

Responsible E-Commerce, Consumer Education and Indian Knowledge Systems

*Mamta Rajput  
*Vandana Ghai  

*Shyama Prasad Mukherji College for Women, University of Delhi, India

Abstract

The paper uses the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) as an interpretive and educational lens to understand how traditional values of moderation, mindful consumption, balance, responsibility towards nature and judicious use of resources can guide modern e-commerce behaviour. E-commerce has become an important part of everyday life, especially for consumers who depend on online platforms for convenience, variety, discounts, and quick access. While E-commerce has made shopping easier, it has brought out the ugly underbelly of overconsumption, disoriented financial habits, negative environmental impact, poor health choices, and reduced interaction with local markets, and the need for stronger consumer education. The findings in the paper serve as the base to identify learning gaps in digital consumer behaviour, particularly around financial literacy, environmental awareness, health awareness and responsible decision-making. The study concludes that responsible consumption requires a balance between the benefits of digital convenience, future-readiness skills such as financial and environmental literacy, and the ethical grounding offered by IKS.

Keywords: *Indian Knowledge System, consumer education, responsible consumption, online shopping behaviour, financial literacy.*

Introduction

With technological advancement, globalisation, consumerism, and the growth of the Indian economy, the way we shop today has changed completely. Today's times no longer require Shopkeepers and customers to see each other, for a purchase, something that was unfathomable a while ago. One can now come back tired from their workplace with no energy to cook food, and just order in, thanks to the rise of online consumerism. Today, the domestic and global barriers for commerce have dropped down lower than ever. With the rise in the efficiency of shipping services, and the quality of these services, along with increasing affordability - one can now get anything their heart desires, from anywhere in the world. Welcome to the world of 'E-Commerce'. According to a report released by McKinsey, "India's e-commerce market is valued at 70-80 billion dollars in 2024, and by 2030 it will reach 180-200 billion dollars." Today, India has roughly 300 million online shoppers; by 2030, this number is expected to grow up to 440 million. Easy access to smartphones, cheaper internet packs, increased network coverage, growth of digital payment infrastructure & online financial security, availability of a global catalogue of products, competitive prices, and attractive deals have made online shopping not only convenient but also appealing. This contributes directly to our economy and bridges the gap between our current standing and the dream of becoming 'Viksit Bharat'; a strong economy is one of the key characteristics of a developed nation. In the present study the researcher has attempted to analyse and compare online shopping trends and its impact on the environment and everyday life. The two cohorts studied are young consumers in the age group of 18 to 30 years and their parents, giving the paper the leverage to compare digital consumption habits with more traditional shopping patterns.

E-commerce is not only defined by its USP of increased convenience, but also raises a lot of new behavioural questions around consumption choices, restraint, responsibility and environmental impact. This study uses the IKS as the key lens from an interpretive perspective. IKS offers ideas such as mindful consumption, balance, moderation, duty towards nature, and responsible use of resources. These principles help examine whether modern online shopping behaviour is moving towards need-based consumption or convenience-led overconsumption. The study therefore analyses the survey findings not only from a behavioural perspective, but also through the values of judicious and responsible living embedded in IKS. This also brings up the topic of education regarding consumer choices. Researchers, studying the behavioural changes caused by E-commerce have realised these changes are not only about the preferences in shopping, but also point to deeper issues in consumer education, financial literacy, environmental awareness, health awareness and digital decision-making. While more

education foundations are laid for enhancing “selling” and “business”, the consumer side suffers. Today’s generation, the young consumers, are growing up in a world where online shopping, convenience, discounts, influencer marketing, quick commerce and digital patients are a norm. For the sake of these consumers, educating the customer is no longer only about literacy and mathematics, but also about a value-based guided system for consumption. In this context, IKS can provide an important educational foundation by teaching moderation, restraint, mindful consumption, respect for nature, financial discipline and balance between need and desire. Linking IKS with future-readiness skills such as budgeting, climate awareness, health literacy and responsible digital behaviour can help young consumers make more informed and ethical consumption choices.

