

A STUDY ON IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR – STUDY BASED ON RAJKOT CITY

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ABSTRACT

The Research Paper is an attempt to recognize the consumer behaviour during the COVID -19 Pandemic with special references to Rajkot City. Here, the primary data were collected with the help of structured questionnaire from 256 respondents using Google form. The majority among the respondents were male; precisely 52.3% and it is found that the majority of respondent's education qualification was PG and above that is 87.5% and the majority respondents were working with private sector-58.6%. The Data was analysed by the Statistical Package for social science. To test the level of association among variables at the significance level of $p < 0.05$ chi-square test was used. The major findings of this study indicated that the consumer behaviour is vitally changed and consumers have started spending more income on Health and Hygiene related products. Current situation has affected the brand preference, shopping behaviour and purchasing decision as well.

Keywords: COVID-19 Pandemic, Consumer Behaviour, Food Products, Health and Hygiene Products.

Introduction

This covid-19 pandemic has affected the whole world. It has impacted people in the whole world. The Pandemic and lockdown have created significant disturbance for people, Communities, brands, and businesses. The routine life of people around the world has transformed in unthinkable ways. But as organizations try to find solutions for this, it is important to realize that Global Consumers were already evolving at a high speed. This process is going faster than anyone would have thought. Consumer optimization has declined in India due to this crisis. As restrictions begin to lift, customers continued to be worried about personal as well as family health and safety. Essentials goods and in-house entertainment increased online shopping for almost everything. While staying at home, they have progressively adopted digital and less-physical contact activities; like watching online streaming shows and online payment systems, most of them wish to continue post-COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts on Consumer Behaviour in India

The situation of lockdown has altered consumer's buying behaviour such as higher spending on health and hygiene related products, trying to be on limited products availability and choosing home deliveries instead of physical store visits. The present crisis is also affecting preferences regarding brand and categories, shopping patterns and spending. In this unforeseen situation created by this pandemic, 40% of consumers are keeping stock of food and home supplies so the supermarkets and grocery stores are experiencing 80% hike in consumer store visit. With 70% of Consumers home –cooked meal preference 90% fall in restaurant visits recorded. 16% of respondents find it difficult to locate source for the food and grocery supplies. 39 % respondents found difficulties in obtaining sanitizer and hand washes. The research has also observed change in the behaviour of the price conscious people now relying on promising brand and highly qualitative products in the hygiene and care products instead of

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price. According to a survey of consumer sentiment, majority of the Indian consumer's habit for online shopping is expected to increase from 46 % in the current scenario to 64% over the next 6 to 9 months in this crisis of COVID-19, even non-essential services/goods brands must engage with customers by communicating on social media. The Social Relationship of customers with brands always has affected the consumer buying behaviour.(Capegamini research)

Literature Review

The Indian market is divided into organized retail sector and unorganized retail sector. Talking about unorganized sector, it contains approximately 13.8 million traditional shops while the organized retail sector has share is less than 10%(IBEF,2020;Halan 2020). This organized retail sector includes all the brick and mortar stores and online shopping websites (Sinha, 2019). Despite of the boom in the B2C business model in India, majority of Indian consumers still have trust in the neighbourhood stores because they prefer to touch and feel the products physically before buying and bargain for discounts over the counter.

Empty store shelves during COVID-19 pandemic have created various problems for the consumers' (Lufkin, 2020). COVID-19 pandemic has forced consumers to change the way of shopping. There is a drastic change in consumer's buying behaviour from traditional methods of shopping to Online shopping (Reddy, 2020). Apart from the increasing number of customers engaged into online shopping, a shift has been observed in the preference of products ordered by consumers through various platforms. Most of the customers have already started ordering more of personal care and medicated products rather than ordering any fancy products. National Retail Federation (NRF) had done survey on consumer's behaviour towards online shopping during pandemic situation and has drawn out certain buying behaviour as follows:

- As per the results obtained from survey, every 9 out of 10 customers have changed their shopping practices.
- Results say that more than 50% of customers have changed their traditional shopping habits by ordering products online.
- About 6 out of every 10 customers had said that they usually not prefer to go to store due to the fear of getting infected and prefer to order necessary goods from online marketing tools only.

