



# Emerging Trends of online shopping with special reference to Apparels – A study conducted at Patna Centre

• Sonali Karn • Rahila Fatima • Ayesha Nadeem  
• Anil Kumar Sinha

Received : November 2013  
Accepted : March 2014  
Corresponding Author : Anil Kumar Sinha

**Abstract :** *In the last few decades, internet has revolutionized the lives of millions of users with its numerous applications. With the growing proclivity and economic growth, online shopping has increased drastically. The world of electronic commerce, also known as e-commerce, enables consumers to shop at online stores and pay for their purchases while staying at home. By just clicking a mouse, shoppers can buy any product online — from household items to home loans. Consumers expect merchants to not only make their products available on the Web, but also to make payments a simple and secure process. Online shopping is beneficial to both consumers as well as merchants. With the fast growing*

*technology online shopping is emerging in India at a very fast rate. According to a report, India has seen a growth of **128%** in interest for online shopping amongst consumers between 2011 and 2012, compared to only 40% growth in 2010 to 2011. In 2013, 'Apparels and accessories' search went up to 35-36% compared to that of 30% in 2012. Apparels and Accessories were already among the top categories ever purchased online with **84% in 2012**, followed by electronics, beauty and personal care, books and household products respectively. Therefore, empirical research is done to study the emerging trend of online shopping with special reference to apparels.. The research paper is an outcome of the study based on 100 respondents' drawn from **Patna** Centre via well-defined Questionnaire. The major objective of the study was to find out respondents preferences and overall opinion on Online Shopping. Consumer buying behaviour with respect to online shopping was studied using different socio-economic variables. It also extended a support that helped researchers understand the drivers of consumers' attitude and goal to shop on the Internet, and consumers' perceptions regarding ease of use and usefulness. The data collected has been tabulated and statistically validated. The study put forward major findings and lists out key suggestions that would be useful to both the business community and consumers*

## Sonali Karn

B.Com. III year, Session: 2011-2014,  
Patna Women's College, Patna University, Patna,  
Bihar, India

## Rahila Fatima

B.Com. III year, Session: 2011-2014,  
Patna Women's College, Patna University, Patna,  
Bihar, India

## Ayesha Nadeem

B.Com. III year, Session: 2011-2014,  
Patna Women's College, Patna University, Patna,  
Bihar, India

## Anil Kumar Sinha

Faculty, Department of Commerce,  
Patna Women's College, Bailey Road,  
Patna – 800 001, Bihar, India  
E-mail : [sinhaanilmarch16@gmail.com](mailto:sinhaanilmarch16@gmail.com)

**Keywords :** *E-Commerce, Consumers, Online Shopping, Internet, Purchases, Categories.*

## Introduction:

Today online shopping has become trendy and popular amongst consumers. Online shopping is a form of electronic commerce whereby consumers directly buy goods or services from a seller over the internet without intermediary services. An online shop, e-shop, e-store, internet shop, web-shop, web store, online-store, or virtual store evokes the physical analogy of buying products or services at a bricks-and-mortar retailer or shopping centre. The process is called **business-to-consumer (B2C) online shopping**. The first online shopping began in 1984 in England. The research firm Forrester estimated that e-commerce had approached \$200 billion in revenue in US alone. In India **ONLINE SHOPPING** culture started during the Internet boom in 1999-2000 and started getting popularity after 2002 and now it has almost become a part of our life, especially of middle class computer literate family. As we all know, percentage of middle class family constitutes major portion of our population in India and it is about 25% of total population. Hence we can say that in the days to come, online shopping culture will grow more and there will be a noticeable change in the mindset of the Indian family falling within the category of High Income Group also towards Online Shopping. India's apparel market is in the throes of change. Rapid growth and rising urbanisation have spawned a new class of consumers with more money to spend, and a growing passion for fashion. In India's high-growth and fast changing e-tail market, we see significant growth opportunities for both foreign and domestic players.

For the study, we selected the target group from these localities; Boring Road, Bailey Road, Rajendra Nagar and Kadamkuan, which was divided on the basis of their income:

- Middle income group (2-4 lacs) and,
- High income group (5 lacs and above).

In this research project, we have focused the study mainly on the determinants responsible for the preference for online shopping (with special reference to apparels) by the various income groups and the factors creating hindrances in its popularity.