Indian Knowledge System (IKS)

The Indian Knowledge System, usually referred to as the IKS, is a rich and profound system of knowledge stemming from ancient Indian texts like the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, & Shastras. This knowledge has been transferred across generations through oral traditions, sages, rishis, families, and everyday cultural practices. Over time, it has been rooted in the culture of family advice, everyday practices, and traditional ‘nuskas’ The Indian Knowledge System offers a framework for value-based living, guiding personal, social, ethical, emotional, psychological and financial well-being. The relevance of IKS is rapidly increasing in today’s modern, materialistic, consumerist and technology driven world, where in the name of modernisation and development we are letting go of our age-old knowledge bank, wisdom and practices. Why IKS? Because IKS, when understood in its true sense and implemented in life, empowers an individual to live a meaningful and balanced life, overcoming all challenges of life. IKS principles also provide guidance for present-day concerns such as cultural fragmentation, environmental deterioration, mental health, consumerism and materialism (Nath, 2024).

Review of Related Literature

The researcher reviewed studies on e-commerce trends and their impact on social behaviour, financial behaviour, health choices and the environment. Most existing studies on e-commerce analyse it from the perspective of economic growth, consumer behaviour or market expansion, while fewer studies examine its educational and value-based implications for young consumers. Similarly, studies on the Indian Knowledge System are often linked with SMEs, ethical entrepreneurship and business models, but less with consumer education, digital behaviour or responsible consumption. Moreover, many

available studies focus deeply on one factor, such as food delivery, financial behaviour, skincare products or environmental impact, rather than studying these concerns together. The acknowledged limitation of the research contributing to this paper is that there was no one holistic study covering trends, their behavioural impact, consumer education needs, and IKS-based principles of mindful and responsible consumption. This gap is important because online shopping behaviour is not only a market trend; it also reflects learning gaps in financial literacy, environmental awareness, health literacy and digital decision-making. Some of the relevant studies reviewed are as follows:

Tiwari, S. & Singh, P. (2011) in their study titled “Environmental impacts of E-Commerce” have discussed the positive and negative impacts of E-Commerce on the environment. The positive impact being energy saving and time saving, and the negative impact is pollution, wastage of material, resources and energy. The study called for a balanced approach so that E-commerce can be used for the benefit of society and the environment.

Thakur, A. (2021) in her study on consumer behavioural analysis of online shopping trends in India, found that people in the age group of 25 to 34 shop online the most while 55 to 64 the least. The most bought online products include: apparels, footwear, electronics, beauty and personal care products.

Gopal, S. (2023) in his ‘Survey On Ordering and Eating Food Using Online Food Delivery Applications’ indicated that younger people order online food more frequently than others and can lead to potential risks such as increased portion sizes, overconsumption, reliance on unhealthy convenient options, inaccurate nutritional information and hygiene concerns. He has further suggested that it is important to be mindful of portion sizes and to make informed choices about what you are eating.

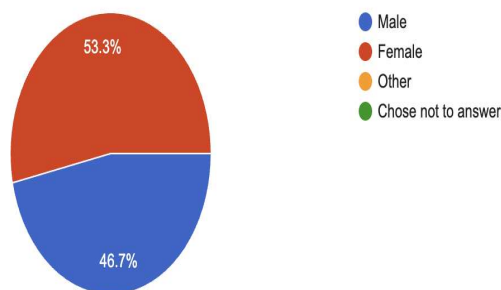
Prasad, S. et. al (2025) in ‘Food Delivery Apps and their Effect and Social Impact on Eating Habits and Health: A Study’ highlighted that the increased accessibility of food through online apps has undeniably altered eating behaviours, consuming more fast food meals. The study also found a correlation between the use of food delivery apps and potential negative impacts on health. The increased consumption of less healthy food choices, coupled with sedentary lifestyles, raises concerns about the rising prevalence of obesity and related health issues.

