

IMPACT OF LOCKDOWN ON THE USE OF E-COMMERCE PLATFORM

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Abstract: This paper is an attempt to provide research methodology skills to graduation first year students. The literature review of various online news articles on lockdown led by government due to covid-19 pandemic, E-commerce and introduction part of paper was covered by students. Students and faculty both designed questionnaire for data collection. Data presentation, processing, and analysis had done by the faculty. This paper is a result of a collaborative activity of students and faculty. The paper is divided in two parts, first part gives background of the current pandemic and concepts of E-commerce. Second part is data analysis on the surveyed data of college students. This paper concludes with the findings that there is not a significant impact of lockdown on the use of E-Commerce Platform by the students. Time duration of this study was one week i.e. from 12/04/2021 to 19/04/2021.

Key Words: Lockdown, Pandemic, Covid-19, E-Commerce, Online Shopping.

Introduction:

Basic human needs are essential for the survival of human race. Consumption of these basic needs is uninterrupted till the lifetime of the human beings. To satisfy basic and other needs, the trade and commerce in India has played a very vital role i.e. providing goods and services to end users and generating employment. Trade and commerce has evolved over the period of time and during 1995 E-Commerce was introduced with the beginning of Information Technology and Internet Services. Structural changes were made in the Indian financial system, banking system, stock exchanges, exports and imports, etc.

The Indian economy had seen many crises from post independence 1950s to post liberalization 1990s or millennium and so on. India being fastest growing and sixth-largest economy in the world according to International Monetary Fund (IMF), India has recovered from each of the crises with the proper implementation of fiscal and monetary policies. With the outbreak of novel corona virus (COVID 19) on 30th January, 2020 World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 to be "a public health emergency of international concern". Followed by this event India took few important steps to control the spread of this novel virus in the country. Lockdown was imposed in different phases starting from 25th March 2020 to 31st May 2020. The peculiarity of each phase was there was suspension of almost all services and factories. Social distancing norms were strictly imposed in the country to control the spread of disease, all these events led to economic slowdown not only India but also in major global economies, all were moving towards global recession. With emergence

to stop the downfall of economy “Unlock” process has been started in various phases starting from 1st June 2020 to 30th September.

On the other hand, Online Shopping or E-Commerce which means doing online business and availing services like booking hotels, flights, online bill payments, etc. According to a report of India Band Equity Foundation (IBEF) Indian E-Commerce industry has projected to grow from 30 US \$ Billion in 2020 to 99 US \$ Billion in 2024. With this potential, the online market has been increased because there were no options available in the lockdown. There were Government and Policy support to promote E-Commerce in India for alternative solution to boost up the economic activities.

E-commerce allows their customers to overcome their geographical barriers and allows them to purchase different types of products anytime and from anywhere according to their convenience. Online and traditional markets have their different strategies for conducting business according to their convenience. Traditional retailers can only offer fewer ranges of selection of products because of shelf space whereas online retailers often hold no inventory but send customer orders directly from the manufacturers so they don't have any problems with holding stocks and inventory. E-commerce brings convenience for customers in their door steps as they do not have to leave home and only need to browse websites on the internet, especially for buying the products which are not sold in nearby stores or shops. It could help customers to buy a wider range of products and save customers time and energy. E-commerce technology cuts the dealing prices by permitting each of the makers and shoppers by skipping through the intermediaries prices.

Literature Review:

Impact of Covid-19 on Online Shopping in India (Halan, 2020)

According to Deepak Halan, there is an increase in the e-commerce sector still the majority of Indians prefer to shop from offline stores or physical stores. E-Commerce sector trying to attract the Indian Shoppers by availing them exciting offers and huge discounts. Author also focuses on the challenges that E-Commerce sector faces that is theft, forgery, frauds, hacking, etc due to pandemic there is an increase in online shopping as well as risks associated with it. Online Shoppers also facing problem of shortage of supplies due to stocking up on essential goods.

Indian E-Commerce to Grow 84% in 4 Years, helped by Covid-19 Impact: Study (Business Standard , 2021)

“The Indian E-Commerce industry has witnessed a huge upsurge due to covid-19 and there is substantial room for future growth” said Phil Pomford, managing director of Asia Pacific, world pay from FIS. Some reports convey that Indian E-Commerce industry will grow 84% to \$111 billion by 2024 as it gains from demand created by the coronavirus pandemic’s impact. Other reports revealed that mobile shopping will be on top increasing the growth up to 21% annually over the next four years. Some of the most popular online

payment options include digital wallets, credit cards and debit cards. E-Commerce has evolved from traditional websites and physical retail to the digital world. It has Top Notch quality which gives access to the customer to shop at their own will, time, space and comfort providing a variety of products and a 24/7 service .

