



SMART PHONES AND E-COMMERCE: A STUDY ON WOMEN'S SMARTPHONE USAGE

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Abstract

Significant progress in telecommunication has made the world smaller and the markets bigger. E-commerce through smart phones is one of these progresses. E-commerce is an established method which is facilitating trade and commerce. Sale of products or services using computer network or mobile network is possible with the 3G boom. Recently, smart phone application has become an all pervasive phenomenon has made a paradigm shift in the field of trade and commerce. India is a developing country and the quantification of development is not complete if the status of women's usage of new technologies is not encompassed. With the entry of smart phones at affordable prices in the market many people have gone for it. This study aims to check whether women are engaged in e-commerce through smart phones. There by the digital literacy of women is also measured.

Key Words: Smart Phones, E-Commerce.

Introduction

Information and communication technologies have made super advances there by helping all areas of human life revolutionary. The *modus operandi* of all departments, sections and areas of human life has changed drastically. There is no work that does not demand the service of information and communication technology.

Smart phones have turned into a handheld computer, of late, and people tend to enjoy this gadget. It gives immense opportunities for a person, helps one to complete the work from where ever one is. Banking, shopping, communication, learning, connectivity, research... what not a gadget enables to achieve. Simply, the smart phones bring the world in to people's hands.

E-commerce too draws a wide range of expertise such as mobile commerce, electronic funds transfer, supply chain management, Internet marketing, electronic data interchange (EDI), inventory management systems and automated data collection systems. It has turned into a major tool of business management in the new millennium.

Aldhaban (2012), smartphone technology is evolving rapidly and is influencing consumers' behaviors, their daily lifestyle, marketing, and business activities. Ngai and Gunasekaran (2007), M commerce applications have two major characteristics: Mobility and broad reach. Mobility implies portability example users can conduct business real time via mobile devices. With Mcommerce people can be reached through a mobile device.

Women and E-commerce

Online presence of business organizations has gained momentum especially since the Facebook boom. Almost all medium and large scale business houses have a Facebook page and they are actively boosting their market/sales to the promotion. Clothes, footwear, accessories, baby products, organic products what not? The visual presentation, variety in the products, ease of shopping, cash on delivery option, comparison of prices across companies and website do all provide the convenience for women to be more comfortable to shop online.

As the observation goes level of education, intelligence, income group, and affordability does all influence rather decide the usage of smart phones. The same holds good with the women's hands on the e-commerce.

Davina Lines (2013) that change in focus means that it's time to reassess traditional views about how to appeal to an e-commerce purchaser. The traditional picture has been of early adopters, predominantly men, buying digital media, computers and other consumer electronics. But expectations as to what an e-commerce purchaser should be, and should do are changing, as many sites are expanding their wares to areas of more traditional female responsibility, as women are the key purchasers for household goods sold online. The increase in fashion brands selling online, once laughed at because 'who would want to buy clothes or shoes without trying them on?' has only been one element of the evolution in online retailing. Grocery shopping, clothes, toys and party supplies are just some of the opportunities that have seen the number of women outstrip the number of men buying online.



Significance of the Study

World over, new media studies have gained importance over a period of time. New media is widely used by government, non-government, business and other organizations universally. As we know all these organizations target the general public. They design and market the products and services, and persuade people to avail them easily. One such effort is smart phone apps. All online market places have developed an app to be present in the mobile phones, thereby expanding their markets. It is not at all difficult today to purchase an outfit or an artifact from distant manufacturers. People need not go to Kashmir to purchase a “*kashmiri shawl*.” At the touch of an app and few steps in banking, one can have the products delivered at the door step.

India is a country where vast number of people is traditional and conservative in their outlook. Women, till recent times have been struggling for their empowerment. It is a nation where women reservation bill is kept in contention since years. The patriarchal society has made its mind to accept a girl child on par with male offspring. But only in matters of education. A developing nation like India will be an overall developing country only when Women in the country are empowered and developed.

