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A Study of Consumer Perception and Purchasing Behaviour towards Online Grocery Stores in Jharkhand - A Case Study of Ranchi District

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Abstract: *The increase of e-commerce has led to a change in the way consumers conduct their buying decisions, especially in the online grocery market. The main focus is on the consumer perception and buying behaviour regarding online grocery shopping in Ranchi District. The objective of the research is to examine the effect of the quality of goods and services on online grocery purchases, determine the level of consumer awareness regarding online grocery sites, and find the highly popular online grocery apps with reasons for their popularity. The descriptive research design was adopted for this study, and both the data, which include primary and secondary sources, were used. The primary data were collected through a structured survey from 152 consumers attempting this survey using the convenience sampling method. Percentage analysis, descriptive and regression analysis are used using MS-Excel software to test the hypothesis proposed. The findings indicate that consumer perception affects online grocery shopping attitude. Consumer perceptions of features like quality of the product, delivery on time, easy ordering procedures, information available, refund policies, and saving time influence their likelihood of buying online products. Regression results have also supported the alternative hypothesis by indicating that there exists a significant relationship between consumer perception and online grocery purchasing behaviour. It is therefore recommended that services be concentrated on providing high-quality services in order to enhance consumer satisfaction and loyalty.*

Keyword: Consumer Perception; Online Grocery Shopping; Buying Behaviour; Service Quality, Time Saving Convenience.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the study

In the past few years, the usage of commerce and the internet has grown rapidly, and their significance is transforming the retail landscape in India. Across diverse segments of ecommerce, online grocery shopping comes as a fast-growing sector that arises from changing consumer demand for convenience, their lifestyle and comfort, time availability, and urbanisation. Consumers are shifting from traditional grocery stores to online grocery platforms increasingly; the platform offers doorstep delivery and a wide range of products, competitive pricing, discounts, and digital payment options. The COVID-19 pandemic made the faster adoption of online grocery platforms for shopping as consumers became more aware of safety, hygiene, and contactless purchasing. In the context of the Ranchi district of Jharkhand, the adoption of online grocery shopping is still in a developing stage. Ranchi represents a unique mix of urban and semi-urban consumers with different income levels, education, and digital awareness. Knowledge of online shopping is less common. While most online grocery platforms have entered the market, consumer perception, trust, built-up awareness, and purchasing behaviour towards the platform remain diverse and are uneven. This study is undertaken to examine how consumers in the Ranchi district perceive online grocery stores and compare them with traditional retail stores, which analyzes the factors that influence their decisions. The findings of this study will help online grocery service providers, marketers, policymakers, and researchers to develop effective strategies to improve customer experience with online platforms and buying decisions, expanding the reach of online grocery services in this region. Blinkit, Big Basket, Apna, Marks, Swiggy Instamart, and JioMart are common apps that come in use on a daily basis.

B. Statement of the Problem

With an increasing growth of the Internet and smartphones in the country, the popularity of ecommerce websites has increased vastly in India, which includes OGS (Online Grocery Shopping) as well. There are various OGS platforms operating in the country; however, their customer base, consumer awareness, and satisfaction level tend to vary from one geographical location to another.

In semi-urban or emerging urban areas, such as Ranchi, offline shopping is still prevalent among consumers due to various reasons such as consumer trust in examining products physically, habit of buying goods, cost consideration, and various other factors. Despite the benefits provided by OGS, which include convenience, saving time, increased product choice, and delivery services, customers are opposed to completely switching from offline to online. There are several reasons why consumers are reluctant, including unawareness about online grocery shopping.

C. Significance of The Study

The significance of the study helps in understanding the level of digital inclusion of consumers in the Ranchi district. The research identifies the changes faced by many consumers in adopting online grocery shopping, internet connectivity, digital literacy, risk of online fraud, and hesitation towards digital payment methods. By highlighting these issues, the study will provide significant information for online grocery businesses, government bodies, and policymakers to address the challenges, user-friendly applications, and secure payment systems. The findings support initiatives to improve digital literacy and increase accessibility to e-commerce services so that consumers from different age groups, earning levels, and educational backgrounds in Ranchi can benefit from digital shopping facilities.

D. Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is restricted to the analysis of consumer perceptions, awareness, and buying attitude concerning online groceries with particular reference to Ranchi. The scope of the study is to focus on consumers who have awareness or knowledge regarding OGS sites and analyze the determinants that impact their preference towards OGS. The areas of focus include convenience, time savings, various prices, quality details, deliveries, mode of payment, and return policy options. Primary data have been collected for analysis through the use of a questionnaire distributed to 152 consumers. Percentage analysis, graph illustration, and regression analysis have been adopted to interpret the collected data. The study results can only be applied to a specified duration and geographic location.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

- 1) Bakale and Kariya (2025) In this study, the focus was mainly on understanding how people perceive online grocery shopping. In the future, consumers will shift their grocery shopping from traditional to online as they provide a reasonable quality of goods at an affordable price and offer home delivery saving time for the customer stronger towards online shopping. The study was conducted in tier-2 cities. Future research will focus on the discount and comparative price availability in quality, which will help loyal customers, while 37% of people shop for groceries online monthly.
- 2) Mirabi et al. (2015) analysed the purchase intention of customers of the Bono brand tile. This study examined the five factors that affect purchase intention: brand name, product quality, price, packaging, and advertising are the independent variables. This study used the descriptive collection data method. The data collected from the questionnaire and 25 questions were collected, and a five-point Likert scale was used. The 384 samples were collected, and this was done through a random sampling method.
- 3) Ali (2015): This study shows the impact of atmosphere on the consumer purchase intention in Karachi, Pakistan.. The sample is taken of 200 consumers. A well-structured questionnaire was made, data were collected from that questionnaire, and analysis was done through regression analysis. Findings show that atmosphere variables such as lighting, scent of the store, and display have a positive impact on consumers. This study is limited to tier-1 cities. The display of the product should be more convenient for the customers.
- 4) Kureshi and Thomas (2019). This study tells about beliefs related to local grocery retailers of online grocery retailing. Interviews of 20 local grocery retailers were taken, ranging from small to big. The sample was collected from two groups of local grocers, firstly retailers who partnered online as suppliers and secondly those who did not partner. Outcome of belief are differenced btw into four categories — business expansion, gaining visibility and reputation, customer expectations, inventory management, managing cost and technical issues
- 5) Sharma et al. (2014). The study highlights the usage of the internet and technological advancement. Usage of the internet to join online buying platforms for buying things. It focuses on the pattern of purchasing online groceries and factors that affect buying decisions. An online questionnaire was made and administered in a pilot phase. 96 filled forms were received; 46 were rejected due to inadequate use of information, and 50 samples were used for preliminary analysis. Logistic and regression analyses were used to find what motivates them to choose online grocery shopping.

