



“A STUDY OF CONSUMER PREFERENCE ON ONLINE SHOPPING IN KAMRUP METROPOLITAN AND KAMRUP RURAL DISTRICTS OF ASSAM”

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ABSTRACT: Today the advancement of science and technology has enabled people to deal business over the online networking system and as a result of which, now-a-days, trade and commerce have become faster, easier and more convenient. The online shopping which is also known as ‘e-commerce’ refers to a modern method of dealing trade and commerce through online networking system or internet without any intermediary factor. On the basis of primary data collected through a field survey and secondary data, this paper tries to make a comparative analysis of consumers preference on online shopping in Kamrup Metropolitan and Kamrup Rural districts of Assam, India.

KEYWORDS: Consumer preference, Online shopping, Kamrup(M), Kamrup(R), Assam.

INTRODUCTION:

Today the advancement of science and technology has enabled people to deal business over the online networking system and as a result of which, now-a-days, trade and commerce have become faster, easier and more convenient. It generally becomes as the alternative means for purchasing and selling goods and services against the traditional means of purchasing and selling. Terms of ‘Online Shopping’ is basically an approach of buying goods and services on online network. In simple terms it can be referred to as a process in where consumers directly buy goods or services from a seller through internet without any intermediary service. The other terms ‘Consumers Preference’ towards online shopping denotes customers’ tendency towards purchasing products online. This inclination is molded by various factors depending on each individual’s state of mind. The online shopping is also known as ‘e-commerce’ meaning as a modern method of trade and commerce addressing the need of organization, seller and customers to cut cost by eliminating any intermediary factor while improving the quality of goods and services and assure speed of service delivery. It is based on the principle of paperless exchange of business information and used network-based technology. The main vehicle of e-commerce remains internet, intranet, extranet and World Wide Web. The 1979 invention of Michael Aldrich, now becomes most of people’s preference to do shopping not only because of broader selection competitive pricing and greater access to information, but also organizations or sellers even do prefer online business as it offers access to a worldwide market, increase customer value and build sustainable capabilities.

This globally recognized e-commerce sector has gradually started to show its potential in India from the last decade of 20th century. In 1995 internet was first introduced in India which marked the beginning of e-commerce in India. At present, there are numerous websites in India dealing e-commerce sector for products like books, furniture, garments, gadgets, food items and many more. Some of them are Amazon, flip kart, 1mg, Mynta,



Snappdeal, Nykaa, Paytm etc. The number of internet users in India is growing day-by-day; by virtue of which tendency of online shopping is also expanding with hand in hand. Currently, India has over 749 million internet users and is ranked as the second largest online market worldwide (source- statista.com).

RATIONAL OF THE STUDY

In ‘An Experimental Examination of Alternative Forms of Web Assurance for Business-to-Consumer E-Commerce (2002)’ Mauldin and Arunachalam identified that certain attributes that are closely related to the intention of purchasing products through online. P. Lurn and Hsin-Hui Lin in “Towards an Understanding of the Behavioral Intention to Use Mobile Banking(2005)” revealed that the explosive growth of internet users provides a great number of potential consumers to e-markets. Md. Umar Sultan and Md. Nasir Uddin (2011) did a study on factors that influence consumers to shop online. The researchers decided to study four factors – convenience, time saving, website design/features, and security and in findings they found that consumer’s willingness to buy products online could be affected by one’s needs and those need can be of need for cognition and need for evaluation which are highly influenced by different situational factors. Adil Bashir (2013) in “Consumer Behavior Towards Online Shopping of Electronics inPakistan” views that main barrier in online shopping process is the safety issue as of which consumers of Pakistan particularly the younger generation are reluctant to purchase products online. Then, the second hindrance is the low level of trust on online store that affecting the behavioral attitude of consumers towards online shopping. Kalpana Mathur and Arti Sharma (2014) conducted a research study on “A Study of Online Shopping Habits of Consumers in India”. From the data analysis, the researchers conclude that visiting shops, malls or retail outlets are more time consuming. Therefore, many people incline to online shopping. The study also reveals that preferred mode of payment for e-shopping is cash on delivery irrespective of respondent’s income group. In 2015 G.R. Shalini and K.S. Hema Malini performed a research study on the characteristics of online shopping and customers intention towards purchasing online products in Chennai city. Is it revealed in the study that there exists a positive relationship between websites’ characteristics and attitude, trust and intention of online purchasing? M. Dhanalakshmi, M. Sakthivel and M. Nandhini (2017) on “A Study on Consumer Perception Towards Online Shopping, Salem” researchers find that the consumers’ perception of online shopping varies from person to person and the perception is limited to certain extent by the availability of proper connectivity and the exposure of need of improving online shopping process to satisfy the customers.