All of these changes in behaviour will not last forever, but few of them will remain forever. As the world will recover from this pandemic, this online shopping taking on will increase at a high rate. Scenario of this pandemic can be classified into two phases: first is change in customer behaviour that tries to stay away from public gatherings and other is higher preference towards the adoption of E-commerce (Shashidhar, 2020).

Research Methodology

This research paper's core objective is to find out the consumer buying behaviour during Covid-19 pandemic with special reference to Rajkot city. Survey was conducted during May to September 2020.

Samples

The present research paper is based on structured questionnaire method using Google Form. The data were collected from 256 respondents.

Sources of Data

Primary data for this study was collected from 256 respondents with the help of structured questionnaire Google Form. Secondary data were obtained by referring various Websites, Journals, Reports, and Newspapers etc.

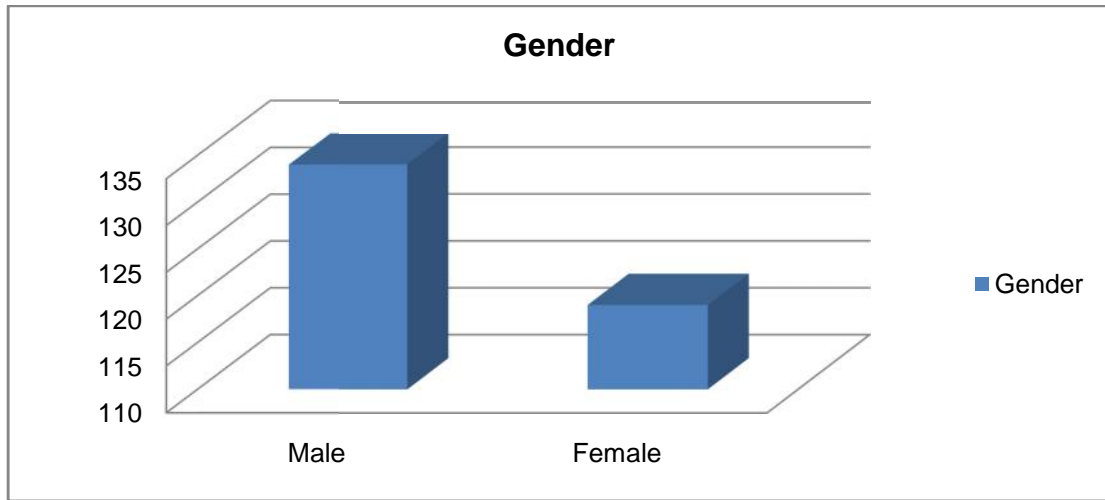
Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used analysis of the data and percentage analysis and chi-square test.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

