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Online shopping is the process through which goods and services can be bought or can be sold over the internet . Online shopping of clothes has become a trend among the youth and which in return is effecting the business of the local retailers .The study “Online shopping of clothes and its effect on the local retail market in Guwahati city” aims to determine the factors influencing the customers to make online purchases and the effect of the same on the small retailers in Guwahati city of Assam.The online clothing market has doubled over the last few years as an increasing number of shoppers have had access to broadband and abandoned the retail shops. The huge discounts given by the online merchants are attracting the customers on a large basis and this in return is creating a problem for the small retailers as they are not in a position to give discount and for this reason they are loosing customers on a huge basis.

Keywords: Online shopping , retail market , purchase perception of customers ,effect of online shopping ,problems and prospects of online shopping and shopping in local retail shops .



I. INTRODUCTION

Online shopping has become very popular among the youth of Assam and specially in guwahati city, having a population which is a blend of different culture and background. Online shopping gives a huge platform to access the best, national and international brands of clothes at affordable prices, desired size and colour even with desired patterns which is not possible for the customers to avail the same on a single retail store. Increasing number of internet users is one of the reason for influencing the purchase behaviour of the customers. The social networking sites are even playing a major role in increasing online sell of clothes as the online shopping websites vigorously advertise their products on the social networking sites which are conveniently able to attract customers. Even the big retail houses are gradually moving towards online selling of their clothes as they started knowing the benefit of online transactions which involves low cost but huge profit as sell increases. The local retail markets have to work hard in order to attract the customers and even work harder to retain them as their customers. According to a famous online portal Myntra.com Guwahati is featured among the 15 cities across the country. According to the portal it receives 350-400 orders per day from the city itself and through this we can assume how much its effecting the local retail market of the city. Shopping in the state of Assam has witnessed a revolution with the change in the consumer buying behaviour and the whole format of shopping also have changed as seen from the fact that many big malls, shopping centres, boutiques have already been established while many a lot are upcoming and such big houses too are proving to be a curse for the local small retailers who cannot invest in their business in order to match this type of big retail houses and thus the local small types of retailers have to face severe competition and is trying hard to sustain in the world of competition.

ONLINE SHOPPING OF CLOTHES :

English Entrepreneur Michael Aldrich invented online shopping in 1979. With Swreg (offshoot of compuserve) in 1987, the community of software developers and shareware authors got an online market where they could sell their product using "Merchant account". Thus online shopping started then for software industry people. Online shopping is a form of shopping over the internet where a buyer meets numerous seller having numerous option to buy according to their wish and affordability. Online shopping helps in selling each and everything from a needle to a big machinery, from a movable to immovable thing. Online shopping is becoming a trend among the youths as they are the frequent users of social networking sites and are the one who are easily attracted towards the advertisement frequently flashed in their screen. In 1995 Amazon.com started selling each and everything online.

Clothes being one of the basic need of human being, has become a major sector for retailing. Thousand and thousand of big and small retail houses deals in clothes of different varieties. Retail shop of clothes are easily available in each corner of the country as a whole. Due to the craze for fashion among the youth, has helped the clothes industry to boom up and even helped the online sellers to easily sell their clothes without any huge investment for establishing showroom or retail outlets. Though there are lots and lots of retail outlets in the city but still most of the customers nowadays prefer to buy their clothes online and this in return has started hampering the business of the small retailers.

LOCAL RETAIL MARKET :

It is estimated that by 3000 B.C shops came into existence. During the Greek and Roman period a number of stores and something like speciality shops developed in the form of open booths, where people from various countries use to have buying. By 14th century retail trade assumed great importance. Lots of types of businesses with very different requirements and different users are classified as retail. Whereas retailing is an economic activity which involves all the steps in which a product reaches its final consumer after its production. Retail market simply deals with the range of activities undertaken by a retailer to promote awareness and sales of the company's product. Local Retail marketing is different from other kind of marketing because of the components of retail trade such as selling of finished goods in small quantities to the consumer or end users usually from a fixed location. Local retail market simply tries to capture the local customers and don't think too further from it.

SCOPE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY:

The article "ONLINE SHOPPING OF CLOTHES AND ITS EFFECT ON THE LOCAL RETAIL MARKET IN GUWAHATI CITY" is an effort to determine the effect of online shopping of clothes on the local retailers and to determine the factors why customers are shifting their buying behaviour.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY :

The objectives with which the study is carried out are –

- a) To determine the effect of online shopping of clothes on the local retail market.
- b) To determine the buying perception of the customers and to know why the customers have abandoned the local retail shops .
- c) To identify the prospects and problems of online shopping vs shopping in local retail shops .

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY :

When we talk of research methodology we not only talk of research methods but also we consider the logic behind the method. Following Research Methodology has been adopted for conducting the study –

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM :

Before finalising the topic as “ONLINE SHOPPING OF CLOTHES AND ITS EFFECT ON THE LOCAL RETAIL MARKET IN GUWAHATI CITY” and conducting the survey following points has been considered such as the problem of low sale, shifting buying behaviour of the customers , prospects and problems of online shopping and shopping in retail shops .

PLAN FOR THE STUDY :

The main objective of the study is to gather relevant information and to analyse them properly and systematically .Information for the study was collected from various sources .

AREA OF THE STUDY :

A pilot survey was conducted in Guwahati city of Assam by selecting randomly some respondents which included both online customers as well as retail customers .

DATA COLLECTION METHOD :

The data collection method includes the following –

DATA SOURCES :

A.PRIMARY DATA : Primary data are those data which are collected for the first time and thus for conducting the survey ,personal interview was undertaken .