Khalid, M., & Abdollahi, M. (2021). in their study ‘Environmental distribution of personal care products and their effects on human health’, have found out that Personal Care Products (PCPs) are the source of emission of several chemicals like siloxanes, phthalates, parabens, ethanolamines amongst others. Evidence-based facts have confirmed the risks of serious diseases associated with various chemical contaminants found in PCPs, which threaten spreading across the entire ecosystem involving human, wild, and marine life.

Muchammad, A. Z. (2023). in their study ‘The Effect of Buy Now Pay Later on The Overspending and Overconsumption of Users in E-commerce Settings’ inferred that the use of buy now pay later has contributed to higher spending and development of overconsumption behavior in consumers.

Methodology

A qualitative research study was conducted to analyse and compare the E-Commerce trends of people residing in the urban village of Delhi. An urban village was chosen specifically for the purpose of the study due to their increased accessibility to weekly markets, local markets, big general stores and hypermarkets. Almost all kinds of goods are easily available at a hand’s reach. An in-depth survey covering the E-commerce behaviour of 30 people, in the age group of 18 to 30 years, was conducted followed by a semi-structured interview. Their parents (10 people in the age group of 45 to 60 years) were also interviewed. The respondent group included 16 women, and 14 men. The responses were compared and grouped in different categories and the analysis done.



Picture 1: Gender wise distribution of sample

Findings and Analysis

Finding 1: Preferred mode of shopping

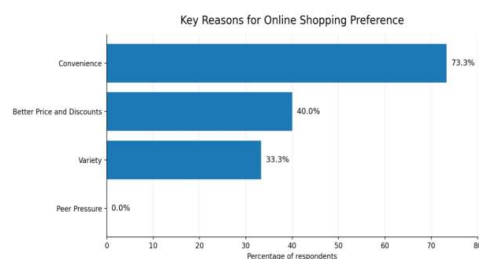
People in the age group of 18 to 30 (considered as Gen Z for this study): Shop mostly online; reasons shared were convenience, ease in making digital payments, discounts and offers, increased variety and availability of all brands. People in the age group of 45 to 60

(considered elderly for this study): Shop mostly offline; reasons shared were need of physical inspection of the product before purchase, increased trust in the quality of the product, finding things more value for money, and shopping as means of socialisation.

Analysis

Even with grocery shops, hypermarkets and general stores available only a few steps away, Gen Z respondents still prefer shopping online. Reluctance to go out to buy something when things can be conveniently delivered at doorstep can make them lethargic, physically inactive, socially oblivious, and reclusive. As our responses for the elder age group indicated, stepping out to the nearby market is also an opportunity to interact more with society and our environment. At the same time, during the older days people bore the responsibility of fetching what they desired, and toiling for the same. In the modern day, with the rise of the gig working economy and e-commerce, we are becoming increasingly insensitive to them. The rise of business models like Quick commerce, especially under extreme temperatures, bad weather conditions, waterlogging, give rise to humanitarian questions. The culture of paying per delivery and tips cannot compensate for the toll it takes on the health of a large fleet of delivery workers. In the years to come as E-Commerce continues to eat at offline retail, the result will be an economic boom on one hand, but a slowdown or shutdowns for local markets, general stores, hypermarkets on the other hand, which will create a social and economic imbalance and bring about a change in the world of work for thousands of people employed in offline retail.

This finding points to the need for digital consumer education that teaches young consumers to evaluate convenience not only in terms of speed, price and discounts, but also in terms of labour dignity, local economies, community interaction and responsible choice.