Thus, from the above discussion it is clear that various researchers have studied and analyzed various aspects of consumer’s preference on online shopping in many regions. But, till now no comparative study has been conducted in Kamrup (M) district areas and Kamrup (R) district areas of Assam in regard to such topic. Since, no such study has been done so far so the present study may be regarded as relevant and justifiable. The researcher basically intends to bring the light on the inclination of consumers of Kamrup (M) district and Kamrup (R) district of Assam towards online shopping in a comparative manner. Hence, the recommendation of the present study will help marketers of various companies to know better the inclination of consumers towards online shopping and the effecting factors of the selected areas.



OBJECTIVES:

The study deals with the following objectives:

1. To analyze the attitude and preferences of customers towards online shopping in both Kamrup (M) and Kamrup (R) district areas.
2. To examine what aspects of internet marketing influence customers' buying decision.

METHODOLOGY:

The study follows descriptive research method. It relies on sources of both primary and secondary data. Primary data are collected from respondents using tools of personal interview of survey method. Questionnaire is prepared to collect information regarding the attitude towards online shopping, problems faced by the consumers due to geographical region, benefits of online shopping, website they use including the factors affecting them while choosing online websites etc. The secondary data have also been collected through published materials like books, journals, internet etc. The researcher uses convenience sampling to select areas and respondents for interview.

SCOPE & LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

The study is conducted in the geographical area of Guwahati city and areas of Kamrup rural district with special reference to Rangia, Baihata Chariali, Kamalpur. The study aiming to understand consumers' preference on online shopping includes those factors that influence the tendency of consumers to do shopping online. The respondents are among various sections of society having different professions like professionals, self-employed, unemployed and students etc.

Some of the limitations of the study are given below -

1. This research limits itself to only online customers excluding offline customers
2. Required time to complete the research study was found too short to cover a broad study like customer's preference towards online shopping.
3. The response rate of respondents for interview was not quite satisfactory as a few respondents hesitated to co-operate with the researcher.
4. Only a few areas under Kamrup (R) district have been selected for research purpose with a view to the consideration of time and cost.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA:

Primary data from respondents as gathered by distributing hundred fifteen questionnaires among the residents of selected areas of kamrup metro that is Guwahati city and kamrup rural that is Rangia, Baihata Chariali and Kamalpur and eighty of them respond with required data. A demographic profile of the respondent is prepared and presented in table 1.1 as under.



Table 1.1 Demographic profiles of the respondents

SL NO	Demographic		Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	36	45
		Female	44	55
2	Marital status	Married	32	40
		Unmarried	48	60
3	Sample size	Kamrup metro	40	50
		Kamrup Rural	40	50
3	Income	Upto 20000	20	25
		20001-40000	32	40
		40001-60000	24	30
		Above 60000	4	5
4	Occupation	Professional	20	25
		Self employed	24	30
		Unemployed	16	20
		Students	20	25

Source- field survey

INTERPRETATION: For the purpose of research study researchers select 80 respondents of which 36 are male and 44 are female. 40 respondents are taken from, Guwahati city (Kamrup metro) and other 40 are taken from kamrup (Rural) with special reference to Rangia, Baihata Chariali and Kamalpur. Among the 80 respondents 32 are married and 48 are unmarried and they are mostly professional person, self-employed, unemployed and students. 20 out of them have income less than 20000 and 32 of them have income between 20001 to 40000 and 24 of them have income between 40001 to 60000 and 4 of them have income above 60000

RESPONDENTS PERCEPTION TOWARDS ONLINE SHOPPING: With the help of questionnaires, it was intended to collect information regarding the perception of consumers towards online shopping in both Kamrup(M) and Kamrup(R) districts of Assam. The questionnaire tried to cover up the following related issues on online shopping and consumers' preference towards it.

AWARENESS OF INTERNET MARKETING AMONG CONSUMERS: On analyzing the awareness of internet markets among consumer it is found that out of 80 respondents 40 respondents belong to Guwahati city i.e., Kamrup (M) and the remaining 40 respondents are from areas of Kamrup(R). All respondents belonging to Guwahati are aware of online marketing while 90% of Kamrup(R) areas' respondents are aware of online shopping. The overall percentage of online shopping is 95% shows that maximum consumer in both Kamrup(M) and Kamrup(R) areas are aware of online Marketing.

