

# COVID-19 AND SHIFTING CUSTOMER TRENDS

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## Abstract

Consumer shopping patterns have changed a lot since the pandemic COVID-19. People have totally changed the way of their shopping. Two major changes which can be observed after pandemic are diversion of people towards cashless and online shopping. During the pandemic with the help of cashless shopping everybody felt herself or himself safe as far as from the point of view of health is concerned. Secondly, online shopping has made people comfortable because they get what they want sitting in their homes just on click of a button. Moreover, internet online shopping sites like Amazon, Snapdeal, Flipkart, Meesho etc, in competition provide offers to people at different times. But people have become so much used to online shopping and cashless shopping during COVID-19 it looks impossible that previous ways of shopping and billing work well ever come at global level.

**Keywords :** Pandemic, Online shopping, Cashless shopping, Customer, Globalization

## INTRODUCTION

Corona virus belong to a large family of viruses which cause illness in both human beings and animals. COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by most recently discovered Corona Virus. This virus was discovered with its outbreak in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and this disease brought several worldwide health, social and economic disturbances during its outbreak. The pandemic generated widespread fear regarding health, job security, quality of life and financial stability. The result of all these fears has slowed down the process of spending money of customers and customer behaviour have also changed in short and long run. There are a variety of positive trends which have been ignited by the COVID-19 pandemic. People have adopted the way of cashless shopping, online shopping and of course choices and need of people have also changed. Present paper is an attempt to discuss in detail the old pattern of shopping and also shifting customer trends after the pandemic. Moreover, we can also see an increase in virtual workforce because more people work from home and also enjoy doing this way.

### ➤ Cashless Shopping

Before the hit of pandemic people were habitual of doing shopping with help of cash. But corona virus has caused a surge in demand for contactless payments, accelerating the shift from cash to digital options. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to cause a drastic decline in cash usage due to the risk of contamination. It is after the hit of pandemic people really started paying attention to how literally they were using money. People concluded that they did not want to touch and exchange cash. The view point of younger generations for switching from cash to contactless payments is that they don't want to use cash as much because of the germs' aspect. The COVID-19 pandemic forced everyone to change the way they shop. The pandemic upended lives and livelihoods across the globe forcing consumers and businesses to adopt new digital behaviours. There have been many consumer shifts after the pandemic and some of these are discussed in the present paper.

### ➤ Online shopping

During the time of pandemic, physical distancing, stay at home and lockdown period have forced consumer segments to change the way of their shopping. Immediately after the onset of pandemic online consumer shopping has increased significantly. People started online shopping during COVID-19 period but today even after the time of pandemic people prefer to do online shopping. Now it seems that they are going to stick to online shopping in the future also. But it has been observed that high income earners are leading when we talk of online shopping. High income people are doing online shopping for both essential and non-essential elements or items. Due to the purpose of hygiene and convenience, online shopping is an easy way for consumers now-a-days.

### ➤ Switching of Brands

COVID-19 has significantly altered the behaviour of Indian consumers in many aspects. When the pandemic hit India, brands were looking at what to do next and how to search consumers amid the disruption in supply chain and logistics where no brands were able to reach to end-consumers. With consumers increasingly shifting to ordering online, the direct-to-consumer model has helped firms deliver goods faster, build trust and earn better profits. Brands adopted direct-to-consumer model during the pandemic. With lockdown imposed in the country, brands have found ways to directly reach the consumers. The gap of consumer-producers was filled by direct-to-consumer model wherein companies have much control over packaging and message marketing, and a better grasp of what customers perceive and post purchase evaluation. "Brands are seeing a lot of consumers hopping

to their official website which enables them to receive multiple information under one roof i.e., from knowing the various products that company has to offer to information about prices, reviews and offers." Direct to consumer is right model in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and delivering better profit. The awareness of brands and slowdown economy also changed the way of shopping of the consumers. Their priorities have shifted as a result of the pandemic and price inflation. After pandemic health considerations and demand for better quality have come to the forefront. People started giving care to spending and their focus of spending was on necessities and saving for emergencies and medical expenses. With this shift came the challenge for brands to provide more better products. The change in mindset and financial position has also changed the way consumers perceive financial success and spend money. Average people shifted their brands and moreover some shifted from brand to local made product. So, a situation of how brands see the opportunities in adapting to those new circumstances to better serve consumers' changing needs. In the present scenario brands look to recover post-pandemic but imperative will be on making demand forecasting more robust and able to deal accurately and quickly to permanently changed behaviours and the complexity COVID-19 has caused.

➤ Focus on Essentials Health Services

"COVID-19 has changed how we look at the future" says CEO Fernando Gonzalez of CEMEX, a global leader in building materials industry. "We started questioning and challenging everything. The traditional ways of planning are outdated and moreover we will never go back". As human beings we all share the same feelings of sorrow and happiness and COVID-19 pandemic has reminded the society how interdependent we are on each other; what happens to one person can soon affect many others, even on the far side of our planet. COVID-19 has prepared us to try to cultivate peace of mind and to think about what we can do for others. The current global health crisis also reminds that what affect the human family has to be addressed by all of us. The COVID-19 pandemic was a momentous global failure which highlighted the limitations of the social forces that produce our health. Many people died because of our weak social and economic systems. The pandemic forced us to think about need of essential items which must be present in any country at all stages. It is critical to maintain preventive and curative services, especially for the most vulnerable populations such as children, older persons, minorities, people living with chronic diseases and with disabilities. The high concern of World Health Organisation (WHO) after pandemic has been regarding implementation of targeted actions to re-organise and maintain access to save high quality essential health services across the life course. Some essential health services which are needed by all are as:

- 1) Population should be monitored and assessed as far as the purpose of health and community needs are concerned.
- 2) We should investigate, diagnose and address health problems which affect the population.
- 3) We should communicate effectively people about health factors.
- 4) Our focus should be on strengthening, supporting and mobilizing communities and partnerships to improve health.
- 5) All the policies, plans and laws that impact health should be created, implemented and executed.
- 6) We should build and support a diverse and skilled public health workforce.
- 7) We should build and maintain a strong and organizational infrastructure for public health.

## CONCLUSION

An ordinary customer after the pandemic shifted his financial concerns from luxury to essential health cares. He started spending money to improve health for a better future. His concern now focuses on better health and happy life. This is the reason why the markets that are declining in essential services like grocery stores, supermarkets and convenience stores have risen. The pandemic generated wide spread fear regarding health, job security, quality of life and financial stability at both personal and macro level. So, the spending has slowed which has directly impacted the income of others. The customer behaviours are hanged in the short as well as long run. Some positive trends which have been generated by COVID-19 pandemic are rapid demand for basic goods, sanitation supplies and health concerns. Customers trends are shaping and changing which is having a direct impact on the future of global economy. There is a lot to think and talk about post covid customer trends which have emerged. Market is also on the stage of rising and upgrading and after bitter experience of pandemic, customer have grown wiser and economic in spending money. "As consumers adapt to the house arrest for a prolonged period of time, they are likely to adopt newer technologies which facilitate work, study and consumption in a more convenient manner." The COVID-19 pandemic has totally changed the world because people are living differently and also thinking differently.

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