Many companies have offered smart phones at a very low cost so that it reaches vast number of people. Freedom251 is one such attempt of Government of India under Digital India program. The affordability of the majority of the population is taken in to consideration. At this juncture there should be introspection on the status of women’s digital literacy. Hence the study assumes importance.

Literature Survey

Though several studies have been conducted world over, on this topic, it still provides ample of opportunities to explore. Especially in India, there are very limited scientific studies carried out by the researchers in India.

Snapdeal.com, a leading marketplace e-commerce player has raised Rs 590 crore in a new round of equity financing. Snapdeal, launched in 2010, is expecting over 50% of its sales through mobile by the end of this year and is looking at spending more aggressively in technology. At present, 35% of its transactions happen through mobile. The company is soon expected to cross the sales target of \$ 1 billion gross merchandise value. Business Standard (May 2014), quotes the snapdeal CEO that, “fashion has become about 60% of the Snapdeal sales unit from almost zero about 15 months ago. The largest category on the website-fashion - is growing by about 40% month-on-month.

Ngai and Gunasekaran (2007), According to a study conducted by Data Monitor, global m-commerce revenues will amount to \$31.7 billion by 2005.

Techcircle (May 2014) reports that **Bluestone.com**, an online jewellery store run by Bangalore-based Jewels Online Distribution India Pvt Ltd., claims to be selling up to 120 units a day with an average order value of Rs 12,000. Founded in February 2012. It raised its last round worth \$ 5 million in January 2013. Jewellery can be purchased via EMIs as well. This convenience is not available in offline store which is in ones city. “It’s all about trust at the end. It is not like particularly for this category people won’t buy online because of the touch and feel factor, it is more about trust. We have seen 30-40 per cent repeat purchases since once customers put in the faith they definitely come back for more,” the e-paper quotes the CEO. Online jewellery shopping has seen tremendous traction and will only grow further; the most expensive purchase from Bluestone was a, Rs 5 lakh solitaire ring. The fact that a good chunk of the sales happen in the bracket of Rs 1-2 lakh says a lot about the customers’ faith in us,” the paper quotes.

Davina Lines (2013) A key driver is convenience. Women in the United Kingdom, for example, are taking their e-commerce purchasing a step beyond online and now lead the market in mobile purchases. Research conducted at OgilvyAction into the mobile behaviour of 1,000 U.K. consumers found that 56 percent of women own a smart phone, as opposed to 51 percent of men. It also showed that one in six women had made a purchase on their mobile phone, compared to one in nine men.

Rahul Sachitanand & Indulekha Aravind (2015) “For Richa Kar, the founder and chief executive of Zivame, an online lingerie retailer, the internet provided an opportunity to give women consumers a far better shopping option than an existing inefficient and uncomfortable offline experience. “We not only offer a broader range and more styles, we also help with fitting,” she says. “We have leveraged technology to solve this problem and built a women centric brand from the ground up.” She claims that 18% of Zivame buyers made their first online purchase on the lingerie portal and the company is looking to move more such potential customers online. “We have barely scratched the surface despite our apparent growth... with



almost no marketing we are seeing strong brand recognition in tier II and III towns... we want women to buy their entire lingerie drawer from us" she adds."

Methodology

Survey method is the approach adopted by the researcher to study this phenomenon. A sample of randomly selected 100 women between the ages 26 to 50 were administered a questionnaire and collected information. The researchers feel that below 25 years of age shows active usage of New Media. Hence they have let out the age between 21-25.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected through questionnaire is presented in the charts below. They are self explanatory.