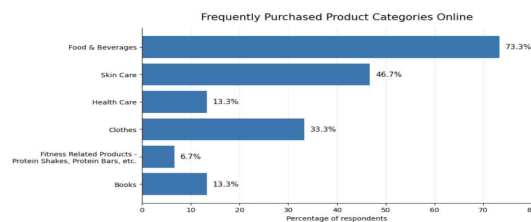
Picture 2: Key Reasons for Online Shopping Preference

Finding 2: Frequently purchased SKUs

- Gen Z: Personal goods, food and beverages, skin care products, health care products, apparel
- Food and beverages: packed food items, cold drinks, health drinks and ready to eat cooked food

- Skin care: serums, sunscreens, cleanser, face wash, gels, moisturiser
- Health care: energy bars, protein shakes, vitamin supplements
- Elderly: Grocery in emergency

It was found that Gen Z usually orders goods for their personal use most commonly, and within that food and beverages tops the list followed by skin care products. They keep on trying different brands influenced by the promotion strategies that the companies follow. When parents were inquired about whether they buy these products offline, they shared that they eat outside food only on some occasions; otherwise they eat home cooked food, fruits and vegetables. They don't consume any junk or highly processed food. Their meal timings are fixed. On the topic of skin care products, most respondents from the elderly group mentioned not using any and they procure their health care products offline. For apparel, they prefer buying offline. In fact, a lot of parents were unaware about their children's e-commerce consumption patterns.



Picture 3: Frequently Purchased Categories online

Analysis

Analysing the findings takes us to the fact that there is a wide difference in the nutrition and food habits of Gen Z and their parents. Parents prefer home cooked fresh food at fixed intervals. Not only has the rise of online ordering increased accessibility to a wide variety of food items, it has also reduced the dependance on home cooked food. India's traditional family culture ensured families sat together for breakfast, and dinner. As the food delivery industry grows, people no longer need to have the dishes they don't want to (compromising nutrition), and this also leads to varied times of timing, impacting the social layer of the family dynamic. Alongside this, most food that is ordered online is delivered in plastic boxes, & low quality cardboard containers which are considered harmful for health. As hot food is poured in these containers, it lets out toxic chemicals that are harmful for our health. Consumers are unaware of the conditions under which the food is cooked, the quality of ingredients used, and the nutritional harm caused by highly processed food and packaged food. Over consumption of junk food, unhealthy food, sugary drinks, and sedentary lifestyle is already the reason for various lifestyle diseases that are now growingly being diagnosed at an early age. These points to the need for nutrition and health literacy within consumer education, where young consumers learn to evaluate online food choices not only by taste, convenience and discounts, but also by

nutritional value, hygiene, packaging safety and long-term health impact. Skin care products are the second most online purchased products by Gen Z, which describes this category as their 'need'. The knowledge of parents is limited to products like cream, shampoo, powder whereas the Gen Z list of skincare includes; moisturizers, serums, toners, sunscreens, facewash, under eye creams to name a few. In the older system, with the Indian Knowledge System at its back, there was very little awareness and need for skin care products. Natural ingredients have been used in Indian households over thousands of years for home formulation for skin care products. These solutions revolve around natural herbs, flowers, oils, and other food components; and are the leading reason that the older cohort does not see the need for skin care products. Contrasting this, with the changed world, internet access, and polluted environment, and loss of belief and use of home remedies, Gen Z is driven by the desire for looking beautiful, having glowing and flawless skin, driving them to spend thousands on products, desperately trying different brands, hoping something would work. This reflects the need for product literacy, where young consumers are taught to understand ingredients, marketing claims, skin suitability, over use of cosmetic products and the value of traditional, safe and need-based self-care practices. Health care products bought online also majorly include protein bars, & protein shakes. These "protein" heavy products have become the latest fad among youngsters. While there is nothing wrong with relying on external over the counter supplements to meet one's nutritional needs, the issue arises that a growing amount of youngsters are now consuming these products, with no medical awareness, guidance or consultation, or testing and diagnostics. Overconsumption of such products can be seriously injurious to one's health. Contrasted with the Gen Z behaviour here is that of the elderly-who do not consume such supplements, but still possess the same, or more physical strength. While other factors also play a major role in this, one of the key factors is nutritional balance, and discipline. This highlights the importance of health-related consumer education, especially around supplements, protein products and over-the-counter health products, so that young consumers do not confuse online availability with medical suitability.

