ABSTRACT for Ph.D

**Topic:** Electronic Shopping: A Paradigm Shift in Buying Behaviour among Indian Consumers

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Due to the fast moving lifestyle, Electronic Shopping has been a growing phenomenon in all four corners of the world. Electronic shopping is defined as a computer activity/exchange performed by a consumer via a computer-based interface, where the consumer's computer is connected to, and can interact with a retailer's digital storefront to purchase the products or services over the internet. With one click, customer can glance, the information regarding the product and services. Buyers today are only a click away from comparing competitor’s product and attributes. Today a person can order almost anything over the internet. With the development of the Internet revolution and the shift in buying behaviour among the consumers, the increase of online shopping has become a trendy way for consumers and/or companies to trade over the Internet.

The major objectives of marketers are to identify the factors that influence buying behavior towards electronic shopping purchase decision. Marketers are interested to know how decisions about purchase are formed and who exactly influence it in the online shopping. They are also interested to know why the potential customers do not prefer online shopping. There have been intensive studies of online shopping attitudes and behaviour in recent years. Most of them have attempted to identify factors influencing or contributing to online shopping attitudes and behaviour. Analyzing consumer behaviour is not a new phenomenon. The theories of consumer behaviour have been used by many years not only to understand the consumer but also creation a marketing strategy that will attract the consumers efficiently. Originally the internet was mainly used by the academicians and researchers but now the scenario has changed as commercial organizations have moved to incorporate World Wide Web to add value to the customer by offering the facility of online purchasing.
The present study has been initiated with the objective to study the impact of socio-cultural factors on buying behavior. The main objectives of the study are to study the perception with reference to awareness and satisfaction. This research also helps to assess the ability of shopping sites in order to attract and retain the customer, to analyze the shift in buying behaviour and to explore the reasons why potential customers do not prefer online shopping. The research methodology was exploratory and descriptive. In the study the sample was based on purposive, judgement and convenience sampling. The sample in the study was restricted to 800 respondents keeping in mind the research objectives and constraints.

Research indicates that the shift in buying behavior towards online shopping is positive due to reasons like convenience, time saving, varied choice and availability, 24x7 availability, etc. The increasing awareness towards use of internet, satisfactory results in online shopping, rise in standard of living due to dual spousal income, occupation, influence of family, friends and attractive promotional offers etc. are going to effect the purchase decisions the most. In the cultural shift, the study found that male spouse is now no more the single authoritative person of the household and he has been joined by his wife to make purchase decision for the family. In this way the household setup has been now shifted towards more democratic in nature than the authoritative/ hierarchical in past. The research is in favour that there is a shift in the socio-cultural environment in the purchase decision-making process. There is a shift in gender roles with the participation of women in decision making. The research also found in the developing country like India, people are still averse to online shopping due to the major reasons like no bargaining facility, online frauds, non-availability of try and buy facility, difficulty in returning the faulty products, lack of awareness level etc. Hence the present study directs the companies they should focus on these aspects in order to attract the customers towards electronic-shopping.