Lockdown proved Inflection Point for E-Commerce in India (Livemint, 2021)

In this article the author explains how the pandemic induced lockdown and movements marked an inflection point for E commerce in India, expanding the demands, indulging new buyers as well as sellers and holding out lasting growth for players. Grofers spokesperson said that among all users on its platform in the last one year, 64% were first time online grocery Shoppers, while 20% were totally new to e-commerce. While Flipkart observes growth up to 50% of new users. The opportunity, however, came with new challenges as the nationwide lockdown put an abrupt end to transportation of goods and movement of personnel. E-Commerce companies struggled to complete the deliveries even as orders pile up. Myntra CEO Amar Nagaram revealed that Myntra went back to the drawing board to chart out a fresh course to overcome this “temporary, yet weighty situation”. They collaborated with over 80 brands for production of Masks and made efforts to deliver them safely across the country in early stages of the lockdown.

How pandemic fostered Indian Consumer’s faith in E-Commerce Sites (Narasimhan, 2021)

The Author says that because of pandemic many countries are facing a severe shortage of essential goods as bulk buying was one of the factor and global supply chains were broken due to export and import Bans imposed by several government. In India due to Technological Solutions the retail sector has rescued the country's long-term future. According to the survey taken by Local Circles 49% Indians said they preferred e-commerce sites and apps for shopping in last 12 months. The survey was received over 1,30,000 responses from over 42,000 unique consumers across 358 districts. 18 % said they called local retail stores and got home delivery. 31% visited malls local retailers and market to shop. The author also focuses on the scaling up of economy with the help of Walmart and Amazon. The intervention of these Global companies leads to the employment of 50,000 small and medium manufacturers in next 5 years. Reliance industry limited also started inventory ownership and has an advantage over its competitors.

Understanding the Covid-19 effect on online shopping behaviour (Meyer)

The author talks about the impact of covid-19 which has influenced more women than men one-third of men compared to 25% of women reported how much they spend on product. Men will also likely to shop online and avoid in store experiences more than women author also told about a study conducted by Nielsen company which has identified six key consumer behaviour tied to covid 19 pandemic and their results on market (1) Proactive health-minded buying (includes preventive health and Wellness products). (2) Reactive Health Management (purchasing masks and hand sanitizers). (3) Pantry preparation (includes

groceries and household essentials). (4) Quarantine time prep (experiencing shortages in stores, making fewer store visits). (5) Restricted living (making fewer shopping trips, limited online fulfilment). (6) A new normal (return to daily routine, permanently altered supply chain).

Author also told that the entertainment industry lead to an increase in digital streaming services like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu and Disney Plus while the other products and services faces loss due to closes Hindi physical stores even online apparel sales are low as people are busy planning their budget for daily Essentials.

Objective of the Study:

To find the impact of use of E-Commerce Platform by the students of Dr. Ambedkar College, Deekshabhoomi, Nagpur.

Research Methodology:

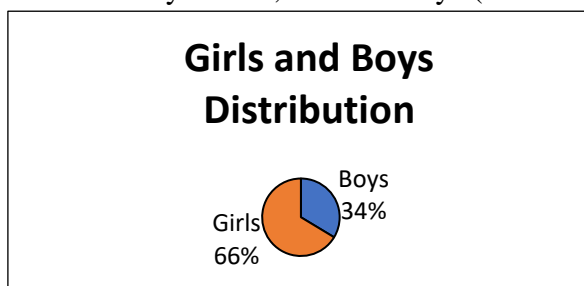
Area of research is Nagpur. Respondents for the study were the Undergraduate (B.Com) & Postgraduate (M.Com) students of Dr. Ambedkar College, Deekshabhoomi, Nagpur. The research is analytical where the non-probability sampling was used and for the analysis pre-planned designed statistical tools was used. The data collection done by structured instruments like questionnaire made on Google Forms. Statistical tools will be used with the help of Excel. In statistics use of the tools like Bar Charts, Pie Charts, Frequency Tables and Hypothesis Testing using Chi-Square.

Hypothesis:

- There is no significant relation between gender and frequency to use E-Commerce Platform.
- There is a significant relation between gender and frequency to use E-Commerce Platform.
- There is no significant relation between students who agreed when they asked, “during lockdown, your use of E-Commerce Apps has increased” and those who disagreed.
- There is no significant relation between students who agreed when they asked, “during lockdown, your use of E-Commerce Apps has increased” and those who disagreed.

