

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MULTIDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES OF TECHNOLOGY DRIVEN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

20th November 2025



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DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES



ARUNACHALA

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING FOR WOMEN

Accredited by NAAC with "A" Grade

(Approved by AICTE, New Delhi and Affiliated to Anna University, Chennai)

Manavilai, Velichanthai P.o, Kanyakumari, Tamilnadu, India – 629203

(An ISO 9001: 2015 Certified Institution)

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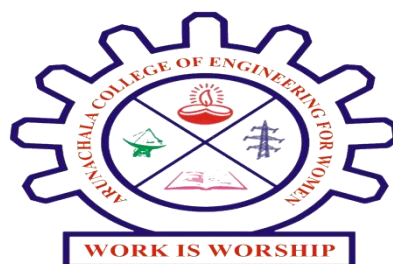
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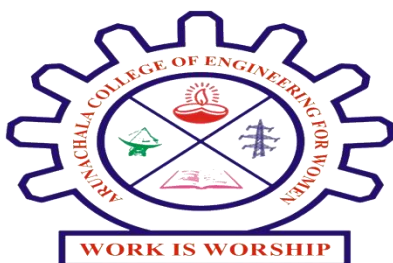
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EVOLVING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN THE DIGITAL ERA: (A STUDY IN
GUMMIDIPOONDI)

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1. Abstract

The digital era has basically transformed consumer behaviour, influencing how consumers search, estimate, and purchase products and services. This study investigates **evolving consumer behaviour in Gummidipoondi**, a semi-urban industrial town in Tamil Nadu. Using a **descriptive research design**, primary data were collected through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, accompany by secondary sources such as journals, reports, and news articles. Findings reveal that factors such as **trust, digital convenience, social media influence, personalization, and flexible payment options** significantly affect consumer behaviour. Consumers face challenges including limited digital literacy, connectivity issues, delayed deliveries, and insufficient customer support. The study provides insights for businesses and policymakers to enhance digital engagement strategies tailored to semi-urban consumers.

Keywords: Consumer Behaviour, Digital Era, Online Shopping, Social Media Influence, Digital Trust

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2.Introduction

The proliferation of digital technology has reshaped consumer behaviour worldwide. Smartphones, high-speed internet, social media platforms, and e-commerce websites have altered the way individuals search for information, compare alternatives, and make purchase decisions. In semi-urban towns like Gummidipoondi, these changes are increasingly visible

among industrial workers, students, and local business owners who rely on online platforms for shopping, services, and digital payments.

Digital consumer behaviour is influenced by several key factors. First, digital convenience allows consumers to shop anytime, anywhere, with easy access to product information and home delivery. Second, trust and security are critical, as concerns over fraud, scams, and data misuse affect consumers' willingness to engage in online transactions. Third, social media plays a significant role, with peer recommendations, reviews, and influencer marketing shaping purchase decisions. Finally, personalization through tailored offers, product suggestions, and loyalty programs enhances consumer satisfaction and engagement.

Understanding these patterns is essential for businesses and policymakers to design effective strategies. A descriptive research approach provides a **comprehensive snapshot of current consumer behaviours**, identifying trends, challenges, and opportunities in the digital era.

3. Motivation of the Study

The rapid adoption of digital platforms, even in semi-urban industrial towns, motivates this study. While online services provide convenience, consumers encounter challenges such as limited digital literacy, lack of trust, delayed deliveries, and inadequate customer support. By examining consumer behaviour in Gummidipoondi, this study aims to provide a baseline understanding of online shopping habits, digital adoption, and the barriers that hinder optimal engagement. Insights from this research can help businesses improve digital strategies, enhance customer experiences, and foster trust in semi-urban markets.

4. Statement of the Problem

Despite the growth of digital commerce in India, there is limited research on consumer behaviour in semi-urban industrial towns such as Gummidipoondi. Unique challenges faced by consumers in these regions, including digital literacy gaps, connectivity issues, and logistical barriers, influence their adoption of online services and platforms. The lack of comprehensive understanding limits businesses' ability to tailor strategies effectively for semi-urban consumers. This study addresses this gap by descriptively analyzing patterns, determinants, and challenges associated with consumer behaviour in the digital era.

5. Objectives of the Study

The study has four main objectives. The first is to describe consumer purchasing patterns in Gummidipoondi in the digital era, including the frequency of online shopping, preferred platforms, and product categories. The second is to identify the problems faced by consumers while engaging with digital platforms, such as digital literacy, trust issues, and delivery delays. The third is to analyze the influence of factors such as digital convenience, trust, social media, and personalization on consumer behaviour. Finally, the study aims to provide

actionable insights for businesses and policymakers to improve digital engagement and satisfaction among semi-urban consumers.

6. Review of Literature

Several studies have examined digital consumer behaviour. **Kotler (2017)** emphasized that digital platforms enable personalized engagement, which enhances satisfaction and loyalty. **Schiffman and Wisenblit (2019)** noted that online shopping is largely driven by convenience and price comparison, highlighting the importance of accessibility in digital platforms. **Solomon (2020)** observed that consumers are strongly influenced by online communities and peer recommendations, reinforcing the role of social media in purchase decisions. **Pavlou (2003)** pointed out that trust is critical for successful online transactions, with security concerns directly affecting digital adoption.