- 6) Sathiyaraj et al. (2015) This study states that the widespread adoption of the Internet among the younger generation of India gives new chances for online retailers in terms of online retailing. The main focus of the study is to explore the customer perception towards online grocery shopping in a tier 1 city. The results show that 29% of the respondents gave reasons to prefer OS because they want to purchase unique items at the best price range. No influence of demographic factors has been seen.
- 7) Sreeram et al. (2017). This study focuses on conceptualising and testing an integrated model of online grocery buying behaviour, expanding the TAM by including various factors such as physical effort, time pressure, entertainment value, website design, aesthetics, etc. The most dependent variable was consumer satisfaction. The model was examined through a structural equation approach from online grocery consumers. Findings suggest that the significance of entertainment value and economic value is a key variable for consumer satisfaction and purchase loyalty intentions. But results support the proposed model.
- 8) Singh and Pathak (2021) The study explains the OGS, which is helpful for customers to make their lives more convenient by giving the best services and good deals. The scope of OGS is increasing rapidly. The focus of the study is Personal Innovation (PI), Economic Value (EV), Design Aesthetic (DA), Perceived Enjoyment (PE), and Convenience (CON), showing a positive attitude towards the use of OGS by developing all factors.. Findings indicate that Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) and all other factors have a symbiotic quantitative correlation in India as well as the adoption of OGS. In contrast, PE does not support PEOU.
- 9) Sharma (2020) An investigation was made by the researcher to study the present scenario of online shopping. The respondents were limited to 60 from various states of the country. Respondents prefer online shopping due to the convenient discount range of the product, the user-friendly website, and the safe and secure payment and return policy.
- 10) Shalu (2024) conducted a study on consumer satisfaction in e-commerce companies in Ranchi, Jharkhand, a fast-growing regional market in India's digital economy. The study found that delivery reliability, product quality, variety, website usage and customer support. These all factors make the customer satisfaction level better than offline service. However, this service was done in tier-2 cities.
- 11) Vahegla (2014): In the study, the techniques of business-to-consumer (B2C) and business-to-business (B2B) are explained. Consumers face many challenges, such as returning faulty goods or services, confusion due to a complicated website, and inefficiency with consumer support. Analysis of data is done through tools like tabulation, chi-square tests, frequency distribution, and cross tabs and charts, which were used with the help of SPSS software.
- 12) Shanti and Desti (2015) study were conducted to show that consumer preference for online shopping is unique for every individual, and the perception is limited to certain exchanges with the connectivity exposure. The study shows that youngsters are more inclined to online shopping compared to elder people, as they know the facilities provided in online shopping. Security of the product is important, and online purchasers see guarantees in warranties and delivery time and precision from the company. Sathiyaraj et al. (2015) conducted study investigated consumer perception and buying behavior towards online shopping. This study focuses on the growing significance of ecommerce in modern retailing. Many customers focus on factors like the offers, discount, range of products, their availability, free home delivery, and payment system. The project recommended that the local store be informed about their orders, and they would deliver the item to their address at the time mentioned.
- 13) Dani (2017) explained Online shopping is becoming more popular day by day due to the rapid increase in its usage. In this the price and discounts, convenience, customer feedback, product quality, and product information are the most influential factors that affect the consumer. Consumers mostly prefer to products with positive reviews and feedback from other users, which helps in building trust. Additionally, websites provide more brief product information and images, which further support consumers in their purchase decisions.
- 14) Verma (2017) The study investigated that modern culture and higher purchasing power are driving consumer behavior. A person's job and how much they generate income are the primary factors that evaluate how often they shop at these stores. There is a specific need for more academic focus on Reliance Mart specifically, rather than general retail studies.
- 15) Khalid and Sahu (2018) It explains that consumer satisfaction in retailing depends on the price of the product and convenience and service.. It indicates a positive relationship spending pattern and satisfaction level. Sometimes weak in both online and traditional retail formats, demographic variables like age, income, and education are collected by deeply examining the spending and satisfaction.
- 16) Gautam (2018) The study understood the dimension of convenience shopping and customer satisfaction in online retail systems. Findings show that convenience is the second most important predictor of customer satisfaction, followed by transaction position and, lastly, evaluation convenience. Firstly, the retailer should design a goods website, and no problem should arise in

the long run. Many problems can arise during the shopping, like slow internet speed and connection timeouts. Future studies use variables to get information about the convenience.