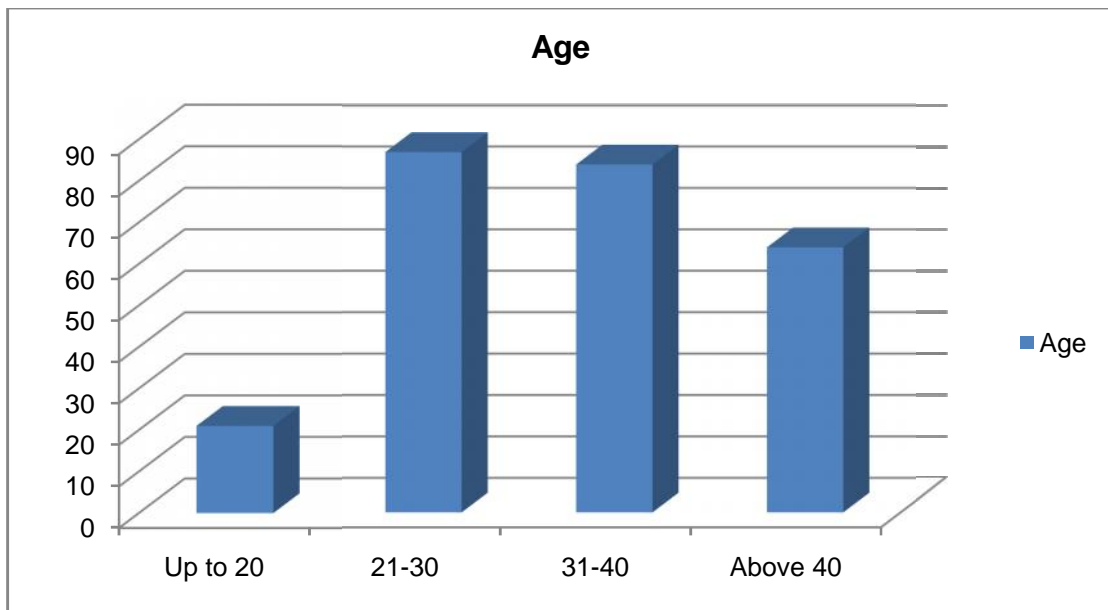
Gender wise Classification

Sr. No.	Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1	Male	134	52.3
2	Female	119	46.5
3	Other	3	1.2
	Total	256	100.00



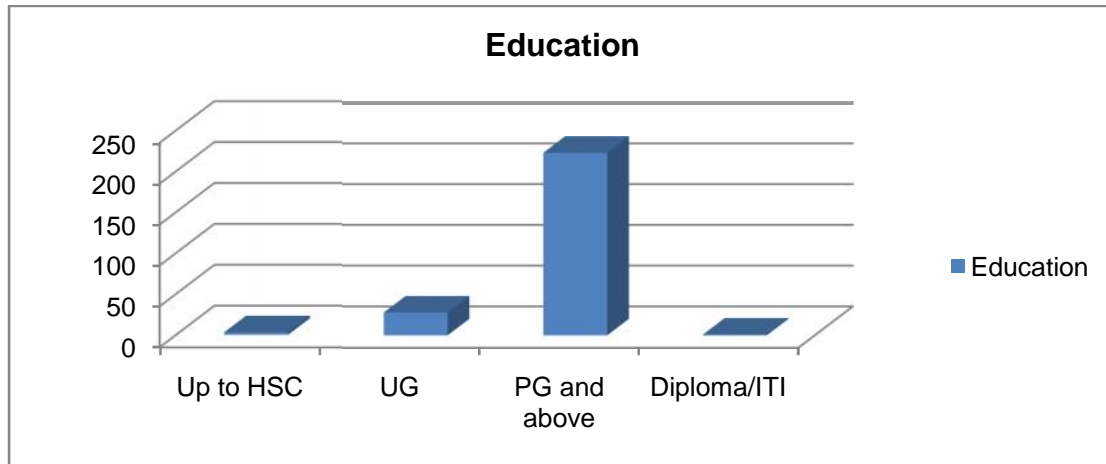
Age wise Classification

Sr. No.	Age Group	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1	Up to 20	21	8.2
2	21-30	87	34.0
3	31-40	84	32.8
4	Above 40	64	25.0
	Total	256	100.00



