delivery for purchasing, 4% use UPI and 36% use card payments.

Chart 4.13-SATISFIED WITH PRICE OF ONLINE SHOPPING



Source: Primary data

INTREPRETATION

It shows that 10% of the respondents are very satisfied with the price of online product, 50% are satisfied and 40% has neutral effect.

Table 4.6: Difference In Price Between Pre & Post Covid

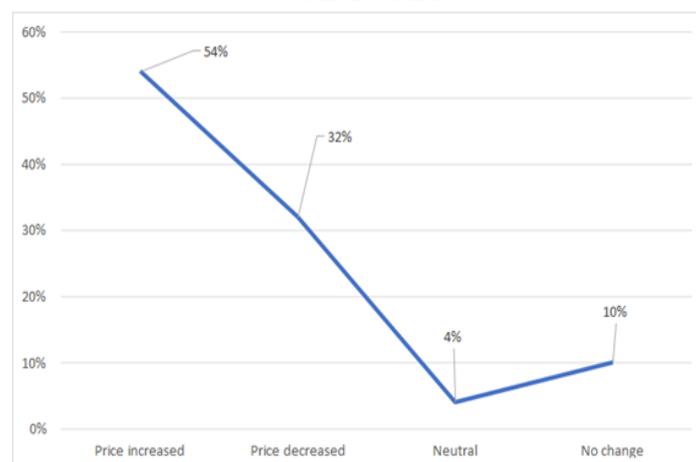
Price	No. of respondents	Percentage
Price increased	27	54%
Price decreased	16	32%
Neutral	2	4%
No change	5	10%
Total	50	100%

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION

It shows that 10% of the respondents have no change in the price of online product between pre and post covid, 32% have opinion with reduction in price, 54% of them responded increased price slightly and 4% of them responded the price level is neutral.

Chart 4.14



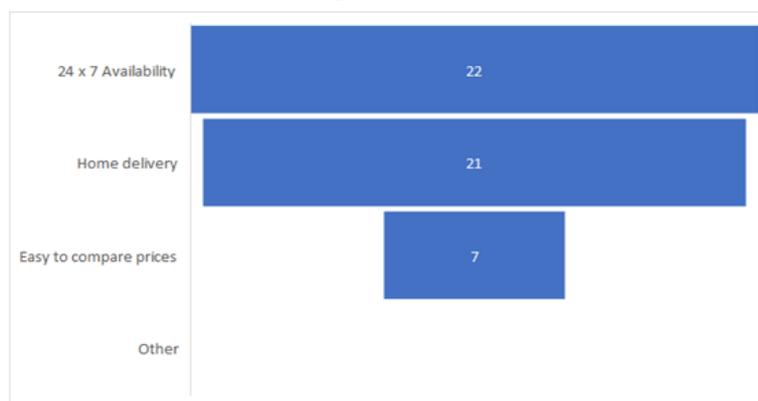
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Table 4.7: Benefits Of Online Shopping

Benefits	No. of respondents	Percentage
24 x 7 Availability	22	44%
Home delivery	21	42%
Easy to compare prices	7	14%
Other	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Source: Primary data

Chart 4.15



INTREPRETATION

It shows that 42% of the respondents' benefits home delivery, 14% of them are easy to compare, 44% of them 24 x 7 availability of online market.

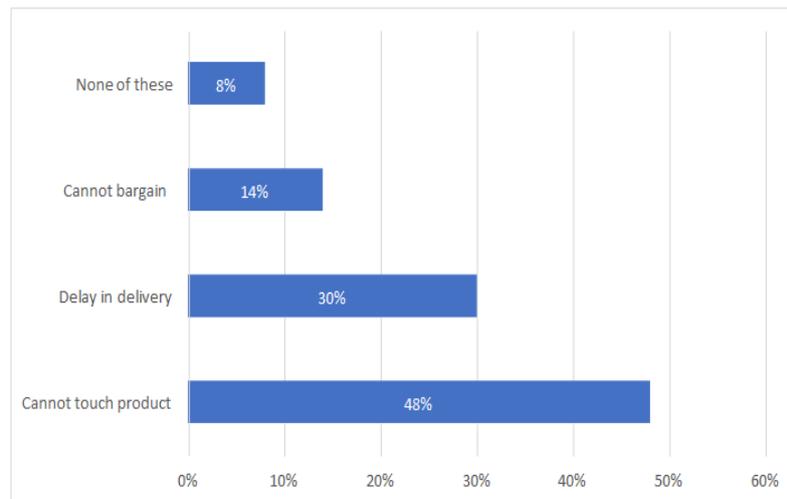
Table 4.8: Problem Faced In Online Market

Benefits	No. of respondents	Percentage
Cannot touch products	24	48%
Delay in delivery	15	30%
Cannot bargain	7	14%
None of these	4	8%
Total	50	100%

Source: Primary data

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Chart 4.16



INTREPRETATION

It shows that 48% of the respondents faced problem of cannot touch the product through online shopping, 14% of them with cannot bargain, 30% of them with delay in delivery and 8% of them faced with other problems.