## Objectives:

The objectives of the project are :

- To ascertain the popularity of apparels sold online in comparison to retail shops.
- To find out the share of apparels in online market.
- To ascertain why consumers find online shopping cost effective.
- To study consumer satisfaction level in case of online shopping.

## Hypotheses:

The research is based on the hypothesis that the consumers of different income groups prefer online shopping for buying apparels due to various determinants. The hypotheses are as under:

- Online shopping has become an emerging trend in a short period of time.
- Apparels hold the largest share of consumer goods sold online.
- Online shopping is cost effective.
- Consumer satisfaction level is highest.

## Methodology:

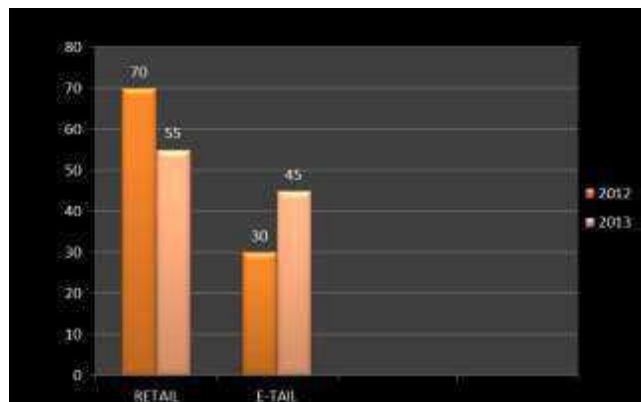
We all know that a research project must follow a well-defined line of action in order to have disciplined methodology. Two tier techniques used to collect data was :

- (a) Primary Data Source – It was gathered on the basis of:
  - Personal Interview of consumers
  - Telephonic interview of the sales person of Flipkart, E-bay and Jabong.
  - Interview of shop keepers (apparels).

- (b) Secondary Data Source: Some information was gathered through different newspapers, journals, magazines and internet sites.

### Major Findings:

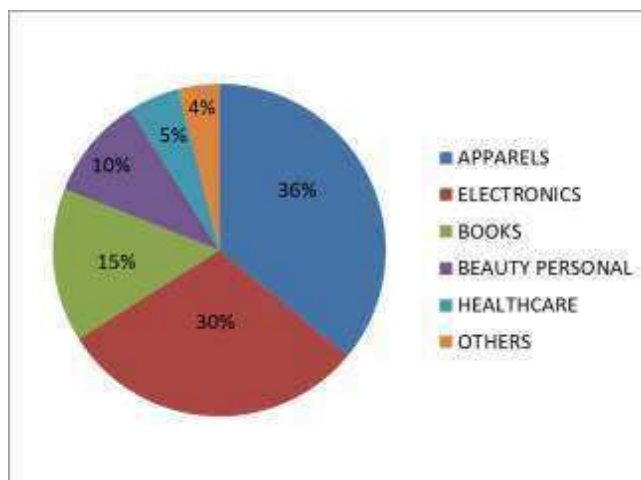
#### Comparison of apparels sold in e-tail markets and retail shops



#### Interpretation:

The above diagram shows the apparels sold in e-tail markets and retail shops. On the basis of the data and information collected from the sample, it can be concluded that the popularity of apparels sold online has grown from 30% in 2012 to 45% in 2013 whereas there is a comparative fall in the retail markets from 70% in 2012 to 55% in 2013. Here, the scale of measuring popularity is taken as the rise in sales of the above markets.

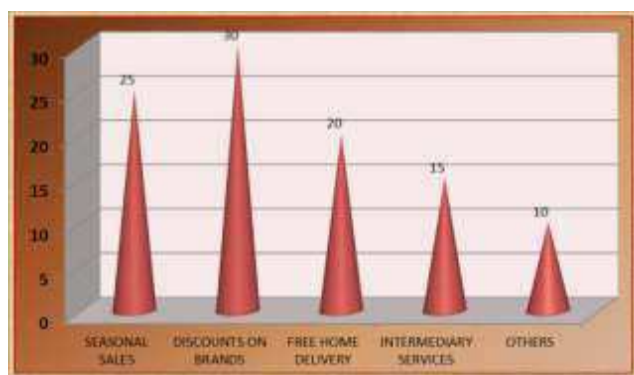
#### Online shopping trend in 2013



### Interpretation:

The above diagram shows the share of apparels in the online market. It was noticed that among all the consumer goods, the growth of online purchase of apparels was the highest. According to our research, 36% of the sample voted that they prefer buying apparels online other than any other consumer goods.

