

## **Indian Customer's Online Shopping Pattern During Covid-19 Pandemic: An Exploratory Study**

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### **Abstract**

The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed consumers to change their shopping habits . The study is about the Indian customers online shopping pattern during COVID-19 pandemic. The main purpose of this study is to understand how Indian customers are doing online shopping in this pandemic, is their proportion increased or not their online shopping pattern like reasons for choosing shopping online, preferable shopping site, frequently buying products, payment method. The data for this study has been collected by circulating a questionnaire on the social media. As per the responses results has been summarised which leads to the conclusion.

**Keywords:** Online Shopping, COVID 19

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## **1. Introduction-**

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the shift towards a more digital world. The changes we make now will have lasting effects as the world economy begins to recover (UNCTAD,2020). Pandemics like COVID-19 result in a disruption in the lifestyle and buying pattern of a consumer. The pandemic has made a trend of shopping online and accelerated the growth of the convenience of online shopping. When the pandemic hits the world and situation getting worse specially in the time of the first wave of COVID 19, traditional shopping becomes difficult, people are increasingly inclined to shop online. Since coronavirus spreads primarily through contact with an infected person (when they cough or sneeze) or when a person touches a surface that has the virus on it, the best way to guard against it is to stay at home. Online shopping is a process of buying products through electronic devices by using internet. Technological innovations are on the rise with has made it possible to do numerous things sitting in the comfort of home. Now a day's technology can provide sophisticated solutions to cope with a pandemic environment.

With the recent COVID-19 pandemic, the presence of which was faced in every sector, created newer and unimaginable challenges for mankind. As a result of the outbreak, shopping malls, grocery stores across the globe were forced to remain closed. The timeline for the closure is longer than anticipated as in many countries including India, proper guidelines and safety protocols are yet to be set for a full proof reopening of the essential stores. As a result, store have experienced panic buying behaviors, empty store shelves, out of stocks, and a large increase in online sales. In online purchasers can purchase anything and from anywhere they want to shop with timely and protected price payment options. Purchasers can compare different products as well as websites or mobile apps to make better shopping.

Now the lockdown is over and now stores started reopen but people need to maintain some restrictions now also, and many will still prefer shopping online from the safety of their homes. Most consumers doing e buying through various online sites or mobile apps which becoming a cornerstone day by day. Restricted movement among individuals, Convenience and Time saving and Digital transformation of local shops are the main drivers of online buying now a days.

Electronic buying can be bright in the coming time. The Covid-19 pandemic has encouraged online shopping activities and online shopping patterns of consumers more rapidly.

Given this background this study aims to examine the following objectives-

- 1) To examine whether the customer is shopping online more during this pandemic time compared to the preceding time period
- 2) To identify the most frequently purchase product in this pandemic.
- 3) To identify the dominant factors behind online shopping during the pandemic.
- 4) To identify the preferred online shopping site for online shopping.
- 5) To identify the most widely used payment method for online shopping.

The rest of the paper has following sections like research methodology, results and conclusion,

## **2. Research Methodology-**

### **2.1 Data Collection procedure-**

The relevant data for examining the stated objectives were circulated by a structured questionnaire. This questionnaire was circulated among online shoppers lived in Kolkata. The inclusion criteria in the sample is those online customers over the age of 18 who buys things from online in Kolkata. The minimum sample size required for this study is  $5 \times 10 = 50$ . I circulated my questionnaire to 71 people out of them 59 responded. 2 people have given a incomplete response. So those responses were not being counted. There are also 4 people who did not do online shopping. So their responses also cannot be counted.

### **2.2 Measurement instrument-**

The structured questionnaire comprised of 2 sections. The first section consists of demographic related questions. The second section consist of total 6 items associated with online shopping scenario. The first question is the screening question that the person does online shopping or not.