Finding 3: Parental unawareness about online orders

Online ordering requires a smart phone, skill of using basic technology and making digital payments (while optional, largely preferred mode of payment in urban regions). Since there is no physical element to online shopping, it creates an unhindered, unsupervised atmosphere for shopping for the younger cohort. One of the core findings of the study was that parents shared that they do not have any clue of what Gen Z is

buying online. Some Gen Z respondents also shared that they make it a point that the order does not land in their parents' hands to avoid getting scolded.

Analysis

Parental unawareness about what their children are ordering online is one of the major disadvantages of online shopping, and serves to reshape societal relationships and interpersonal relationships in families. In the developmental years, owing to hormonal changes, social group influence and societal expectations, adolescents prioritise looks and body image. The culture of more and fast consumption is also a trend rapidly growing with youngsters, whereas the elderly cohort comes from the ideology of buy less, use and throw - then you can buy some more. Earlier, during offline shopping trips parents could supervise, monitor which things are being bought by family members and because of this supervision there was a resistance and fear of buying non essential things and moreover asking the money frequently for shopping would invite lot of questions. This finding shows the need for family-based consumer education and digital guidance, where young consumers are taught to reflect on what they buy, why they buy it, how often they buy it, and whether the purchase is need-based or impulse-driven.

Finding 4: Added waste and carbon emissions in the environment

In recent times, for very unfortunate reasons, climate change has become a publicly discussed topic, and needed change. While conversations have started stirring around the topic, full knowledge of what sustainability is, awareness of alternatives, and the ownership of the impact climate change is bringing, remains lacking. The rise of e-commerce has also resulted in the rise of shipping, and packaging material. All the goods which are delivered at our doorstep are being packaged and all that packing material (plastic, cardboard, bubble wrap, styrofoam) contributes to environmental pollution. Rapid delivery services also produce high carbon emissions, increasing traffic on the roads leading to noise pollution and various other issues.

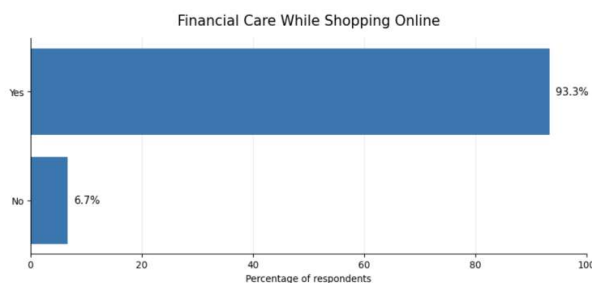
Analysis

Driven by consumer's want for convenience, the level of carbon emissions coming not only from long-haul shipping vehicles but also from domestic and local delivery vehicles is increasing, but those created by domestic and local delivery vehicles is also increasing. In order to keep up with the USP of speed in the e-commerce world, companies often

have to deal with rushed demand, and are forced to send their trucks half their capacity, generating more traffic and emissions. Easy return policy adds to this vehicular emissions due to increased number of trips. The older generation on the other hand either prefer going to the local market, walking, for their day-to-day needs to frequent once with a planned trip to a bigger mall/market/complex. They also added that they have a habit of taking their own bags, at least for everyday items. This finding highlights the need for environmental education and climate literacy within consumer education, so that young consumers understand how packaging, returns, rapid delivery and convenience-led ordering contribute to waste, emissions and unsustainable consumption patterns.

Finding 5: Change in Financial Behaviour

The adjectives usually associated with Gen Z when looking at their consumption trends on E-commerce often fall in a single bucket of overconsuming, overindulging, addiction to shopping apps, impulsive buying, mental stress, unending comparison loops. In further conversations with the siblings of Gen Z respondents (in a limited sample set within the respondents), they shared how mostly siblings end up sharing everything if they are of the same gender, or at least can share if they choose to. However, with the growing addiction to shopping, great discounts and impulse buying, products end up getting accumulated unnecessarily.