- 17) Das and Todmal (2020) Grocery shopping online has become popular due to the growth in the usage of the internet and changes in the buying pattern of consumers. According to research, the advantages of convenience and time saving have been found out as the most important determinants that influence the behavior of consumers while making their purchasing decisions regarding online grocery shopping. It is clear from the results that having access to fresh fruits and vegetables is an important determinant that positively influences consumer perception.
- 18) Lavuri (2023). This study emphasised the significant understanding of consumer motivations and attitudes in building effective online details strategies. This study also emphasised the importance of trust in online shopping behaviour. This study is only focused on Indian consumers and is based on purposive and snowball sampling methods. This study is significant in understanding online consumer behaviour in the context of the co-ovin-19 period and provides guideline for e-retailers to further improve.
- 19) Sagar (2024): The research concentrates on finding out the forces behind them, challenges that have faced traditional businesses and consumer perceptions and behaviour. The change in consumer shopping habits into the online world is going to fuel digitalisation. This study addresses the gaps of digital perspective, integrating use, ethical concerns, tech, and consumer behaviour to provide practical insights for future retail development.

III. RESEARCH GAP

Several research studies have been conducted on consumer perception and behaviour of customers towards online grocery shopping. Much research has been conducted in metro cities and developed urban markets. The research studies have focused on factors like convenience, price of the product, delivery speed, quality of the product, and online payment system. However, there are fewer research studies conducted in the eastern Indian state of Jharkhand. The research studies conducted have ignored aspects like challenges faced by consumers in urban and semi-urban areas. This study will focus on the developing cities like Ranchi where now also people are adopting e-commerce.

IV. RESEARCH QUESTION

- 1) How far does the perceived quality of goods and services influence your decision to purchase groceries from online stores?
- 2) How aware are you of online grocery shopping services available in the Ranchi district?
- 3) What online grocery app do you prefer the most, and what is the main reason for preferring it?

V. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

- 4) To determine whether the quality of goods and services has any impact on consumers' buying behaviour when they are purchasing online.
- 5) To ascertain the most preferred online grocery apps among the various selected sites and the reasons for preferring it.
- 6) To study the consumers' awareness about online grocery in Ranchi district.

VI. HYPOTHESIS

H0- There is no significant relationship between consumer perception and online grocery purchasing behaviour.

H1- There is a significant relationship between consumer perception and online grocery purchasing behaviour.

VII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study follows a descriptive research design. The descriptive research design is applied to analyse the characteristics, opinions, and behaviour of the consumers towards grocery shopping online. This research design is acceptable for this research because it does not manipulate any variable, and the objective is just to evaluate consumer awareness, and behaviours in link to online grocery shopping.

B. Data Source

This research is based on primary data, and primary data means data collected freshly and firsthand for a specific reason. This study was conducted by gathering primary data from the respondents living in the Ranchi district through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire is formed as a demographic profile of consumers and their awareness of online grocery services.

C. Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The current study makes use of the convenience sampling method, which is a form of non-probability sampling. In convenience sampling, respondents are selected based on easy access and the availability of people to participate in this study. In this study, a convenience sampling method was used to get responses from 152 individuals in the Ranchi District

D. Data Collection Method

The data for this study have been assembled from the primary sources using a well-formed questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed keeping in view the aim and ensuring that the questions asked are applicable and clear. It is formed by multiple-choice and Likert scale.

E. Statistical Tool and Software Used

Percentage analysis is applied for reviewing the demographic characteristics of the respondents, and Regression Analysis is applied for studying the link between independent and dependent variables. For both analyses, the software that is applied is MS Excel.

VIII. DATA ANALYSIS

A. Demographic Factor

1) Gender

Table I

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	86	56.6
Female	66	43.4
Other	0	0
Total	152	100

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: This table analyses the gender-wise distribution of respondents. The total number of respondents in the survey was 152, of which 86 (56.6 percent) were male, and 66 (43.4 percent) were female. There was an "other" gender category, but no respondents were recorded in this category.