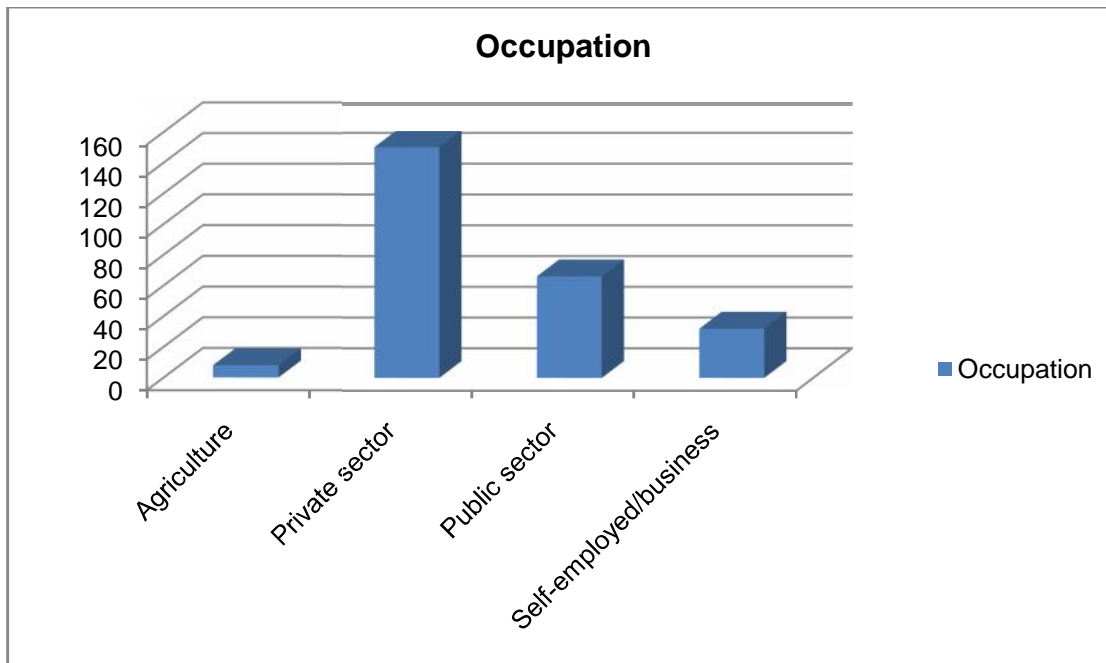
Education wise Classification

Sr. No.	Education	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1	Up to HSC	3	1.2
2	UG	28	10.9
3	PG and above	224	87.5
4	Diploma/ITI	1	0.4
	Total	256	100.00



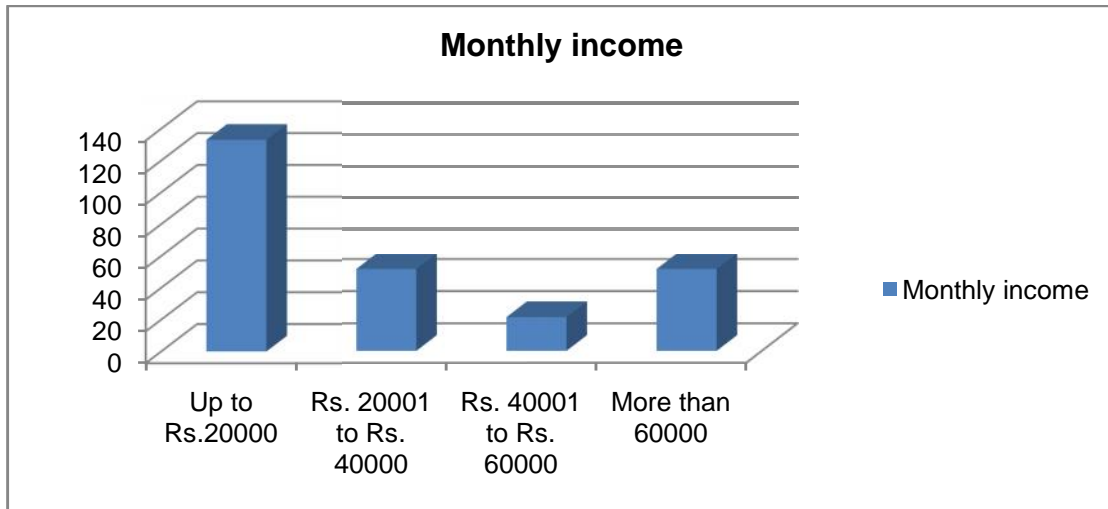
Occupation wise Classification

Sr. No.	Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1	Agriculture	8	3.1
2	Private sector	150	58.6
3	Public sector	66	25.8
4	Self-employed/business	32	12.5
	Total	256	100.00



