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A STUDY OF DIGITAL MARKETING ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR IN RURAL AREAS OF AYODHYA DISTRICT

Dr. Nimish Mishra

Asst. Professor, Dr. Rammanohar Lohia Avadh University, Ayodhya, U.P. India.

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Keywords

**Digital Marketing,
Promotion, Consistent,
Interact, Consumer Buying
Behaviour.**

Abstract

The shift to digital innovations has reshaped the market environment by enabling businesses to engage with consumers by different online channels. The fast adoption of smartphones, low-cost internet services, and cashless payment methods has increased the presence of digital marketing beyond urban centers into rural communities in India. Such changes have affected how rural consumers search for information and have helped them compare products, find alternatives, and make purchase decisions. This study analyses the role of electronic marketing in the purchase behavior of consumers in rural areas of Ayodhya District. It mainly investigates how online platforms such as social networking sites, e-commerce websites, digital advertisements, mobile applications, and online marketing campaigns influence consumers' awareness, attitudes, and purchase intentions. The research further explores the key determinants that influence the adoption of digital marketing among rural consumers, such as availability of the internet, trust in online purchasing, advertising incentives, product availability, and digital awareness.



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	The Primary data were gathered from 100 respondents were living in selected rural areas of Ayodhya District by using a structured questionnaire. In the analysis part, Frequency Distribution, Percentage, and Cumulative Percentage have been used. The results show that internet-based marketing has become an increasingly important source of product-related knowledge for rural consumers and positively influences their purchasing decisions.
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1. INTRODUCTION

The concept 'Digital Marketing' was first introduced in 1990. It refers to advertising goods and services to a specific audience via online channels. Today, it includes company online platforms, internet search tools, social media, electronic mail, smartphone applications, as well as other internet-based communication technologies. In 1990, the earliest search engine, 'Archie,' was introduced, marking the beginning of online business marketing. The first interactive web ad appeared in 1993, followed by the first electronic commerce transaction in 1994, establishing the online market. In 1995, India entered this space with public internet connectivity and mobile phones, and in 1996, IndiaMART, a business-to-business platform, came into existence.

It was all just the initial stage; the scene significantly changed with the launch of Yahoo followed by Google in 1998. Companies had started recognizing the potential of online selling and adopted marketing through digital platforms. The concept of smartphones had entered the market, leading to further innovations in marketing, and the earliest mobile based promotional campaign was introduced in 2001. Assessing a study's effectiveness using research remains quite simple, whereas examining the viability of an endeavor through conventional advertising and marketing becomes more difficult. In this online market, it's simple to continuously update data based on goals and management. Web consumers can access information anytime, anywhere. Today, platforms like Myntra and other online shopping sites provide a wide range of brands, enabling customers to shop anytime, anywhere by downloading a single app. The 24/7 availability further boosts customer loyalty. Currently, most people depend on the internet to browse and purchase a variety of items—from clothing and gadgets to household supplies. Digital marketing offers clients round-the-clock access, allowing them to buy any product or service at their convenience (Tian, 2023).

In conclusion, the present investigation seeks to examine the effects of digital marketing on the buying behavior patterns of buyers in rural areas of Uttar Pradesh. It investigates how internet-based advertisements, social media, e-commerce platforms, and other digital marketing methods influence the preferences and purchasing decisions of rural consumers. It emphasizes that social media has become an important tool for actively promoting and strengthening consumer relationships, as well as supporting ongoing connections and



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activities (Hosain & Mamun, 2023). The outcomes of this study are anticipated to improve understanding of rural consumers' needs and preferences. It also offers useful insights to researchers and decision-makers, encouraging digital awareness and the efficient use of online marketing in rural regions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sindakis and Showkat (2024) noted that despite existing challenges, rural digital marketing offers promising opportunities due to the growing adoption of digital technologies. The increasing availability of affordable smartphones and government efforts to enhance digital infrastructure are gradually reducing the digital gap. As more rural consumers go online, the role of online marketing on their buying decisions grows.