Data Analysis and Findings:

In Figure 1 given below, from the surveyed data, 34% are boys (37 out of 110) and 66% are girls (73 out of 110).



In Figure 2 given below, from the surveyed data, 35% (39 out of 110) are of 15 to 20 Years, 59% (65 out of 110) are of 20 to 25 Years and 5% (6 out of 110) are of 25 years and above. Maximum number of students belong to the age group of 20 to 25 years and least number of students aged 25 years and above.

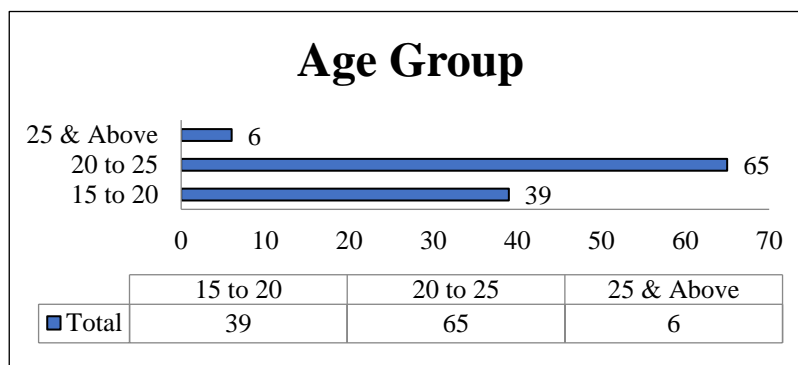


Figure 2: Age-wise Distribution of Students

In Figure 3 given below, from the surveyed data, highest number of students have mobile or smart phone which accounts to 98% (108 out of 110) and 32% (35 out of 110) have both mobile and laptop/computer.

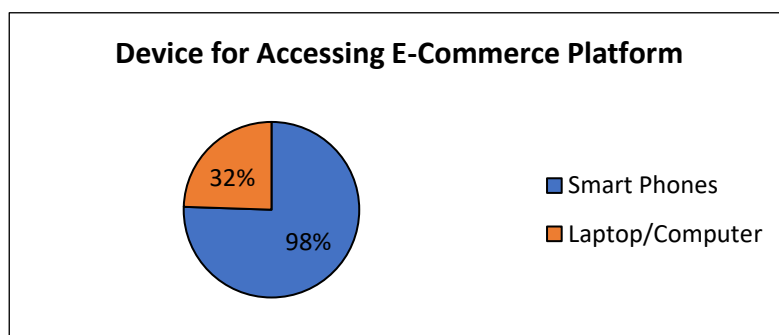
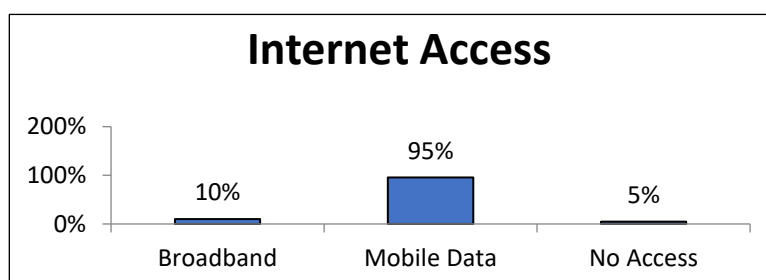


Figure 3: Device for Accessing E-Commerce Platform

In Figure 4 given below, from the surveyed data, highest number of students have Internet Access via Mobile Data which accounts to 95% (105 out of 110) and 10% (11 out of 110) have both Mobile Data and Broadband. 5% (5 out of 110) have No Access to Internet.



In Figure 5 given below, from the surveyed data, 26% (29 out of 110) students are studying in First Year Graduation, 10% (11 out of 110) students are studying in Second Year Graduation, 13% (14 out of 110) students are studying in Third Year Graduation, 25% (27 out of 110) students are studying in First Year Post Graduation and 26% (29 out of 110) students are studying in Second Year Graduation. Both first year graduation & post graduation second year are equal highest. Least students were from second year graduation.