B.SECONDARY DATA : Secondary data are those data which were already been collected and published by someone else . For the study purpose secondary data was collected from the following sources –

- a) Internet websites
- b) Related books and journals
- c) Newspapers

RESEARCH DESIGN :

Descriptive research design method is used to study the topic .

RESEARCH APPROACH :

Observation and survey technique were the basic approach used in order to know the responses regarding the online shopping of clothes and its effect on the local retailers ,as well as to know the problems and prospects of both online and local shopping of clothes in the city .

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT :

The main research instrument to obtain facts and to collect data was personal method .

SAMPLE SIZE :

The study is based upon 50 samples which were randomly selected .

TIME PERIOD :

The datas were collected within the period of 1-2 months including analysis of the collected data .

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY :

- 1.The study is based upon randomly selected size of 50 samples and so, the sample may not be an adequate representative of the population of both online and local retail customers .
- 2.The study conducted is mostly based on primary data and the primary data were being collected through direct personal interview ,which was very time consuming and thus full coverage of the area was not possible .
- 3.The information provided by the customers may not be fully accurate and may involve biasness.

EFFECTS OF ONLINE SHOPPING ON LOCAL RETAIL SHOPS :

Online shopping of clothes by the customers have started gradually effecting local retailer's business dealing in clothes . The effects are as follows –

- 1.Customers demand for discounts on clothes which is not always possible for small type of local retailers dealing in clothes compared to discounts given by online merchants .
- 2.Working man and women nowadays don't want to spend their precious time in roaming from one shop to another shop just for purchasing clothes rather they prefer to purchase online during their working time as, just a click let them buy whatever they want to buy .
- 3.Changing lifestyle and craze for fashion among the youth are driving them to make online purchases as each and every dress material in trend cannot be made available to them by the local retailers .

PURCHASE PERCEPTION OF CUSTOMERS :

Though earlier the purchase perception of people regarding online shopping was low in the city but the purchase perception towards online shopping has gradually started changing and is increasing day by day .Following are the reasons for shifting buying behaviour of the customers –

- a)The lifestyle of the people of the city has changed radically during the last few years and standard of living is also improving and this change in lifestyle , demands various products and services either near to home or delivery at home .
- b)Mostly women are interested in shopping whether its online or offline .Thus the increasing number of women is now earning .Most of the nuclear families having atleast two of the members earning and freedom to women have made women one of the biggest buyer of clothes .
- c)The attitude towards luxury has changed radically ,even middle income group are prone to it and this are guiding their buying behaviour .

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF ONLINE SHOPPING VS. SHOPPING IN LOCAL RETAIL SHOPS :

On the basis of the findings and after properly analysing them on the basis of the gathered information ,the present study highlights the following problems and prospects –

PROBLEMS :

Following are the types of problem on the basis of findings -

- a)Most of the customers don't know how to use internet and thus they don't do online shopping and thus

prefer to go to nearby local retail shops. Whereas, most of the working man and woman who wants to purchase clothes for themselves or for their dear one and at the same time don't have much time to spend on shopping prefer to do online shopping and ignores visiting the local retail shops.

b) Due to the inability to check the dress material/clothes physically most of the customers don't prefer online shopping whereas many of the customers go for online shopping because of the craze for fashion or an urge to look different from others, as many options are available in online shopping.

c) Due to the lengthy procedure of delivering or returning a product most of the customers usually prefer to go to nearby local retail shops rather than waiting for a product. Whereas, the unavailability of desired dress material or clothes in the nearby local retail shops many of the customers prefer online shopping which gives numerous options to buy.

PROSPECTS :

On the other hand based on the information collected following are the future prospects of both online shopping and shopping in local retail shops –

a) Online shopping of clothes will help in curtailing the time of shopping. Whereas, shopping in local retail stores will help in boosting up the economy and development of the state.

b) Customers can avail desired type of clothes at affordable prices, desired colour, pattern and even can get desired size etc. very easily just simply by clicking a button. Whereas, shopping in local retail market will let the customers check the cloth physically which is not possible in online shopping.

II.SUGGESTIONS:

The suggestions are based on the findings and may help in the development of Guwahati city of Assam. The suggestions are as follows –

a) The changing lifestyle and disposable income of the people may prove to be effective and helpful in the growth of online marketing as well as may motivate small local retailers to do online marketing of their clothes.

b) The urban as well as a huge rural population who are adopting or are willing to adopt new lifestyle are providing vast opportunities for retailing clothes in local markets.

c) Retailers should not only try to grab the urban customers but also should attract customers of rural area and try to retain them as customers for longer period.

d) Local retailers should try to establish their store in such a place which can easily be reached, so that customers can visit there frequently.

e) Retailers should try to attract and retain customers by giving discounts on clothes.

f) Online merchants should try to resolve the problem of delivery time and procedure for returning the products.

III.CONCLUSION :

The study “ONLINE SHOPPING OF CLOTHES AND ITS EFFECT ON THE LOCAL RETAIL MARKET IN GUWAHATI CITY” aimed at studying the effect of online shopping on the local retail market, purchase perception of the customers as they are shifting their buying behaviour and the problems and prospects of online shopping and shopping in local market. To attract customers, retailers will have to build a strong online offerings while making their shops more nicer and more conveniently located. Retailers must focus on expensive clothes that customers will want to buy and for which they will pay extra. Local retail stores have to become more fun to visit, so shoppers will feel it is worth the trip to the shops. The online clothing market has doubled over the last few years in the city due to the increasing number of broadband users and thus they have abandoned visiting the local shops. The government is also taking necessary steps as the number of complaints from people buying products online, the consumer affair ministry is proposing to frame guidelines for protection of consumer's interest in online shopping.

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