Ravi, Saravanan & Rajan (2023) highlight the essential link between consumer trust, e-commerce adoption, and the importance of digital marketing in rural communities. By employing transparent communication, social proof, and personalized strategies, brands can build trust among rural consumers, unlocking significant opportunities for e-commerce in underserved areas. As internet connectivity grows in these regions, this provides useful guidance for businesses looking to explore these emerging markets.

Al Azzam et al. (2021), students' buying decisions are positively influenced by the four separate factors. Among the four major digital marketing approaches analyzed, audience targeting is the most influential component with respect to the independent features of student buying decisions. Additionally, the evaluation stage has the highest influence on students' preference, which depends on the platform used by buyers who explored about the product. Prior to making a buying decision, these consumers, who had earlier familiar with the product, looks for further information to evaluate its many attributes and options. Furthermore, among digital marketing channels, electronic mail marketing shows the lowest influence on students' purchasing decisions.

Shareef et al. (2019) acknowledge the continuous expansion of social media usage and the Internet's evolving social role. The system now sees customers first looking for information on social media, then turning to traditional methods. Weinberg noted that the move from traditional media to online social platforms has weakened client trust in conventional media, reducing its influence.

Amira M. Omkar (2020) found that digital marketing channels (email marketing, mobile marketing) were beneficial to marketers. The research investigates the effect of various channels on customer buying choices in the Egyptian market. The findings show that mobile, as a digital marketing channel, has a detrimental impact on purchasers' purchasing decisions at all phases of the end user purchasing process.



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Peppers and Rogers (2000) state that email marketing is increasingly influential because of its clear benefits, high engagement, and affordability. The discussion centers on acquisition email marketing, targeting new customer acquisition instead of retention. While email marketing serves both goals, its focus has transitioned from merely attracting new clients to building long-term customer loyalty.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

1. To examine the influence of digital marketing on consumer buying behavior.
2. To analyze the key factors affecting digital marketing on the buying behavior of the consumer.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Area of the study - This study was undertaken in selected rural regions of Ayodhya district, specifically in Masaudha and Amaniganj blocks.

4.2 Sampling design -The sampling technique selected for the research is non-probability judgmental sampling.

4.3 Sample size- The investigation is based on a total sample of 100 respondents selected from the rural regions of Uttar Pradesh. The respondents were selected using the convenience sampling method, ensuring that participants were residents of rural areas.

4.4 Source of data -The required data were collected from primary sources using a structured, closed-ended questionnaire.

4.5 Statistical tools- Frequency Distribution, Percentage, and Cumulative Percentage

4.6 Study Limitations

- The scope of the study is limited to Ayodhya district only.
- Time and cost also affect this study.
- Sample size too small.
- Researcher and respondent bias.

5. DATA ANALYSIS & ITS INTERPRETATIONS

Table5.1 Gender					
		Frequency(F)	Percent %	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Female	52	52.0	52.0	52.0



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Valid	Male	48	48.0	48.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 5. 1 reveals that, out of 100 respondents, 52 (52.0%) were female, and 48 (48.0%) were male. This distribution provides representation from both genders, examining the impact of digital marketing on consumer buying behavior in rural Uttar Pradesh.

Table 5.2 Age					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 20	15	15.0	15.0	15.0
	21 – 35	42	42.0	42.0	57.0
	36 - 50	28	28.0	28.0	85.0
	51 - 60	15	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 5. 2 indicates that out of 100 respondents, 15 (15.0%) were under 20 years of age, 42 (42.0%) were in the 21-35 age group, 28 (28.0%) were in the 36-50 years age group, and 15 (15.0%) were in the 51-60 age group. The analysis indicates that the majority of respondents were in the 21-35 years age group, signifying that younger individuals are more likely to be actively involved in digital marketing platforms.

Table 5.3 Marital Status					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Married	59	59.0	59.0	59.0
	Single	41	41.0	41.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 5.3 reveals that a maximum of 59.0% of the participants were married. 41.0% of the individuals surveyed are single. The observation result showed that married people consistently prefer online shopping.