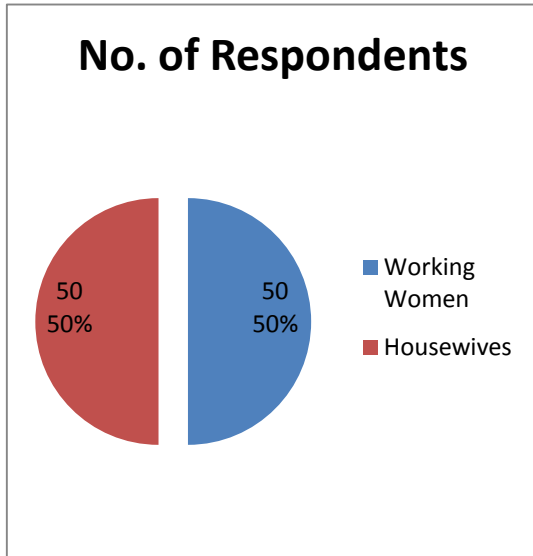


Figure 1

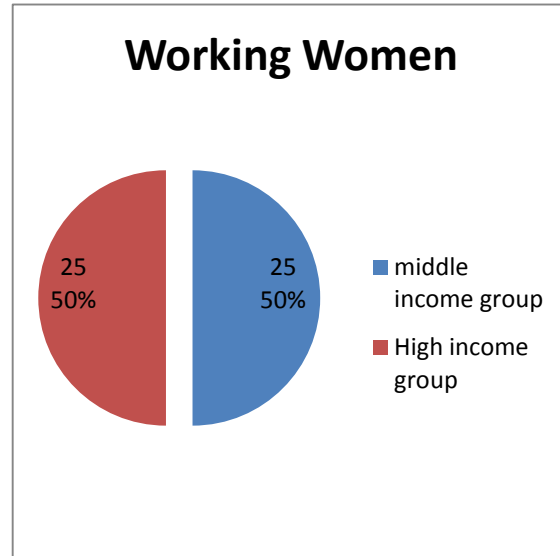


Figure 2

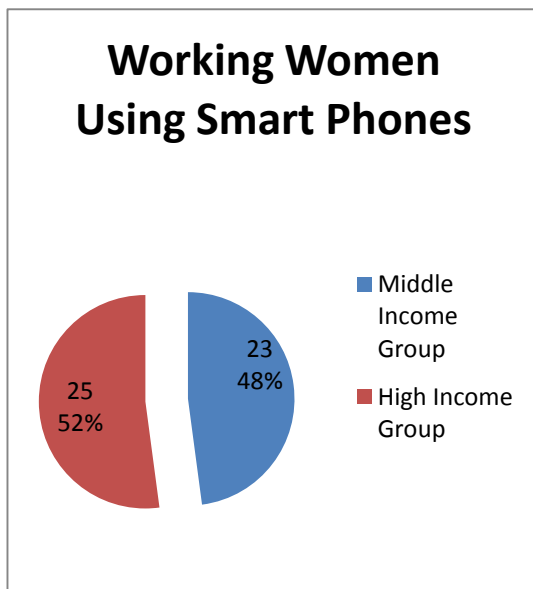


Figure 3

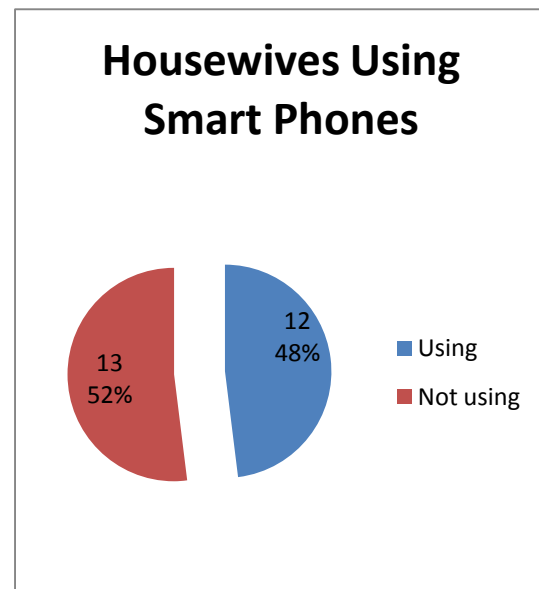


Figure 4

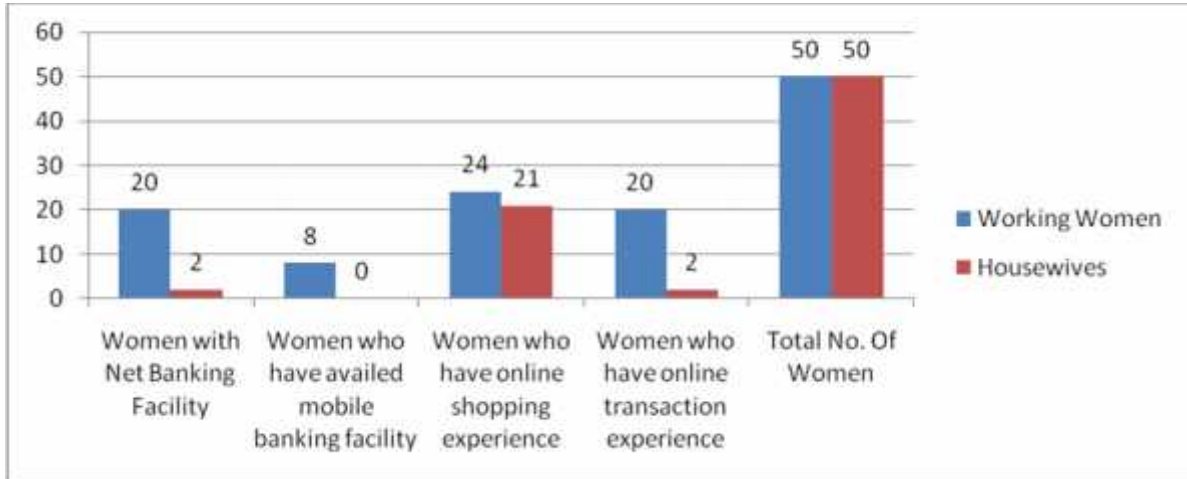


Figure 5

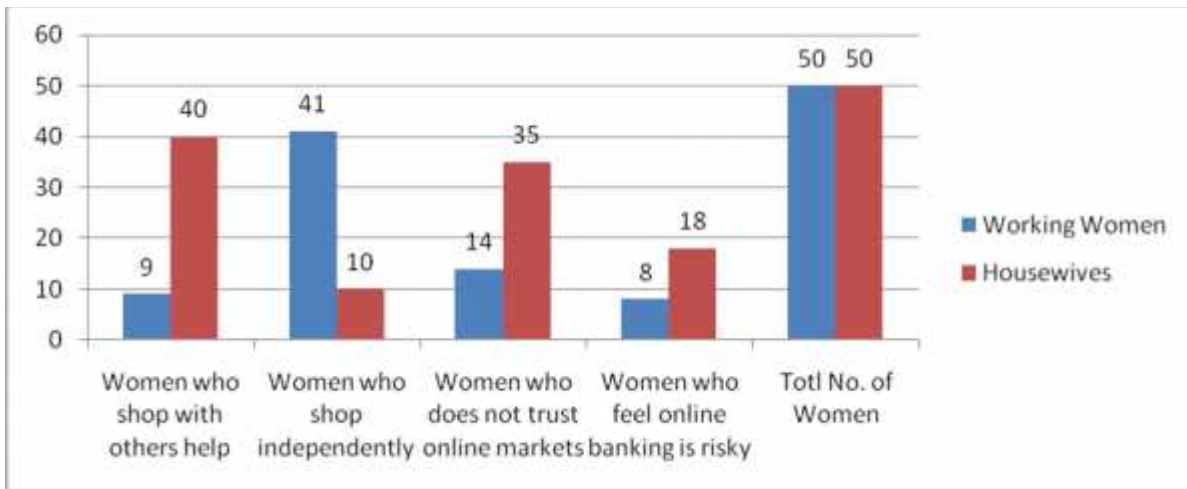


Figure 6

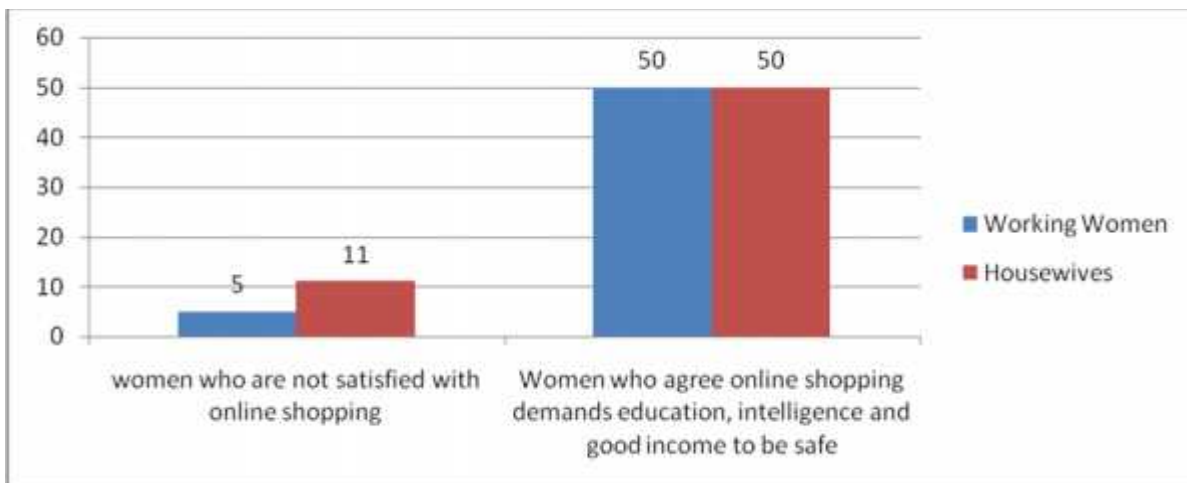


Figure 7

The above charts show the data collected from the randomly selected 100 women of different ages. Women have been divided into two categories- Working women and housewives. This is for the convenience of the study. And also both housewives and working women differ in their outlook, stand and points of view towards concepts. Not only that, economic



independence is a matter of thought when we study the topic. Choice, decision making, assertion is more independent and stern among working women than housewives. Hence this bifurcation.