The next 5 questions are according to the objectives of the study. This next 5 questions are only applicable to those persons who do online shopping. The items of this sections are in multiple choice and dichotomous types. For multiple choice there are 1 question which is of single select option question and 3 are multi answer select options.

### 2.3 Data analysis procedure-

Tools used for analyzing objective one and five is percentage along with a pie chart for a visual representation and better understanding. In pie chart the data are represented in a circular graph.

Tools used for analyzing objective two, three and four is percentage along with a bar chart. Bar chart is a way of representing categorical data.

### 3. Empirical Results-

#### General profile of the participants-

The results indicate that approximately 44.1 % of respondents are male while 55.9% females. The majority of the participants belonged to the age group of 18-24 years (approximately 74.1%). Majority of the respondents are students (approximately 71.9%). Around 63.2% respondents don't have direct source of income because there are a lot of respondents who are student or home maker.

Table 1: Demographic details of the respondents-

Parameters	Number of respondents
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	26
Female	33
<b>Age</b>	
18-30	43
31-40	6

41-50	6
51-60	3
61-70	0
Above 70	0
<b>Occupation</b>	
Student	41
Businessman/Businesswoman	3
Employed	5
Teacher	6
Homemaker	2
Other	2
<b>Monthly income</b>	
Less than 15000	7
Rs. 15,000-30,000	7
Rs. 30,000-45,000	4
Rs. 45,000-60,000	3
More than Rs. 60,000	0
I don't have any direct source of income	36

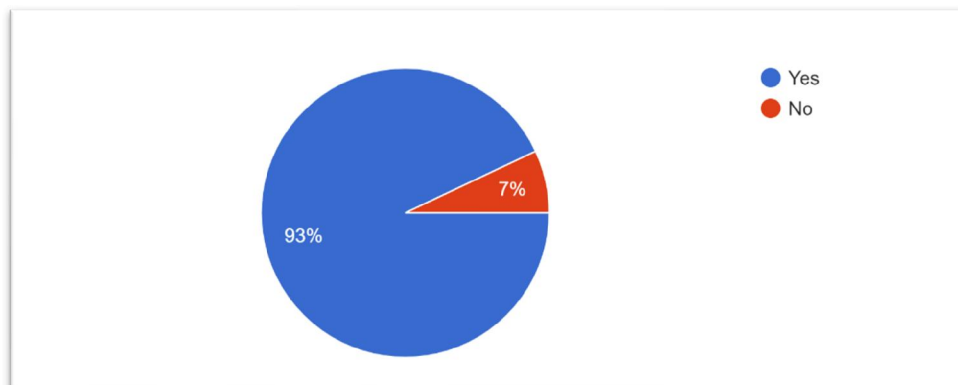


Fig1: Respondent do online shopping or not

As per our screening question that is people do online shopping or not, we can see there are 93% people who do online shopping and there are 7% people who did not do online shopping. Those people who do online shopping our further study is applicable for them only.

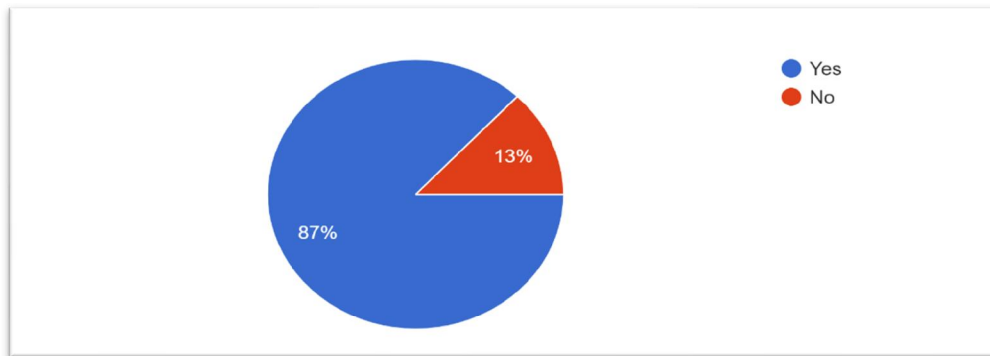


Fig2: proportion of online shopping increased during pandemic or not

Above pie chart shows that there are 87% respondents whose proportion of online shopping increased during this pandemic and there are 13% respondents whose proportion of online shopping did not increased during this pandemic.