Picture 4: Financial care while shopping online

Analysis

While behaviours like impulsive buying, & overconsuming can be good for E-Commerce as a sector in the world of business, but it's not healthy for the younger generation. Youth is the time to build skills like fiscal discipline, budgeting and amp up savings. While the amount of disposable income with keep increasing and decreasing through their life, the habits and patterns they set today will last them a lifetime, and impact how they take their future financial decisions. Analysing E-Commerce from a sociological perspective, one finds that the convenience of buying goods at the click of a mobile is coming at a cost. E-Commerce may shape the future of India, but its rapid growth is detrimental to the food choices of people (Patgiri, 2022), their spending tendency (Jain & Pasricha, 2018; Pal et al, 2021; Tomar et al, 2023), and the environment (Tiwari & Singh, 2011) and their life.

(Larose, 2001). It should be alarming to see that the rapid growth of E-commerce, with the knowledge of the cons it brings in our lives, raises the question if we care more about our needs, convenience and comfort or what we are buying, how financially stable we are and the overall impact of this consumption on our lives and the world? Do we even think for a moment, what consequences we will be facing if we do not keep a check on our habits of online shopping, spending tendency, develop sensitivity to environment and life. The researcher believes that answers to these questions form the basis of our life and guide us to live a contented and meaningful life. Our parents had the knowledge and wisdom which was passed on to them from previous generations through the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) which provided a framework to live a meaningful and purposeful life. This finding highlights the need to integrate financial literacy and value-based consumer education, so that young consumers learn budgeting, delayed gratification, need-based spending and mindful use of discounts before unhealthy consumption habits become permanent.

Understanding Food, Health, Skin Care, Family, Society and Right Living through IKS: A Value-Based Learning Perspective

The following research works show that IKS does not only offer cultural or traditional knowledge, but also provides a value-based learning framework for everyday decisions related to food, health, self-care, wealth, family, society and responsible living. It has been observed that the understanding of food over the past few years has changed. Food is seen as something to fill the stomach, satiate taste and which is easily available in the market in ready to eat form. Contrary to this, our ancient texts' understanding of food is something which is for mind, body and soul. Various samhitas, ayurvedic texts have written elaborately about the minutest details of which food should we consume on different timings of a day, different seasons of a year, method of cooking, way of eating, nutritional and medicinal value of different foods, nutrition as the key identifying factor of a food.

“Svasthya, ‘to be established in one’s self or own natural state’ is optimal health according to Ayurveda. In order to achieve this, one has to have a balance of structural and physiological factors, metabolic and excretory processes, body tissues, senses, mind, and attain a state of self awareness and contented self.” Payyappallimana, U., & Venkatasubramanian, P. (2016).

“Ahara is one of the three pillars of life according to Ayurveda; the other two being sleep and regulated sexual life. The classical texts of Ayurveda of 300 BC–700 AD dedicate elaborate sections on foods. Unique aspects include detailed descriptions of food and beverage, food classification based on their taste, therapeutic qualities, etc., food safety and measures for the same, different incompatibilities of food based on their tastes, processing, dose, time, place, etc., prescriptions of consumption, food qualities and intake based on the digestive ability of an individual, and the nature of food that is being consumed. Primary classification of food is based on its appropriateness to body and mental constitution based on the five elements and the tridosa theories. Five elements combine and dissociate in the natural transformation of any material, living or non-living.” Payyappallimana, U., & Venkatasubramanian, P. (2016).