Table 5. 4 Family					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Nuclear Family	28	28.0	28.0	28.0

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Valid	Joint Nuclear Family	24	24.0	24.0	52.0
	Joint Family	48	48.0	48.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 5.4 illustrates the distribution of participants by family type. Within the sample, 48% belong to joint families, 28% to nuclear families, and 24% to joint nuclear families. The observation shows that the large number of respondents are from joint families, indicating that joint families constitute the largest proportion of the sample.

Table 5.5 Educational Qualification					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below Intermediate	24	24.0	24.0	24.0
	Graduate	46	46.0	46.0	70.0
	Post Graduate	28	28.0	28.0	98.0
	Ph.D.	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 5.5 indicates that 46% of respondents are graduates, 28% are postgraduates, 24% have an education below intermediate, and 2% hold a Ph.D. The observations suggested that respondents with advanced educational qualifications are more likely to be aware of digital marketing and to use online platforms when making purchase decisions.

Table 5.6 Monthly Income Distribution					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 20,000	26	26.0	26.0	26.0
	21,000– 40,000	30	30.0	30.0	56.0
	41,000 – 60,000	18	18.0	18.0	74.0
	61,000– 80,000	14	14.0	14.0	88.0
	Above 81,000	12	12.0	12.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 5. 6 shows that 30.0% of participants have a monthly income between Rs.21,000 and 40,000. The findings show that the majority (56.0%) of individuals belong to the lower-middle-income group. Consequently, they are more price-sensitive and tend to prefer



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affordable online shopping platforms which offer low-priced products, discounts, and budget-friendly deals.

Table5.7 Respondents Occupation					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Students	22	22.0	22.0	22.0
	Farmers	34	34.0	34.0	56.0
	Service	18	18.0	18.0	74.0
	Business owner	16	16.0	16.0	90.0
	Others	10	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table5.7 clearly shows that 34.0% of the respondents were farmers, 27.0% of the participants are students, 18.0% service holders, 16.0% of businessmen, and only 10% belong to others. The result reveal that farmers constituted the largest occupational group in the sample, suggesting that it is influenced by agricultural income, seasonal earnings, price sensitivity, and availability of affordable products through digital marketing platforms.

Table 5.8 Online Shopping					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Daily	8	8.0	8.0	8.0
	Weekly	24	24.0	24.0	32.0
	Monthly	28	28.0	28.0	60.0
	As Required	40	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 5. 8 above: 40.0% of respondents purchase products online as required, 28.0% purchase monthly, 24.0% purchase weekly, and only 8.0% purchase daily. It has been confirmed that most respondents have purchased products online to meet their needs.

Table 5.9 Most frequently purchased				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent



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Valid	Electronics	23	23.0	23.0	23.0
	Clothing & Fashion	31	31.0	31.0	54.0
	Home Decoration	22	22.0	22.0	76.0
	Books	3	3.0	3.0	79.0
	Others	21	21.0	21.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 5.9 indicates that 31.0% of respondents bought electronic goods, 23.0% purchased clothing and fashion items, 22.0% bought home decorations, 21.0% acquired other products, and just 3.0% purchased books. This confirms that electronics are the most commonly bought items online among the respondents.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Digital marketing has become an important determinant of consumer purchasing in rural Ayodhya. The research shows that increased access to smartphones and affordable internet has encouraged rural consumers to seek product information, compare prices, read online reviews, and make informed purchasing decisions. Social media, digital ads, and e-commerce platforms have greatly boosted awareness of products and brands among these customers. However, the effectiveness of digital marketing is also affected by variables including education, digital literacy, and income levels. Marketers should consider targeting male consumers and expanding their focus across all age groups, as well as exploring categories beyond electronics. Focusing on specific groups, like working professionals, could be advantageous. Ultimately, efforts should aim to increase daily purchasing activity. Younger, more educated consumers tend to be more receptive, while older consumers remain cautious online. Improving digital infrastructure and promoting digital information can save consumers' time. Enhancing digital marketing in rural Ayodhya benefits both consumers and the growth of e-commerce.

AUTHOR(S) CONTRIBUTION

The writers affirm that they have no connections to, or engagement with, any group or body that provides financial or non-financial assistance for the topics or resources covered in this manuscript.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.



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