As per our first objective in order to examine whether the customer are shopping online more during this pandemic time compared to the preceding time period, this study shows most of the customers are doing online shopping more during this pandemic. This pandemic has made e-Commerce a far more important part for consumers shopping habits than the previous times.

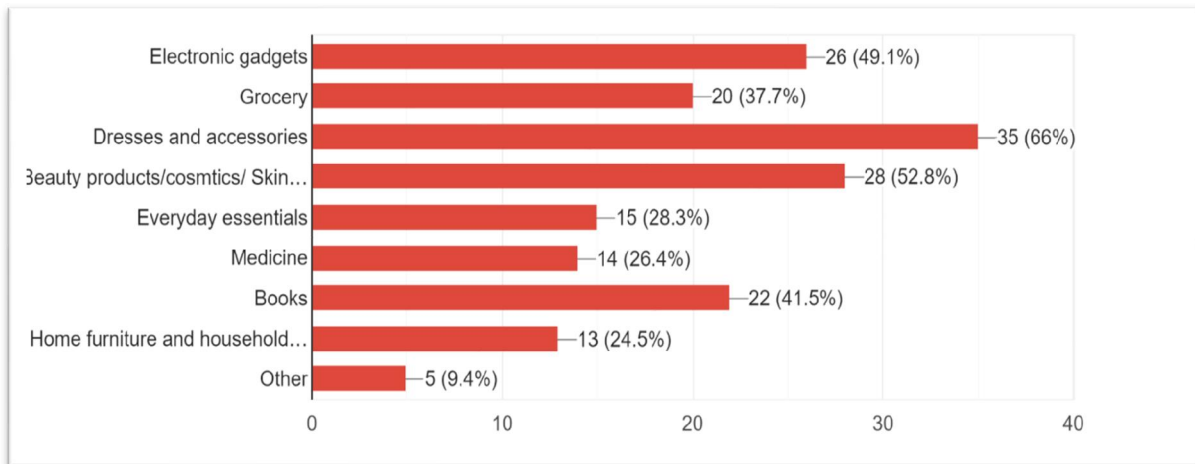


Fig3: most frequently purchase product in this pandemic

In order to highlight the most frequently purchase product in this pandemic which is our second objective a bar chart has been plotted. Above bar chart shows most of the respondents that is 66% of the respondents frequently buy dresses and accessories and 52.8% buys beauty products cosmetics, skin care products from online. Also 49.1% respondents who buys electronic gadgets etc. from online. One reason for this frequently buying of dresses, accessories, beauty products can be our respondents in this study where 55.9% are female. Also a good no of respondents i.e. 37.7%, 28.3%, 26.4% purchased grocery, everyday essentials, medicine from online during this pandemic. Shopping online become a habit of customers in this pandemic where they can get anything and everything in a place.