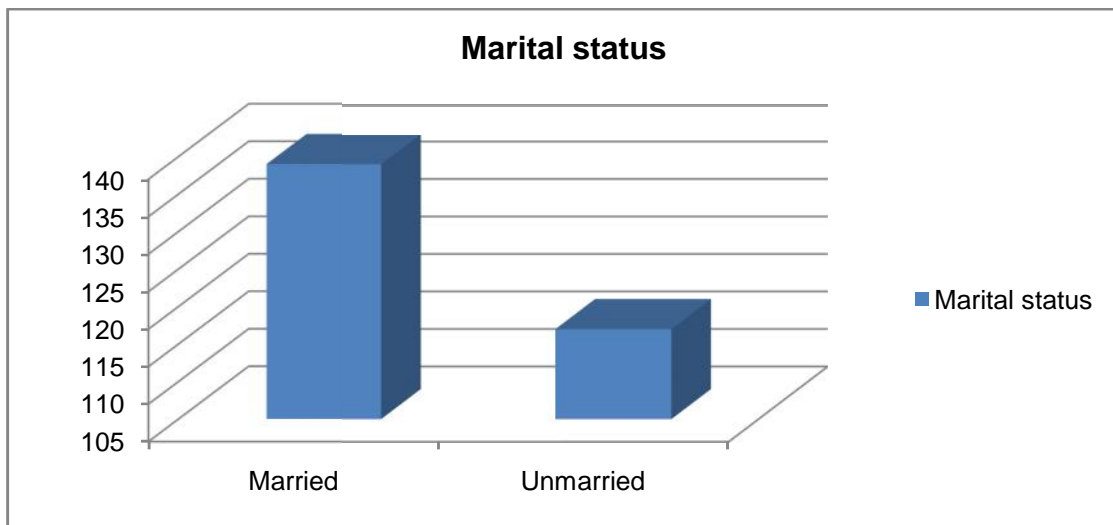
Monthly Income wise Classification

Sr. No.	Monthly Income	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1	Up to Rs.20000	133	52.0
2	Rs. 20001 to Rs. 40000	51	19.9
3	Rs. 40001 to Rs. 60000	21	8.2
4	More than 60000	51	19.9
	Total	256	100.00



Marital Status Wise Classification

Sr. No.	Marital Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1	Married	139	54.3
2	Unmarried	117	45.7
	Total	256	100.00



Hypothesis Testing

Sr. No.	Null hypothesis	Test used	Calculated value	Accepted/ Rejected
1	Gender is not having any significant impact on buying behaviour	Chi-square	0.156	Accepted
2	Gender has not having any significant impact on spending of income on essential goods	Chi-square	0.053	Accepted
3	Gender is not having any significant impact on preference of Brand.	Chi-square	0.639	Accepted
4	Gender is not having any impact on purchase of vegetable & fruits	Chi-square	0.185	Accepted
5	Gender is not having any impact on changing food habits	Chi-square	0.416	Accepted
6	Gender is not having any impact on payment mode.	Chi-square	0.047	Rejected

7	Gender is not having any impact on reduced expenditures in COVID-19 pandemic.	Chi-square	0.690	Accepted
8	Gender does not affect savings during COVID-19 pandemic.	Chi-square	0.226	Accepted
9	Gender is not related with changed life in COVID-19 pandemic.	Chi-square	0.320	Accepted
10	Occupation is not having any relation with spending income on essential goods	Chi-square	0.002	Rejected
11	Occupation has not having any impact on preference of brand	Chi-square	0.075	Accepted
12	Occupation is not related with changing food habits	Chi-square	0.019	Rejected
13	Occupation is not having significant impact on reduced expenditures in COVID-19 pandemic.	Chi-square	0.000	Rejected
14	Occupation does not have impact on savings in COVID-19 pandemic.	Chi-square	0.003	Rejected
15	Occupation is not related with changed life in COVID-19 pandemic.	Chi-square	0.264	Accepted
16	Monthly income has no relation with spending income on essential goods	Chi-square	0.552	Accepted
17	Monthly income is not related with Brand preference	Chi-square	0.051	Accepted
18	Monthly income is not related to changing food habits	Chi-square	0.467	Accepted
19	Monthly income does not any impact on reduced expenditures in COVID-19 pandemic.	Chi-square	0.250	Accepted
20	Monthly income does not affect savings in COVID-19 pandemic.	Chi-square	0.007	Rejected
21	Monthly income has no relation with changed life in COVID-19 pandemic.	Chi-square	0.032	Rejected