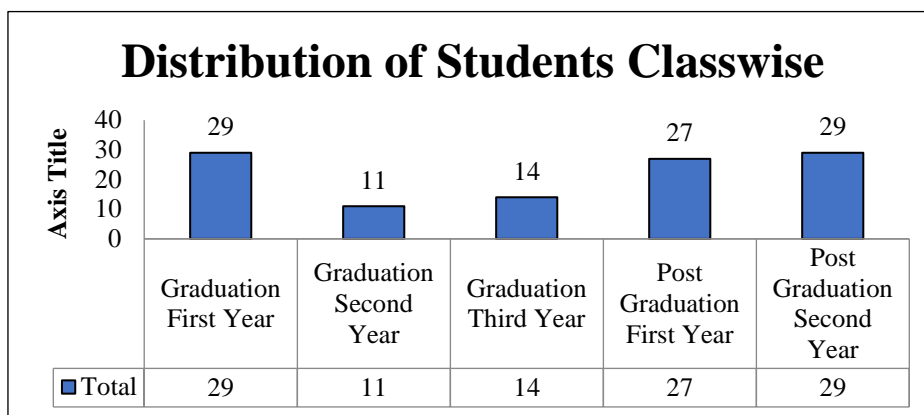


Figure 5: Distribution of Students Class-wise

In Figure 6 given below, from the surveyed data, 35% (38 out of 110) students purchase Health & Fitness Products, 23% (25 out of 110) students purchase Groceries, 37% (41 out of 110) students purchase Fashion Apparel, 33% (36 out of 110) students purchase Gadgets and 36% (40 out of 110) students purchase Other products which are not specified in general. Students prefer Fashion Apparel over Health & Fitness, Gadgets, Groceries. Most of students also purchases other products which are excluded from the given category.

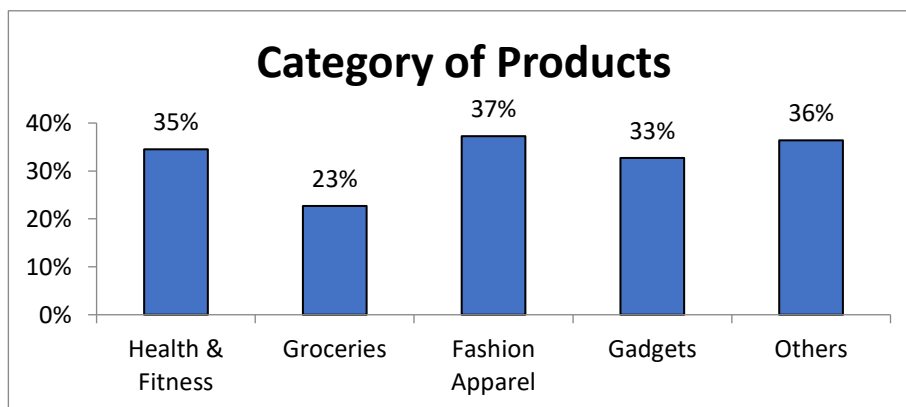


Figure 6: Category of Products

In Figure 7 given below, from the surveyed data, 15% (17 out of 110) students use E-Commerce Application Most frequent or on daily basis, 22% (24 out of 110) students use E-Commerce Application frequent or on weekly basis, 14% (15 out of 110) students use E-Commerce Application Less frequent or on fortnightly basis and 49% (54 out of 110) students use E-Commerce Application rarely or on monthly basis. Highest number of students

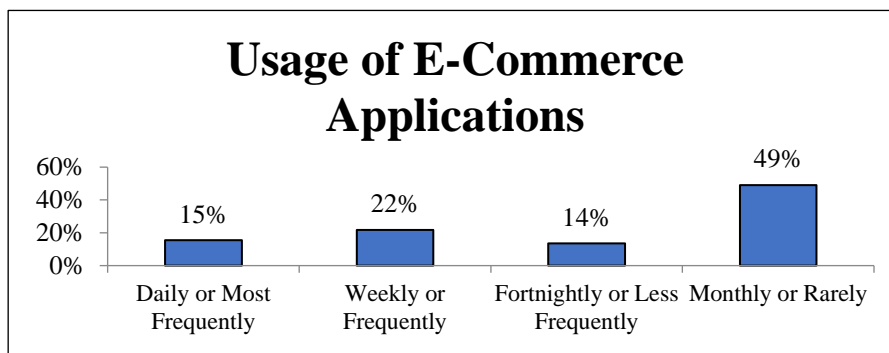


Figure 7: Usage of E-Commerce Applications

When asked to the students “did you / your family find any difficulty in procurement or purchase of Essential Goods & Non-Essential Goods during the Lockdown” – the responses from the surveyed data, shows 39% (43 out of 110) students found it difficult. Whereas, 61% (67 out of 110) students didn’t find any difficulty. From these 43 students, 29 (67%) got helped by the use of E-Commerce Applications for procurement or purchase of Essential Goods & Non-Essential Goods during the Lockdown. Refer figure 8 and 9.