“Ayurveda recommends us to eat sattvic (pure and fresh) foods avoiding rajasic (fiery) and tamasic (spoiled) foods. Sattvic foods are fresh and light and help to clear the mind. The role of food on the behaviour and character of a person is not negligible. As our food will be pure and natural, our brain will also be healthy and active. Ayurvedic food habits help in strengthening immune systems and assisting the gut in functioning more effectively. With a clear mind and a healthy body, one can more easily fulfil one’s soul purposes. Food is an essential requirement in life and one can attain good health by following a proper, natural diet. Most health problems develop due to the wrong eating habits.” S, D., N V, R. & Mishra, A. (2019).

“Tamasic foods include fried and frozen foods, fast foods, microwaved foods, processed foods, left overnight foods, meat, fish, eggs, onion, alcohol, etc. They are good for slowing us down, numbing us, depressing us and enhancing inertia. Tamasic food is the unhealthiest food of all.” S, D., N V, R. & Mishra, A. (2019).

“Food in India is more than sustenance - it is deeply intertwined with culture, health, and spirituality. Rooted in Ayurveda, one of the world’s oldest medical systems, Indian culinary traditions emphasize the medicinal properties of ingredients and their role in maintaining health.” Patil, S. (2024).

“The human skin, the body’s largest organ, serves vital functions in physical protection and health reflection. However, modern lifestyle factors often compromise skin health, leading individuals to rely on cosmetic products that may exacerbate damage. Ayurveda, an ancient Indian medicinal system, offers holistic approaches to skin care and beauty maintenance, emphasizing internal and external well-being. Ayurvedic

texts detail various herbal formulations and practices for skin care, including external applications like Lepa and internal remedies such as Vayasthapan Mahakashaya and Varnya Mahakashaya. Ayurveda addresses a broad spectrum of dermatological concerns, including skin and hair care, fairness, stretch mark elimination, foot care, hair coloring, removal, acne treatment, scar reduction, and dandruff management. These treatments are known for their safety, affordability, and high efficacy. Ayurveda presents promising solutions for modern skin care dilemmas, offering safe, affordable, and effective alternatives to conventional cosmetic products.” Sharma, P., & Sharma, M. (2024).

“The Vedic and philosophical traditions advocate wise use of wealth - on self-improvement, economic commotion, and charitable giving (Dāna).mentions that whatever is given to others selflessly as returns many times over (: 1-8).also specifies the disciplines of(non-hoarding) and(non-stealing), a balancing act of striking an equilibrium between our desires and virtues. Human beings have one universal duty or, which is a virtue. By virtue is meant the cultivation of compassion for our fellow beings; an individual social responsibility (ISR) which means to share and coexist with all living beings including insects, animals, etc., If ISR becomes a way of life, and then corporate social responsibility will occur by its very nature. Nature follows the principle of "this is not mine; it is for collective well-being." The ocean, sun, stars, moon, wind, trees, etc., perform functions to give to other's welfare not for themselves.” Swamy, D., Nagarajan, K., & Babu, N. (2021).

“IKS offers an alternative paradigm that emphasizes balance between material prosperity, ethical responsibility, and environmental sustainability.” Kumar, K., Tiwari, V., T., & Tiwari, S. (2023).

Wealth Management in Ancient India: A Study of the Arthashastra" by R.K. Sharma (Journal of Indian Economic Thought, 2015) this paper analyzes the Arthashastra's principles of wealth management and their relevance to modern times. It discusses the importance of budgeting, saving, and investing in ancient Indian economic thought.The paper concludes that the Arthashastra's principles of wealth management are timeless and universal.

Indian Philosophy and Finance: A Study of the Bhagavad Gita" by R.K. Singh (Journal of Indian Economic Thought, 2012) This paper explores the Bhagavad Gita's principles of finance and economics.It discusses the importance of selfless action, detachment, and spiritual growth in financial decision-making.The paper argues that the

Bhagavad Gita's principles offer valuable insights into ethical and sustainable financial practices."NEP 2020

Indian knowledge systems place parents and family at the center of child development: shaping morality, identity, education, and social responsibility. While forms of family life are changing, the core ideal remains a value-rich, interdependent family that carries cultural and spiritual heritage into the next generation. When connected to modern consumer education, these IKS principles can help young consumers develop practical judgment around what they eat, what they buy, how they spend, how they care for their bodies, and how their choices affect society and nature