Table 1.2: Awareness of respondents

SL no	Consumer	Aware	Not aware	Percentage of awareness
1	Kamrup(metro)	40	0	100
2	Kamrup(rural)	36	4	90
3	Total	76	4	95%

(Source- field survey)



Table- 1.3 Respondents reasons for preferring online shopping versus not preferring online shopping

Occupation	Kamrup(M)		Kamrup(R)	
Professional	14	35%	6	15%
Self employed	12	30%	12	30%
Unemployed	6	15%	10	25%
students	8	20%	12	30%

Source- field survey

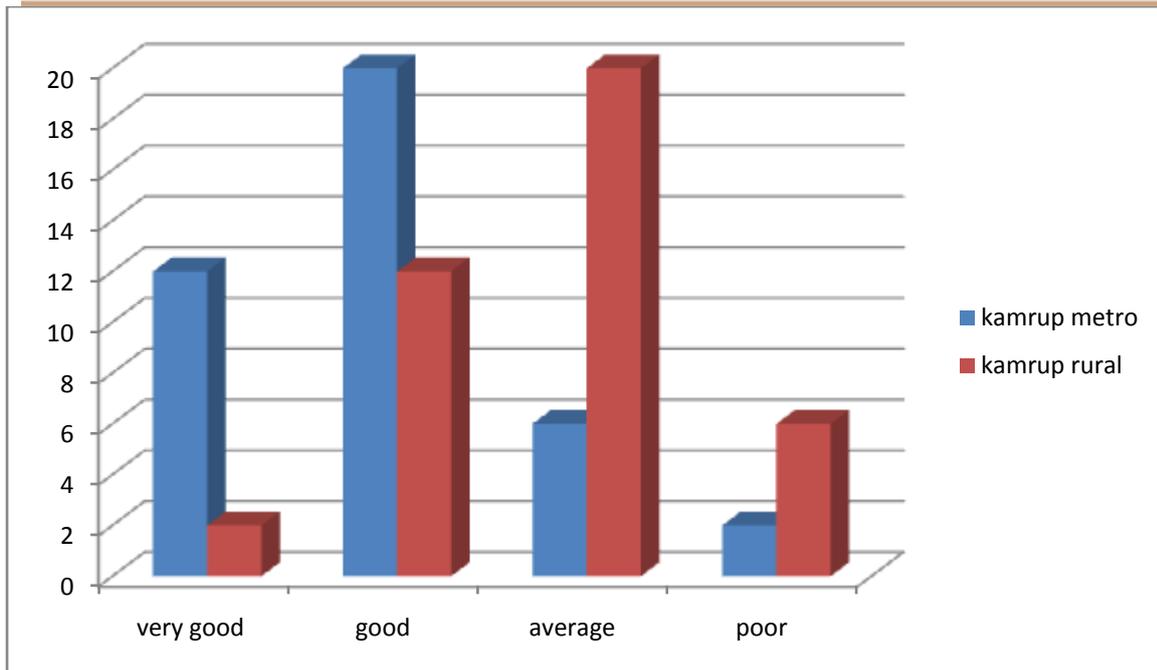
INTERPRETATION: Because of the scarcity of time and the fact that most of the brands are easily available, most of the professionals, self-employed, and students in urban and rural areas prefer online shopping. The ability to order 24 hours a day, 7 days a week attracts the majority of respondents. Aside from time by not having to stand in queue for bargaining, it also saves money by providing complete product information. The above table reveals that 35% professionals, 30% self-employed person and 20% students of urban areas prefer online shopping. In rural areas 15% professionals, 30% self-employed person and 30% students prefer online shopping. But if we see the attitude of unemployed person regarding online shopping, we see that only 15 % from urban areas and 25% from rural areas prefer online shopping. The main reasons for not preferring online shopping by the unemployed person is that they are unable to use the internet for online shopping since they are unaware of how to do it. Besides that, some of them have no idea about the brand quality and they want to buy non branded products at cheapest price on offline mode.

QUALITY OF PRODUCTS AVAILABLE ONLINE:The researcher wanted to know the experience of the consumers with the quality of the products present online.