Hypothesis Testing:

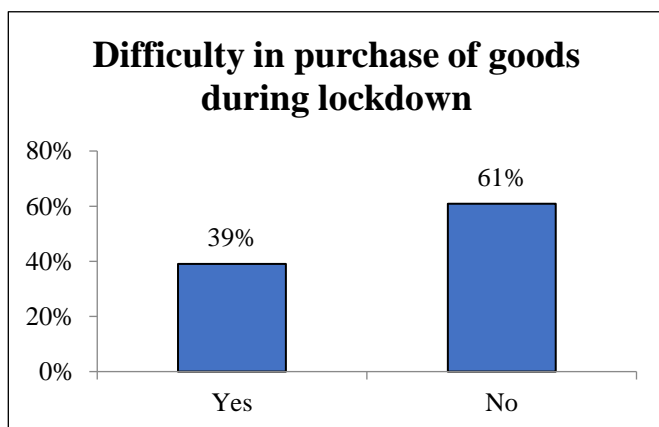


Figure 9: Difficulty in purchase of goods during lockdown

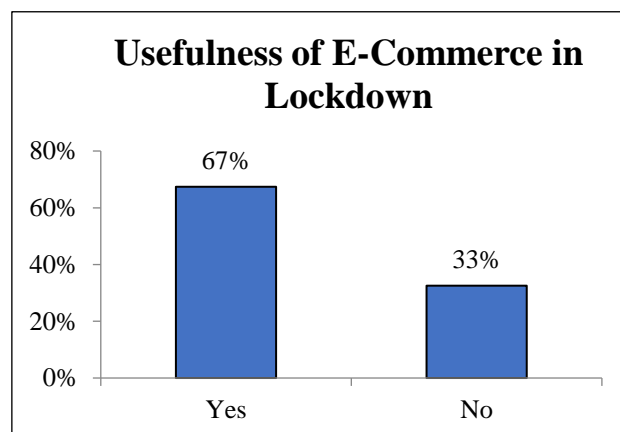


Figure 8: Usefulness of E-Commerce in Lockdown

According to Table 1 the rows represents the gender i.e. girls and boys. The Columns represents the frequency of using E-Commerce. To find out whether there is any significant relationship between gender and frequency of using E-Commerce; we are using a Chi-Square Test. Assuming Level of Significance at 0.05 (α).

Table 1: Cross-Tabulation for Gender and Frequency

	Frequency of using E-Commerce Platform				
Gender	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Total
Boys	8	8	5	16	37
Girls	9	16	10	38	73
Total	17	24	15	54	110

The P-Value is calculated as 0.6232 which is more than the alpha (α) 0.05. Hence, the alternate hypothesis will be rejected and null hypothesis is accepted i.e. there is no significant relationship between Gender and Frequency of using E-Commerce Platform.

Table 2: Cross-Tabulation for Observed and Expected Responses

	Observed	Expected
Agree	43	43.5
Disagree	44	43.5
Total	87	87

According to Table 2 the observed and expected values are given of the students who responded agree and disagree to the question. To find out whether there is a significant relationship between students who said agree and disagree a Chi-Square Test is used. Assuming Level of Significance at 0.05 (α).

The P-Value is 0.9146 which is more than alpha (α) 0.05. Hence, the alternate hypothesis will be rejected and null hypothesis is accepted i.e. there is no significant relationship between the students who responded Agree and Disagree to the question "According to you, during lockdown, your use of E-Commerce Apps has increased." Mentioned in the questionnaire.

Limitations:

The time period of this study was limited to one week. Only commerce stream student's data collected. Due to pandemic for data collection cannot be done physically, the

empirical data was collected via Google Form. The study is limited to Dr. Ambedkar College and findings of this study cannot be generalised as socio-demography may differ in other college. To understand the impact of Lockdown very few variables were selected, for further study a lot more variables can be explored.

Conclusion:

The expansion of E-Commerce industry depends on the expansion of spectrum of technology and infrastructure supporting it. For economic growth there must be inclusion of the unorganised sector in the E-Commerce industry. Development of cyber security cell, data privacy bill and other related regulations are need of an hour. Literature review directs that there has been increase in the use of E-Commerce Platform i.e. online shopping mobile applications and websites in major parts of country. The findings of the study indicates that majority of students from sample data are equipped with smart phone having access to mobile internet. Students prefer to buy fashion apparel over other category of goods like gadgets, health and fitness, etc. Usage of E-Commerce Platform is not the same among the students, almost half of the students use E-Commerce Platform on Monthly basis which is low. E-Commerce application also helped in families who faced difficulties in purchasing of goods. Findings also specify that the impact of Lockdown has no significant effect on the increase in the use of E-Commerce Platform.

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