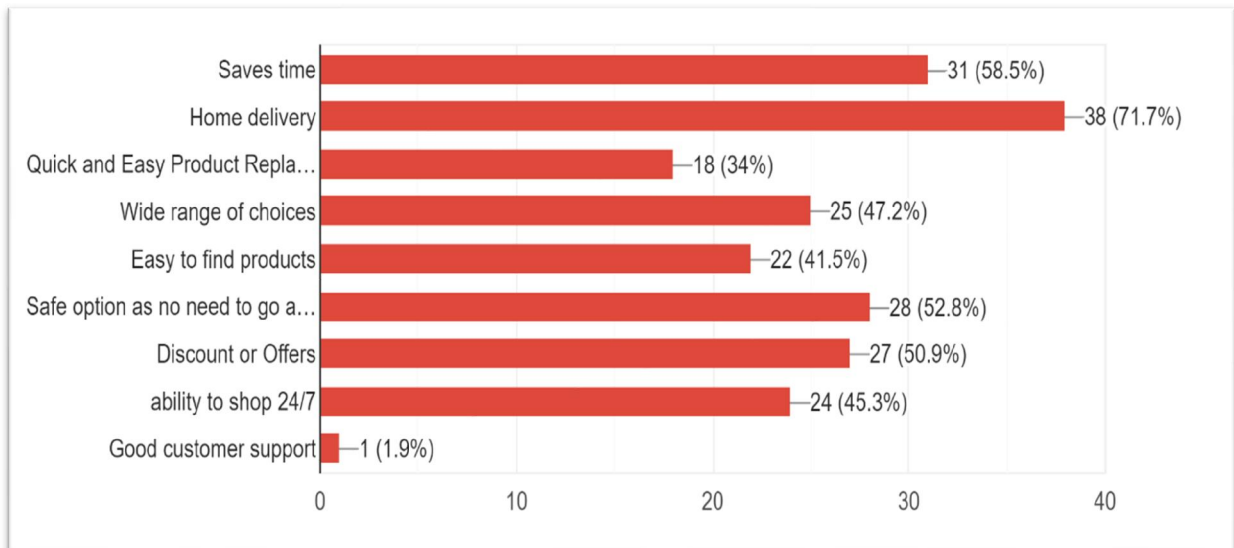


Fig4: Dominant factors behind online shopping during this pandemic

Above bar chart reflects our third objective i.e. why people do online shopping. 71.7% respondents like it because of its home delivery facility, 58.5% respondents think online shopping saves time. In this pandemic situation online shopping is a safe option because here we don't need to go anywhere. Also 50.9% 47.2%, 45.3%, 41.5% respondents prefer online shopping because there are discount or offers, wide range of choices, ability to shop 24/7, easy to find products respectively. Online shopping has some of the major benefits like there are wide range of choices and also its very easy to find a product online. Also we can check product description and product reviews before buying it which makes our purchase decision easy. Also, online shopping sites give a lot of discounts or offers which become a catchy point for customers. Shopping online is very convenient where we can get access of it 24/7 and online shopping sites gives option of product replacement and refund also.