Table 1.4: Quality of the products available online

Sl No	Experience	Kamrup(M)		Kamrup(R)	
1	Very good	12	30%	2	5%
2	Good	20	50%	12	30%
3	Average	6	15%	20	50%
4	Poor	2	5%	6	15%
5	Total	40		40	

(Source – field survey)



INTERPRETATION

The above table revealed that 30% of respondents belonging to Kamrup(M) and 5 % of Kamrup(R) having very good experience regarding quality of products purchasing online. On the other hand, 15% of respondents in Kamrup(R) and 5% of Kamrup(M) expressed their experience of poor quality of products purchasing online. It has been observed that highest percentage 50% of Kamrup(R)'s respondents expressed of having average quality products while in Kamrup(M) 50% of total respondents responded their experience of having good quality products shopped online.

Preferable online platform: Data relating to consumers' preferable online platform for shopping online in selected areas are arranged below.

Table 1.5: Websites for Online shopping

Sl No	Name of website	Kamrup(M)	Kamrup(R)
1	Flipkart	12	12
2	Amazon	11	11
3	Myntra	10	8
4	Snapdeal	5	3
5	Naaptol	2	2
6	Total	40	36

(Source-field survey)

INTERPRETATIONAs per the Table 1.2 all 40 respondents of Kamrup(M) are aware of online marketing system and 36 out of 40 of Kamrup(R) are aware of online shopping. The above Table 1.5 discloses that in Kamrup(M) 12 respondents prefer Flipkart, 10 prefer Myntra, 11 prefer Amazon, 5 choose Snapdeal and 2 prefer Naaptol. On the other hand, in Kamrup(R) out of 36 respondents 12 prefer Flipkart, 11 prefer Amazon, 8 prefer Myntra, and

Snapdeal and Naaptol are preferred by 3 and 2 respondents. So, Flipkart and amazon are the most preferable website for online shopping in both districts.

DELIVERY SERVICE FACILITY: The opinions of the respondents regarding delivery service in selected areas have been presented with the help of following table:

Table 1.6: Experience on Delivery service facility

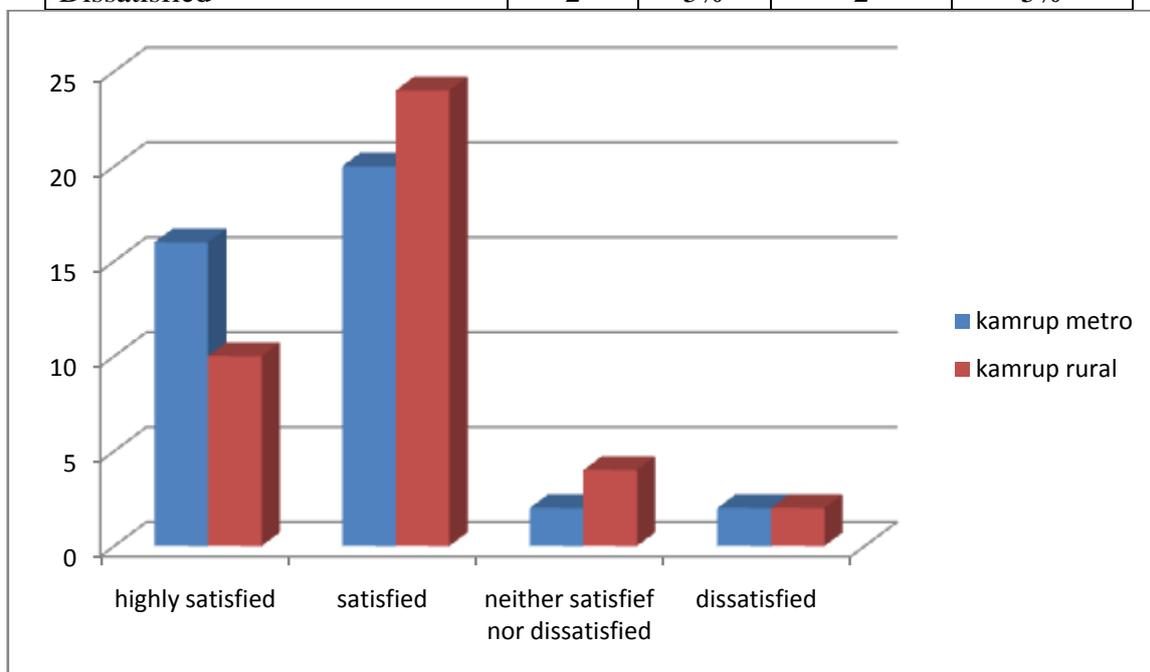
Sl No	Delivery service facility	Kamrup(M)		Kamrup (R)	
1	Good	24	60%	20	50%
2	Average	12	30%	12	30%
3	Poor	5	10%	8	20%
4	Total	40		40	