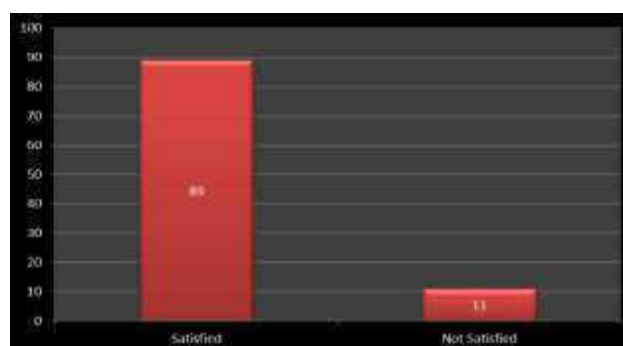
#### Cost effectiveness of online shopping



#### Interpretation:

The above diagram is to ascertain why consumers find online shopping cost effective. There were many reasons why online shopping is cost effective. The units stated that seasonal and off season sales, available discounts mainly on brands which are not usually offered in physical stores, intermediary services such as no middle men (wholesalers) and free home delivery offers make the goods sold online cost effective. There are some other reasons too which make online shopping more cost efficient.

#### Satisfaction level among the Online Shoppers



### Interpretation:

The above diagram depicts the satisfaction level amongst consumers in case of online shopping. Through data collected it was found that the level of satisfaction of consumers was 89% in case of online shopping, whereas only 11% were dissatisfied with online shopping. Therefore, it can be inferred that most of the units found online shopping more satisfactory than actually buying from shops.

The findings of the research study clearly depict that all the four hypotheses of the research have been proved. It proves that online shopping has become an emerging trend with the highest consumers' satisfaction level and apparels hold the largest share in total online purchases.

### Conclusion :

The main purpose of the study is to assess the emerging trend of online shopping with special reference to apparels at Patna. Some important conclusions drawn from the study is listed below:

- Although the sales in the shops were more than online stores, a sharp fall of 25% was spotted in the year 2013 as compared to the previous year. And a similar rise was seen in the online markets.
- The apparels were the most preferred consumer goods in terms of absolute volumes purchased online.
- Seasonal sales, discount on brands, free home delivery, no intermediary services, etc. make online shopping cost effective.
- 70% of the sample units were satisfied with online shopping, rest 30% disagreed.

In the end, we can say that with current changing consumer space, information awareness, upcoming new technology assistance, customer maturity and growth of Internet

penetration in the Indian market, the online retail is here to stay and has great potential in the overall internet commerce space, especially for India. Online Commerce through internet is gaining a lot of attention from students too. It is a business with huge potential which is a revolution already and will be so in the near future.

### Suggestions :

Keeping in view the above observations, it was felt that online shopping options should increase. The existing and the potential online shoppers should be made aware of the ways in which they could shop online easily and be protected against the fraud e-tailers.

Some suggestions for consumers are as follows:

**Know the business.** Consumers should buy only from websites they know and trust. They should check that the company has a physical address and phone number. If the company operates from overseas, they might have trouble getting a refund or repair if required.

**Check the contract.** Consumers should carefully read the terms and conditions, refund policy, delivery details and policies on costs associated with returns and repairs.

**Check the full cost.** Consumers should be aware of the full cost of their purchase, including currency conversion, taxes, delivery fees, packaging and postage. After adding these costs, it may be cheaper to buy locally.

**Protect your privacy.** Consumers should only buy online from a company if they are satisfied with their privacy policy. They should not provide additional information that the company does not need for the sale.

**Confirm the order.** The business should enable consumers to confirm or reject their order before paying.

**Keep records.** Consumers should print their orders before and after they confirm. They should write down any reference numbers, and print any receipts that display on screen or are emailed to you.

**Pay securely.** Consumers should use only such websites that their browser recognises as secure. A secure address begins with https:// or an image of a padlock will appear in the bottom right corner of the browser window.

"The future is promising; the market is growing, the government policies are becoming more favourable and emerging technologies are facilitating operations" (Prabha, Laxmi, 2007).

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