HYPOTHESIS TEST

Following is the hypothesis set for the purpose of the study:

Hypothesis 1:

H0: There is no significant difference between age and spending habit of consumption.

H1: There is a significant difference between age and spending habit of consumption. ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)

Analysis of Variance, or ANOVA for short, is a statistical technique that examines whether the means of three or more groups differ significantly from one another. In order to ascertain whether there is a statistically significant difference between two or more categories or treatments, it is frequently utilized to compare means across them. To determine this, an ANOVA is used to evaluate the variation within each group in comparison to the variation between groups. A one-way ANOVA uses one independent variable, while a two-way ANOVA uses two independent variables. The assumptions of ANOVA are Normality of population, Homogeneity, Randomness and Independence of error.

Demographic cross analysis: Age and spending habit of consumption

Age wise cross analysis is carried out in the following Table 4.20, using one way ANOVA Test. Opinions expressed by the respondents may vary according to demographic characteristics. Cross analysis is carried out using the variable Age and spending habit of consumption.

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Table 4.9: ANOVA Test

Source of variations	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean squares	F
Between sample	SSC=240.67	2	120.33	1.79
Within sample	SSE=603	9	67	
Total	SST=843.67	11		

An independent sample one-way ANOVA test is carried out for testing the above hypothesis and the result are exhibited in the Table 4.20 The result indicate that test is not significant as the F value is less than the table value and we accept the null hypothesis (H₀).

VII. MAJOR FINDINGS

- Out of 50 people who took the survey, most are women.
- The majority of buyers are in the 18–28 age brackets.
- In the online market, Flipkart is the clear favorite among respondents.
- Most people want to get the best deal on high-quality products when they purchase online.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, 86% of people said they drank more alcohol while online.
- Online buying became the preferred method of most responses after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Prior to COVID-19, the majority of respondents bought their clothes online, spending between five hundred and a thousand dollars.
- People's shopping habits and money spent on garments have changed since the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Many people began purchasing online during the pandemic, and over 70% of respondents said they shopped more often from online markets.
- Many customers enjoy online shopping, but not all are pleased with the quality of the items or the service they receive. Most people are either very happy or indifferent regarding overall satisfaction with internet purchasing.
- Most people use their mobile devices to buy online since many applications and websites exist.
- It is easy to pay for things when you purchase online. While many online retailers accept UPI and credit card payments, most customers still prefer to pay with cash upon delivery.
- We may shop around by comparing pricing at several online marketplaces for the same things. Most respondents are OK with the costs, but a small percentage is delighted.
- A small number of respondents feel that goods prices have gone up little after the COVID-19 pandemic, and many of them think the price shouldn't go up at all.
- The primary advantages of Internet purchasing are its availability around the clock, home delivery, ease of price comparison, and lack of direct interaction with vendors. Online shoppers mostly think about them during the COVID-19 epidemic.
- Online purchasing has numerous advantages, but it also has some drawbacks. Most respondents point out that they cannot physically inspect the items. Once bought, certain goods cannot be replaced.

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7. CONCLUSION

In this article, we looked at how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected online shopping habits in semi-urban regions. More than 50% of those who took the study started shopping online after the pandemic. The internet purchasing system is among the most revolutionary in today's technologically advanced world. Additionally, its market size is comparable to a typical physical market. Online shopping refers to a system that allows customers to buy products and services in real-time from sellers without going through any middlemen. Although there are significant obstacles, and competition is growing daily, e-commerce is growing rapidly. To better understand how individuals in rural and urban areas shopped during the COVID-19 epidemic, this article sets out to do just that. Several variables, including product, time savings, payment, and the lack of direct interaction with dealers, greatly impact customers' online purchasing behavior.

8. AUTHOR (S) CONTRIBUTION

The authors agreed to have no connections or engagements with any group or body that provides financial and non-financial assistance for the topics and resources covered in the article.

9. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author(s) declared that no potential conflict of interest concerning the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

10. PLAGIARISM POLICY

The authors declare that any kind of violation of plagiarism, copyright, and ethical matters will be handled by all authors. Journalists and editors are not liable for the aforesaid matters.

11. SOURCES OF FUNDING

The author(s) declares that the study do not involve any financial aid /support from any private or government organization.

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