(Source-field survey)

INTERPRETATION:The above table reveals that 60% respondents in Guwahati city have good experience on delivery service of online shopping and 10% expressed of having poor delivery service experience. On the other hand, in the selected areas of Kamrup (R) 30% respondents have average experience, 20% have poor and 50% have good experience on delivery service facility while shopping online.

Table: 1.7 Overall satisfaction level of online customer

Satisfaction level	Kamrup metro		Kamrup rural	
Highly satisfied	16	40%	10	25%
Satisfied	20	50%	24	60%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2	5%	4	10%
Dissatisfied	2	5%	2	5%



INTERPRETATION:The above table clearly reveals that 40% of the urban and 10% of the rural respondents are highly satisfied with online marketing since it offers a wide range of branded quality products that are not readily available in the local market. Besides that, 50%



of the urban respondents and 60% of the rural respondents are satisfied with online shopping because of product variety, 24 hours service facility and exciting discount offer. However, a significant number of respondents both urban and rural are dissatisfied due to lack of understanding of the benefits of the internet shopping as well as the fact that they are largely uneducated and lack proper knowledge about technology.

ADVANTAGES OF ONLINE SHOPPING OVER TRADITIONAL SHOPPING:

Through the questionnaire the researcher tried to find out the main advantages of online shopping over traditional shopping. The following table shows the received data from respondents. Source:field survey

Table 1.8:Representing main benefits of online shopping over traditional shopping

Benefits of online shopping	Kamrup(M)		Kamrup(R)	
Save time and efforts	12	30%	9	25%
Discount offer	8	20%	9	25%
24*7 hours service facility	8	20%	9	25%
Product variety	6	15%	9	25%
Product specification	6	15%	--	--

(Source- field survey)

INTERPRETATION: the majority of respondents both urban and rural areas prefer online shopping over traditional shopping because of the 24 hours service, product variety, discount offer and the fact that it saves the customers' time.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The major findings are revealed from the study are as follows:

- In digital era anyone from anywhere can order for online shopping. It helps the respondents for cashless transaction which is the main motto of the present government.
- According to the findings of the study all respondents in urban region are aware of online shopping while a small percentage of respondents in rural areas are unaware of it due to poverty and lack of technical education.
- Regarding delivery of the products most of the respondents' views that they deliver the product in due time without any delay.
- Regarding quality of the products most of the respondents' views that their quality is good and they maintain brand as per standard with their product specification.
- According to the response obtained most of the respondents feel that the most of the advantages of digital platform is information followed quick service, easiness of payments and brand comparison with their products variety. Most of the respondents feel that the digital marketing platform is cost effective as compared to traditional marketing tool.
- The majority of online customers are content with their quality and service but a minority percentage of respondents are dissatisfied due to lack of technological understanding and knowledge.

RECOMMENDATION & CONCLUSION:

For the improvement of online shopping the following steps can be initiated for better results:

- By providing quality of products marketing groups should make efforts to build trust among consumer.



- The online retailers should take care of the aspect of good return and exchange policy.
- The online retailers should provide clear, accurate and necessary information about the products which are marketed through online service.
- Apart from reducing prices and delivery time the marketers can improve other areas like trust aspects, speed up the shipping time and customer relation etc. so as to increase more online shopping consumers.
- Since the reason for online shopping in most cases are due to low price, convenience and saving of time the marketers should further aim to reduce prices, delivery time.

Taking into account the above findings and analysis it can be concluded now-a-days people prefer online shopping over traditional shopping in the selected areas due to various reasons. People of Guwahati city i.e., Kamrup(M) are much more aware of online shopping process than that of Kamrup (R). People are satisfied with the discounts and offers of various online shopping websites such as Flipkart, Myntra, Snapdeal, Amazon etc. However, many rural areas of Kamrup (R) do not have proper internet connectivity which hinders people to purchase online. Technology has now made a significant progress over the years to provide consumers with a better online shopping experience. With the rapid increase of products and brands it can be assumed that in near future online shopping market will overtake the traditional marketing system.

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