Chaffey (2015) argued that e-marketing reshapes the consumer decision journey by providing more interactive and targeted engagement opportunities. **Kumar and Reinartz (2018)** discussed how Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools enhance loyalty by personalizing offers and communications. **Hajli (2014)** found that social commerce drives decision-making, indicating that social networks are becoming integral to online shopping behaviour. **Verhoef et al. (2015)** highlighted the impact of omnichannel strategies on engagement, emphasizing that seamless integration across platforms improves satisfaction. **Prasad and Jha (2014)** observed that cultural factors moderate digital adoption, while **McKinsey (2021)** noted that the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital adoption, creating lasting behavioural changes.

Overall, these studies indicate that trust, convenience, personalization, and social media influence are key determinants of digital consumer behaviour. However, there is limited focus on semi-urban towns, making Gummidipoondi an ideal context for this research.

7. Hypothesis Development

Based on the literature review, the following hypotheses were developed:

H1: Digital convenience positively affects online purchase intention.

H2: Trust and security positively influence digital adoption.

H3: Social media influence significantly impacts purchase decisions.

H4: Personalization enhances satisfaction and loyalty.

H5: Omnichannel experiences improve consumer engagement.

H6: Price transparency affects platform choice.

H7: Demographics moderate the relationship between digital adoption and behaviour.

These hypotheses guide the descriptive analysis of consumer behaviour in Gummidipoondi.

8. Research Methodology

The study adopts a **descriptive research design** to document consumer behaviour patterns without manipulating variables. The population comprises consumers in Gummidipoondi

who actively use digital platforms for shopping, services, or payments. A sample of 250 respondents was selected through **stratified purposive sampling** to ensure representation across age, gender, occupation, and income groups.

Data were collected through structured questionnaires with Likert-scale questions, supplemented by semi-structured interviews with 20–30 respondents together qualitative insights. Secondary sources, including journals, government reports, and news articles, were also reviewed.

Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, such as percentages, means, and standard deviations, to describe consumer patterns. Relationships between demographic variables and online behaviour were explored using cross-tabulation, while trends were visually represented through bar charts and pie charts.

9. Problems Faced by Consumers

Consumers in Gummidipoondi encounter multiple challenges when engaging with digital platforms. Limited digital literacy is a significant barrier, as many users, especially older adults and industrial workers, lack familiarity with smartphones, apps, and online shopping interfaces. This results in hesitation or avoidance of online transactions.

Trust and security concerns are also prominent. Many consumers fear fraud, scams, and data misuse, which reduces their willingness to adopt digital payment methods. Connectivity issues, such as slow or unstable internet, disrupt online transactions and create negative shopping experiences.

Payment barriers further complicate digital adoption. Many consumers prefer cash-on-delivery due to unfamiliarity with digital wallets, UPI, or net banking, which slows the transition to fully digital purchasing. Product mismatch is another challenge, as items received may differ from their online descriptions or images, leading to dissatisfaction and returns.

Delivery delays in semi-urban areas frustrate consumers and reduce repeat purchases, while limited customer support exacerbates dissatisfaction when complaints are unresolved. Additionally, misleading reviews, fake advertisements, and cultural resistance to online shopping influence purchase decisions and slow digital adoption. Hidden costs, such as delivery fees or convenience charges, also reduce consumers' willingness to engage with online platforms.

10. Recent Trends in Consumer Behaviour

Recent developments highlight the increasing importance of digital channels. Digital payments and online shopping have surged nationwide, reflecting broader adoption trends.

Social media has become a critical factor, influencing approximately 84% of consumer purchases, with peer recommendations and influencer marketing playing key roles.

Data privacy and security remain significant concerns, with consumers seeking platforms that provide transparent policies and secure transactions. Semi-urban towns like Gummidipoondi are showing rapid adoption of e-commerce, driven by better connectivity, smartphone penetration, and familiarity with online tools. Categories such as electronics, fashion, groceries, and home décor are increasingly purchased online. Despite digital adoption, consumers still value human interaction, particularly for complex queries or complaints.

11. Tools to Study Consumer Behaviour

Several tools and methods were used to study consumer behaviour. Surveys and questionnaires provided quantitative insights into purchase patterns, trust, and social media influence. Interviews and focus groups offered qualitative perspectives on consumer motivations, challenges, and satisfaction. Web analytics platforms such as Google Analytics and Hotjar tracked online engagement, while social media monitoring tools, including Hootsuite and Sprout Social, analyzed consumer sentiment and trends. Customer relationship management systems like Salesforce and Zoho helped assess loyalty and personalization effectiveness. Eye-tracking and A/B testing tools provided additional insights into user interaction with digital platforms.

12. Conclusion

This descriptive study demonstrates that digital convenience, trust, personalization, social media influence, and omnichannel experiences are key factors shaping consumer behaviour in Gummidipoondi. Although adoption is increasing, consumers face challenges such as digital literacy gaps, connectivity issues, delivery delays, limited support, and concerns about fraud. By understanding these patterns, businesses and policymakers can design strategies that enhance digital engagement, improve satisfaction, and foster trust, particularly in semi-urban contexts. Future research could expand to compare multiple semi-urban towns, analyze longitudinal changes, and explore the impact of emerging technologies such as AI-driven recommendations on consumer behaviour.

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