significance at 5%-rejected, non significant at 0.05-Accepted

Interpretation

- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.156. Since P value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant association between gender and buying behaviour.
- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.053. Since P value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. So, it can be concluded that there is no significant relation between gender and spend money on only essential goods.
- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.639. As P value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. That's why, it can be concluded that there is no significant relation between gender and brand preference.
- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.185. Here the P value is higher than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. Hence, it can be concluded that there is no significant association between gender and purchase more fruits and vegetables.
- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.416. Since P value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. So, it can be said that there is no significant relation between gender and changing food habits.
- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.047. As the P value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. Hence, it can be found that there is highly significant relation between gender and preferred mode of payment.
- The calculated chi-square P value here is 0.690. Since the P value is higher than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. Hence, it can be said that there is no significant impact of gender on COVID-19 reduced your expenditure.
- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.226. As the P value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. So, here it is concluded that there is no relation between gender and COVID-19 saved your income.
- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.320. Subsequently the P value is higher than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. So here it can be concluded that there is no any significant relation between gender and COVID-19 changed your entire life.
- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.002. As the P value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. Therefore, it can be said that there is high impactful relation between Occupation and spending on essential goods.
- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.075. Meanwhile P value is higher than 0.05, thus the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. So, it can be concluded that there is no significant relation between Occupation and Brand Preference.

- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.019. As the P value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. Hence, it can be concluded that there is a highly significant relationship between Occupation and changed food behaviour.
- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.000, and the P value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. Hence, it can be said that there is highly significant relation between Occupation and COVID-19 reduced expenditure.
- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.003. As the P value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. Hence, it is concluded here that there is important association between Occupation and saved income.
- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.264. Here the P value is higher than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. So, it is concluded that there is no significant association between Occupation and COVID – 19 changed entire life.
- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.552. As the P value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. Hence, it is concluded here that there is no any relation between Monthly income and spend money on only essential goods.
- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.51. Here the P value is higher than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant association between Monthly income and the changed Brand Preference.
- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.467 and the P value is higher than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. Hence, there is no any significant association between Monthly income and changed food behaviour.
- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.250 and Since the P value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. So, to conclude it can be said that there is no anyrelation between Monthly income and COVID-19 reduced expenditure.
- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.007. Here, the P value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. Therefore, it is concluded that there is highly significant relationship between Monthly income and COVID-19 saved income.
- The calculated chi-square P value is 0.032 and here the P value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. So, it can be concluded that there is highly significant association between Monthly income and changed life due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusion

“New Changed World” as we imagine it, it has new fresh air, clear sky, pure rivers has transformed the attitude of people. Weather this change is everlasting or not but as of now it has made everyone recognizing the hidden blessing. As world economies are feeling pressure to survive as there are big losses in profits, thus further actions were taken by marketers, and consumer preference will decide the direction of the new normal world. Certainly this COVID-19 pandemic has come up with an ultimate lesson and has affected every aspect of nature and human life. E-Marketing and consumer shopping preference is not an omission to it. The best advice is to weather to adjust or to survive in this hard time. It is better to accept the changing need of the consumer as the new need as of now is not the availability of extravagance or luxurious products at specific price, as everyone is contributing and trying for the passage of this hard time. Preferences are changed over from journey to the world to staying at home and buying trending products online to buying essentials for living. While the world has been turning from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, at the same time consumer's behaviour is being forced to change and consumers are gradually heading towards the online shopping. Many new challenging tasks have been forced to business as borders of international trade have been closed. So, the survival for many people will be a really tough task. It might possible that some companies will have to stop operating for short run and some may face permanent shut down also. This will lead to a financial insecurity among economies, business and people. This will surely leave a long-run impact upon consumer's shopping trends, perception and buying behaviour for sure.

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