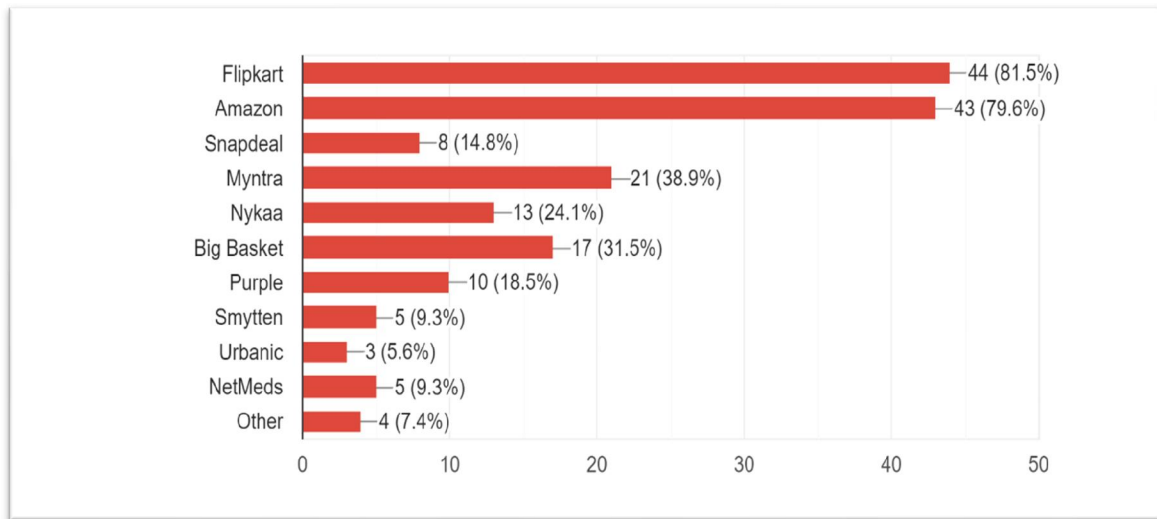


Fig5: preferable online shopping sites

As per our fourth objective in order to highlight the preferred online shopping site a bar chart has been plotted and it is shown that most no of respondents select Flipkart as preference. Above bar chart shows that 81.5% respondents are doing online shopping from Flipkart and 79.6% respondents have selected Amazon.

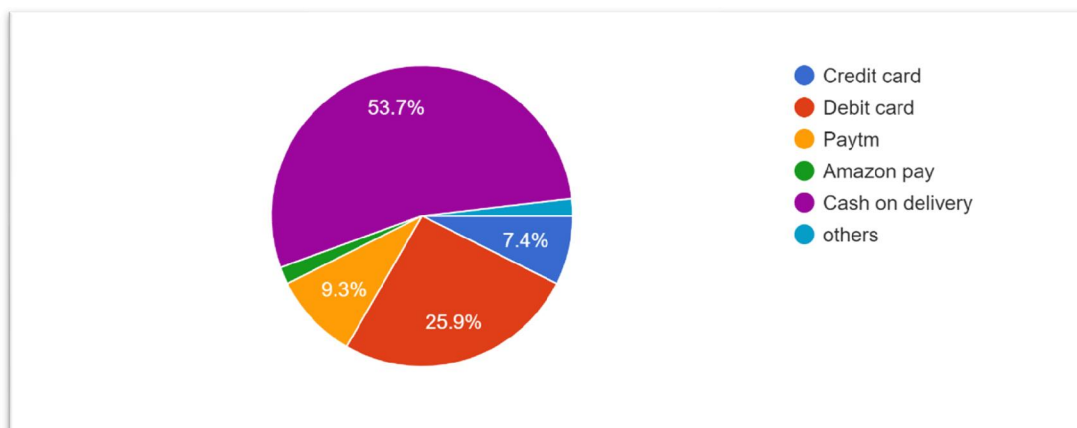


Fig 6: Most widely used payment method for online shopping

In the order to understand the preferable payment method in time of shopping online a pie chart has been plotted. Above pie chart shows that most of the respondents (53.7%) choose cash on delivery as preference. 25.9% people use debit card for payment. Cash on delivery become a convenient option because after getting the product they are paying and sometimes people can also prefer to see the product is it in a good situation or a right product by unpacking it before the payment.

#### **4. Conclusion-**

This coronavirus pandemic has increased the web traffic and showed a jump in shopping online. Our analysis indicated that proportion of online shopping has been increased than the previous times for most of the respondents. Also people are frequently buy from online like dresses , grocery , everyday essential, electronic gadgets etc. in this pandemic situation. As this pandemic comes countries various restrictions have been imposed on going out of homes, going in markets etc. hence people cannot go to markets for buying products. So this is probably pushing people towards online shopping. Online shopping allows people to fulfil their needs staying at home and also there are several advantages like as per our study respondents chose it has home delivery facility, save time, wide range of choices, offers available, refund option etc. it saves time, gives wide range of choices etc. Though many of the respondents do online shopping previously but in this pandemic situation this becomes the easier and safest option for people to buy their essentials. As per our study results Flipkart and amazon become most of the respondent's preference in shopping online and also COD i.e cash on delivery becomes most preferable payment option for many people. So, due to covid 19 most of the people have shifted from offline shopping methods that is going to the nearby stores, supermarkets or malls to buy their daily essentials groceries , medicines to online shopping methods that is ordering all the products online and getting them home delivered with the use of online shopping sites.

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