Discussion

Thus, it can be seen that IKS, through the Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads and other literature passed down across generations, offers key sutras for living a contented, meaningful and balanced life. These sutras can also be understood as principles of value-based consumer education, especially for guiding young consumers towards judicious e-commerce use. Some of the lessons which have seen our parents and grand parents adopting in their life and which guide us for using E-Commerce judiciously are as follows:

- Keep your needs minimum whether it is clothes, footwear, jewellery, accessories, food etc.
- Reduce the consumption of non essential things, reuse and recycle
- Shop for the things which are of the need
- Value money and save it
- Be satisfied with what you have, no comparisons, having what others have is not necessary
- Food is not that which fills the stomach, it should be which nourishes mind, body and soul
- Beauty is not of the skin, it is of the soul. Don't waste too much money on external beauty
- Vasudhev kutumbakam, the whole world is a family , man is a social being
- Learn to live in harmony with environment
- Parents have lived their life on IKS principles. Their guidance and suggestions are valuable

When applied to e-commerce, these lessons can be translated into practical learning areas such as financial literacy, nutrition awareness, environmental responsibility, digital self-control and mind ful consumption. Young consumers need to learn not only how to use digital platforms, but also how to question whether a purchase is necessary, healthy, sustainable and financially responsible. Passing down IKS is important for future generations because they are living in a world shaped by technology, consumerism, globalisation, digitalisation and maximalism. This world is changing faster than before, making it even more important to give young people a strong foundation in value-based learning. IKS can provide this foundation by helping them balance convenience with restraint, consumption with responsibility, and modern access with ethical judgment.

Conclusion

After analysing the behavioural shift around online shopping and the survey responses, the study shows that individuals, especially younger Gen Z consumers, need to strike a careful balance between the convenience they seek and the values of restraint, moderation and self-reliance taught by IKS. E-commerce is clearly here to stay in the new world, only changing shapes and forms like evolving into Quick Commerce. Therefore, the researcher doesn't suggest abandoning the industry altogether but carefully deciding which products need to be bought online versus which products need an offline glance. Some products may be better suited for online purchase because of availability, price comparison or accessibility, while others may still be better purchased offline, especially when local trust, freshness, reduced packaging, or community interaction matter. For instance, occasionally choosing a nearby tea stall instead of ordering tea online, or dining in instead of always choosing takeaway, may seem like small decisions. Yet such choices can support local vendors, reduce packaging waste, improve awareness of hygiene, and preserve everyday social interaction. The Indian Knowledge System warns us that progress that comes with a heavy disproportionate cost is usually harmful in the longer run. Its emphasis on moderation, mind ful consumption, duty towards nature and responsible living is essential to guide modern consumers in using technology, and the world of E-commerce without becoming dependent on it. This is particularly important because many societies that moved rapidly towards excessive convenience and technology use are now also discussing minimalism, slower living, mind ful consumption and reduced digital dependence. India has the opportunity to learn from this cycle early. If we adopt every convenience without reflection, we may later struggle to manage its consequences. Therefore, the question is not which to choose between traditional values and modern platforms, but to bring them into dialogue. E-commerce can serve the individual, society and the economy when used with awareness. IKS can provide the ethical and cultural grounding needed to ensure that consumption remains need-based, balanced and responsible. The responsibility finally rests with individuals, families and

communities to use both systems wisely, so that modern growth remains aligned with personal well-being, social harmony and environmental care. This makes responsible e-commerce use not only a matter of individual choice, but also a matter of consumer education that combines IKS-based values with financial literacy, health awareness, environmental responsibility and digital decision-making.

Declarations: *Ethics approval and Consent to participate: Informed consent was obtained before participation of subjects and informed consent was obtained from the institutions concerned.*

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