2) Age Group

Table II

Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Below 20 years	8	5.2
20 – 30 years	68	44.7
31 – 40 years	29	19.1
41 – 50 years	42	27.6
Above 50 years	5	3.3
Total	152	100

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: This table shows that age wise distribution of the consumer. Out of the total 152 respondents, the largest age group belongs to the 20-30 years with 68 respondents (44.7%) of the total sample. This is followed by the 41-50 years age category, which consists of 42 respondents (27.6%). The age group of 31-40 years respondents consist of 29 respondents (19.1%). A smaller proportion of respondents comes under 20 years age group, with 8 respondents (5.2%) and above 50 years age group or above, 5 respondents (3.3%) fall under it. Overall, the age category of young and middle-aged consumers includes online grocery shopping.

3) Occupation

Table III

Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Student	62	40.8
Business	22	14.5
Government Employee	15	9.9
Private Employee	48	31.6
Homemaker	4	2.6
Other	1	0.7
Total	152	100

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: Out of a total of 152 respondents, occupation consist of students which have the highest group with 62 respondents (40.8%) followed by a private employee group that consists of 48(31.6%) Business occupation respondents consist of 22 respondents (14.5%) .Government employees comprise 15 respondents (9.9%).Homemakers consist of a small portion of 4 respondents (2.6%), while only 1 respondent (0.7%) is of the “other” category.

4) Product Preference in Online Grocery Stores.

Table IV

Product Preferences	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Dairy Product	22	14.5
Bread and bakery items	23	15.1
Fruits and Vegetables	57	37.5
Frozen items	16	10.5
Other essentials	34	22.4
Total	152	100

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: Among all the respondents surveyed (152), fruits and vegetables have the greatest percentage of the distribution, which consists of 57 (37.5%) of the total number. The second category is other essential which consists of 34 (22.4%) followed by Bread and bakery items come third with 23 (15.1%) the fourth most preferred items in online groceries, including dairy products with 22 (14.5%) respondents. Frozen items have been the least popular product categories, with just 16 respondents (10.5%) using them.

5) Preferred Online Shopping Platform

Table V

Preferred Online Shopping Platform	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Blinkit	38	25
Apna Mart	38	25
Big Basket	24	15.8
Jio Mart	44	28.9
Swiggy Instamart	8	5.3
Total	152	100

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: It can be seen that among a total of 152 respondents, the most preferred online grocery shopping platform is JioMart with 44 (28.9%) respondents. In second place, the preferred platforms are Blinkit and Apna Mart, as both are liked by 38 (25%) respondents each. In third place is BigBasket, preferred by 24(15.8%) respondents. Swiggy Instamart is the least preferred online grocery shopping platform, liked by only 8 respondents. From looking at the table, the conclusion is that JioMart is the most preferred; Blinkit and Apna Mart are equal in second place; BigBasket is in third place; and Swiggy Instamart is the least popular.

B. Hypothesis Testing

1) Summary Output

Table I

SUMMARY OUTPUT	
<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.477574
R Square	0.228077
Adjusted R Square	0.222931
Standard Error	0.786095
Observations	152

Source: Computed by the Researcher Using MS-Excel

Interpretation: From the regression output, the correlation between the independent and dependent variables can be identified to be moderately high as shown by the Multiple R value of 0.477. R Square (0.228) is the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that can be accounted for by the independent variables. Thus, 22.8% of the variance of the dependent variable can be attributed to the independent variables. Adjusted R-Square (0.224) indicates the reliability of the data even after correcting for sample size. Standard error of 0.781 indicates reasonable accuracy.

2) ANOVA

Table II

ANOVA					
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	1	27.38721	27.38721	44.31982	4.93E-10
Residual	150	92.69174	0.617945		
Total	151	120.0789			

Source: Computed by the Researcher Using MS-Excel

Interpretation: The ANOVA analysis provides evidence to prove that the regression equation is statistically significant. There is an F-value of 44.31982, with a significance F-value of 4.93E-10, way smaller than the conventional 5%. This indicates that the independent variable is significant in affecting the dependent variable, and hence the regression equation explains the dependent variable quite well.

