An Empirical Study on Awareness about the usage of Online payments among rural and semi urban women in Dindigul and Surrounding Regions, Tamil Nadu

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Abstract: In contemporary India, women whether employed or homemakers groutine□ly shoulder multifaceted responsibilities that demand extensive time for financial chores such as paying gas, electricity, water, taxes, groceries, milk, rent, loan installments, and other bills. This relentless schedule curtails personal care, strains childcare, and generates considerable stress, thereby diminishing overall quality of life. The advent of digital payment platforms—including banking codes, point□of□sale terminals, internet banking, UPI, mobile banking, AEPS, micro□ATMs, and BHIM—offers a trans-formative solution by enabling 24/7, faceless, cash transactions that can be executed swiftly from home or work.

Despite the proliferation of these tools, rural and semi□urban women often remain unaware of their availability and usage, resulting in continued reliance on time□consuming cash□based methods. Bridging this awareness gap is essential to empower women economically and socially, reduce daily stress, and foster inclusive growth.

This study therefore investigates the current level of awareness and adoption of digital payment mechanisms among rural and semi□urban women in a selected district. A structured questionnaire administered through direct interviews will collect data from a sample of 150 women, proportionately drawn from both rural and semi□urban locales. The research seeks to: (i) assess the extent of awareness regarding various digital payment options; (ii) identify barriers to adoption such as limited digital literacy, infrastructural constraints, and perceived security concerns; and (iii) Analyse the factors influence in the usage of online payment system
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Anticipated findings will inform policy makers and financial institutions about targeted strategies—like community workshops, mobile literacy vans, and simplified on boarding processes—to accelerate digital inclusion. Ultimately, enhancing digital literacy among these women promises not only operational efficiency but also a Women to become a Empowering Women, broader societal shift toward a more equitable, cash□less economy.

Keywords: Digital Payment, Online Banking, Rural Women, Semi□Urban Women, Awareness, Financial Inclusion, Digital Literacy.

Introduction:

A Technical option which is used to settle a Bill or Payment is called online Payment, we can send a Money to another individual person it excludes to maintain a cash or cheque. We can complete the transaction with few taps with the help of your smart phones, debit and Credit cards or through desktop. there are seven primary types of online payment methods that is UPI, credit/Debit cards digital wallets, Net Banking, Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) and Crypto Currencies every online payment method having a various features and limitations. The most widely used online payment in India is UPI (Unified Payment Interface Trade) developed by the national corporation of India (NPCI) It allows a customer to link multiple bank accounts in a single mobile application it offers a (24x7) service. It directly debits and credits money between bank accounts with the help of QR code or entering a Virtual payment Address without entering a any bank details. the popular usage of UPI payment in India is Phonepe, Google Pay, Paytm and BHIM (Bharat Interface for Money) through the online payment people can pay for goods and services without leaving the house. All the Transactions or protected by Robust encryption strict Tokenization and Authentication and also transaction can made instantly or within a second

Factors affecting the usage of online payment by the Women in Rural and Semi urban Areas

Global financial transactions have been completely transformed from barter system to digital payment system. Usage of online payment system has grown rapidly in India people's adoption of online payment is becoming more because of convenient, safety, Security and 24x7 service but still women's having some difficulties in accessing and using digital payment system, particularly in Rural and semi urban areas because of lack of financial literacy fear of fraud and scams and privacy.

Objectives of the study

1. To Assess the current level of awareness among the women in rural and semi urban areas
2. To identify the barriers in adoption of online payment system
3. To analyse the factors, influence in the usage of online payment system

Review of Literature

1. **Dr. S. Seethalakshmi and C. S. Vijaya (2019)** studied 50 working and non-working women in Chennai to assess access to and perception of digital payments. Using questionnaires and tools like Friedman's ranking and Chi-square test, the study found women had good access to digital payment infrastructure and largely supported cashless systems. Working women showed higher adaptability to digital tools than non-working women. The study stressed safety measures like consistent mobile numbers, record-keeping, and data privacy, and concluded that digital transactions were well received by women in Chennai.
2. **Dr. Bhikhalal Moradiya and Darshana Gandhi (2023)** studied the awareness of digital payments among 175 homemakers in Vadodara district. Using questionnaires and statistical tools like Chi-square and frequency analysis, they found that most women had only a moderate understanding of digital transactions. The study highlighted the role of Digital India in promoting cashless payments but noted risks from low awareness of safety practices. Researchers recommended workshops, hands-on training, and regional language apps to improve digital confidence. The study concluded that adoption is growing among homemakers, but awareness levels still need improvement.
3. **S. Apte and R. Murudkar (2021**) studied 50 women teachers from the University of Mumbai to examine factors influencing digital payment usage. Using questionnaires and SPSS analysis, the study found no significant link between usage and age, income, or education. Instead, teachers' attitude and awareness of digital tools played a greater role in adoption. The authors recommended awareness programs and hands-on training to build confidence. The study concluded that mindset and awareness, not demographics, drive digital payment adoption among women educators.