Figure 5 show that 40% of the working women have availed netbanking, while only 4% of housewives have availed it. 16% of working women have mobile banking facility for their account while only one percent of housewives have it. 50% of the working women have online shopping experience, while 42% of housewives have. 40% of working women have done online transaction and only 4% of housewives have done online transaction. Figure 6 reveals that 80% of housewives shop online with others help, while 80% of working women shop independently. 70% of housewives do not trust online markets. 28% of working women do not trust online market. 36% of housewives feel that online or mobile banking is risky, while 84% of working women trust online or mobile banking to be safe. Figure 7 shows that only 22% of housewives are not satisfied with online shopping experience. Lesser than that, only 10% of working women are not satisfied with online shopping. All women agreed that online shopping demands education, intelligence and good income to be safe.

Conclusion

In India online market is booming and expanding every minute. Social media alone has boosted many fashion brands selling. The ease, convenience and comfort, wide range of offers and options, price comparison and importantly cash on delivery and easy return ideas have given momentum to the booming e-commerce. Mobility and Portability are the greatest advantages of ecommerce through mobile phones. Women are the most targeted group when it comes to household and fashion products. They are wooed and cooed by the entrepreneurs. Compared to computer monitor, as the smart phones have smaller display, users find it difficult to view the product. The respondents opined that it was easy for them to navigate and transact in a computer rather in a smart phone. Intelligence, education and knowledge are demanded by e-commerce. Without which it is difficult to enjoy the fruits of online shopping. Women's smart phone usage has considerably contributed to the e-commerce. More and more women may be attracted to e-commerce through smart phones in near future.

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