4. **Tushinder Preet Kaur and Divya Budhia (2019)** studied 300 women in urban Punjab to identify factors influencing online payment usage. Using questionnaires, factor analysis and discriminant analysis, they found that while cash was still dominant, urban women were increasingly adopting digital payments. The study highlighted awareness, knowledge and infrastructure as key factors affecting adoption. Researchers recommended government awareness campaigns and improved infrastructure, especially in rural areas. The study concluded that digital payment use among women is rising but needs more support for wider reach.

5. **Bijin Philip (2019)** in his study *"Unified Payment Interface: The Impact of UPI on Customer Satisfaction"* aimed to analyze the influence of UPI on customer satisfaction. The study examined how UPI services differ from traditional payment methods, how users from various occupational and educational backgrounds utilize UPI, and whether these demographic factors affect their attitudes towards UPI services. Using regression analysis, the researcher evaluated the extent to which UPI impacts consumer satisfaction. The study concluded that UPI services significantly influence customer satisfaction and highlighted the differences in customer perception between traditional and digital payment systems.

Data analysis:

Table:1 Age-wise usage of Online Payments

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
18–24	42	28%
25–34	55	37%
35–44	30	20%
Above 45	23	15%
Total	150	100%

Table:2 Frequency of Using Online Payment System

Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	48	32%
Weekly	61	41%
Monthly	29	19%
Rarely	12	8%
Total	150	100%

Table:3 Preferred online payment methods among women

Payment Method	Frequency	Percentage
UPI/Mobile Wallets	67	45%
Debit/Credit Cards	41	27%
Net Banking	24	16%
Q R code Payments	18	12%
Total	150	100%

Table:4 Main Reason for using online payment System

Payment Method	Frequency	Percentage
Convenience	58	39%
Cashless transaction	39	26%
Discounts &Cashback	31	21%
Safety During Transaction	22	14%
Total	150	100%

Table:5 Challenges faced by women While using online payments

Challange	Frequency	Percentage
Technical Issues	46	31%
Fear of Fraud	38	25%
Lack of digital literacy	35	23%
No Major Challenges	31	21%
Total	150	100%

Findings

1. Demographics & Usage Pattern

The highest users of online payments are in the 25–34 age group (37%), followed by 18–24 (28%). Together, women below 35 make up 65% of users.41% use online payments weekly and 32% use them daily. So, 73% are regular users.

2. Payment Preferences

UPI/Mobile Wallets are the most preferred method (45%), followed by Debit/Credit Cards (27%). Traditional methods like Net Banking (16%) and QR Code (12%) have lower adoption.

3. Motivating Factors

The main reason for adoption is Convenience (39%).Other key drivers are Cashless Transactions (26%) and Discounts & Cashback (21%).Safety (14%) is the least cited reason.

4. Key Challenges

Technical Issues (31%) are the biggest barrier.Fear of Fraud (25%) and Lack of Digital Literacy (23%) are also significant.Only 21% reported "No Major Challenges".

Suggestions

Improve Technical Support & Infrastructure

Since 31% face technical issues, payment apps and banks should focus on faster grievance redressal, better app stability, and 24/7 customer support in regional languages.

Enhance Digital Literacy & Awareness Programs

Conduct workshops and training in colleges and communities to address the 23% who lack digital literacy. Focus on safe transaction practices, especially for women above 35.

Build Trust to Reduce Fear of Fraud

Promote security features like 2-factor authentication, fraud alerts, and insurance. Run awareness campaigns on identifying phishing and scams to reduce the 25% who fear fraud.

Leverage Convenience and Incentives

Since convenience and discounts are major drivers, companies should continue offering cashback, reward points, and one-click payment options to retain users.

Target Younger Demographics

With 65% of users below 35, marketing campaigns for UPI and wallets should focus on students and working professionals through social media and college tie-ups.

Conclusion

The study shows that online payment systems have strong adoption among women, especially those aged 18–34. UPI and mobile wallets dominate due to convenience and cashless benefits. However, growth is being limited by technical glitches, security concerns, and gaps in digital literacy. To achieve wider and more confident usage, stakeholders should focus on making platforms more reliable, educating users on safe practices, and building trust. Addressing these challenges will help in moving toward a more inclusive and cashless economy for women.

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