Here, the regression sum of squares is given as (SS = 27.38721), showing that much variation in the data is accounted for. On the other hand, the residual sum of squares (SS = 92.69174) shows how much variation cannot be accounted for. In this case, where df = 1 for regression and df = 150 for residual, the mean square for regression (27.38721) is much larger compared to the mean square error (0.617945).

As a result, the null hypothesis will be rejected, implying that there is statistical significance in the regression analysis.

3) Coefficients

Table III

	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>	<i>Lower 95.0%</i>	<i>Upper 95.0%</i>
Intercept	1.691626	0.307957	5.49306	1.65E- 07	1.083132	2.30012	1.083132	2.30012
X Variable 1	0.487797	0.073272	6.657313	4.93E- 10	0.343017	0.632576	0.343017	0.632576

Source: Computed by the Researcher Using MS-Excel

Interpretation: From the coefficient table, it is clear that the model is statistically significant and meaningful. From the coefficient table, the intercept value is 1.6916, and it is statistically significant at a 5% level ($p = 1.65E-07$). This suggests that when the independent variable is zero, then the expected value of the dependent variable is 1.6916. For the X variable, the coefficient value is 0.4878, suggesting that when there is an increase in the independent variable by one unit, then there will be an increase in the dependent variable by 0.49 units. From the t-statistic value of 6.6573 and p-value ($p = 4.93E-10$), the relationship between the variables is statistically significant.

In addition, from the confidence interval of X (0.3430 to 0.6326), it is clear that the estimated value is statistically significant.

IX. ACHIVEMENT OF THE OBJECTIVE

The objective involved finding out whether there is any relationship between the quality of products and/or services and the consumers' online shopping behaviour. From the survey, it is noted that 56.57% of respondents have agreed that the quality of goods and services affects their decision to buy online. This includes the 20.39% who strongly agree and the 36.18% who just agree. It is worth noting that almost 32.89% of respondents have remained neutral with regard to whether quality matters. The rest 10.52% of consumers disagree that quality affects their decision making. This includes the 7.89% who strongly disagree. As first objective of the study tells about ,. In light of the fact that more than half of the respondents agreed that the quality matters, the objective of this study was clearly met.

The aim of this study to find out the most preferable online grocery application services along with the reasons why they are preferred has also been accomplished. As evident from the responses received by 152 participants, JioMart comes up as the most popular online grocery shopping application followed by Blinkit and Apna Mart, which have equal popularity, and then by BigBasket. In contrast, Swiggy Instamart is the least preferred one. Therefore, it can be said that the purpose of finding out the most preferred online grocery services has been accomplished.

The third research objective, which was to determine consumer awareness about online grocery shopping in Ranchi district, has been fulfilled. From the results of analyzing responses from 152 consumers, it can be seen that there is a relatively high level of awareness about online grocery shopping and its policies. It is evident that a relatively high percentage of the respondents had positive awareness about this issue because 44 respondents (28.94%) agreed strongly while 60 respondents (39.47%) agreed to this assertion. However, while 33 respondents (21.71%) were neutral, few were unaware about this concept because only 13 respondents (8.55%) disagreed while 2 respondents (1.31%) strongly disagreed with this claim.

X. FINDINGS

As per the study, many consumers have shifted from local grocery shopping to online grocery shopping. Also, maximum respondents would recommend online grocery shopping to others. The online grocery market has already overstepped the traditional grocery market to some extent. It was observed that quality of the products and service, affordable price, variety and availability of products, discount and convenient delivery slots are very important to the maximum consumers.

According to the research, Jio Mart 28.9% is the most preferred online grocery site by the consumers, followed by Blinkit 25% and Apna Mart 25%. Therefore, if Jio Mart wants to maintain the lead, it needs to give a tough competition to the rival companies by improving its services, introducing new and innovative ideas to help the existing customers maintain their loyalty and attract new customers.

XI. CONCLUSION

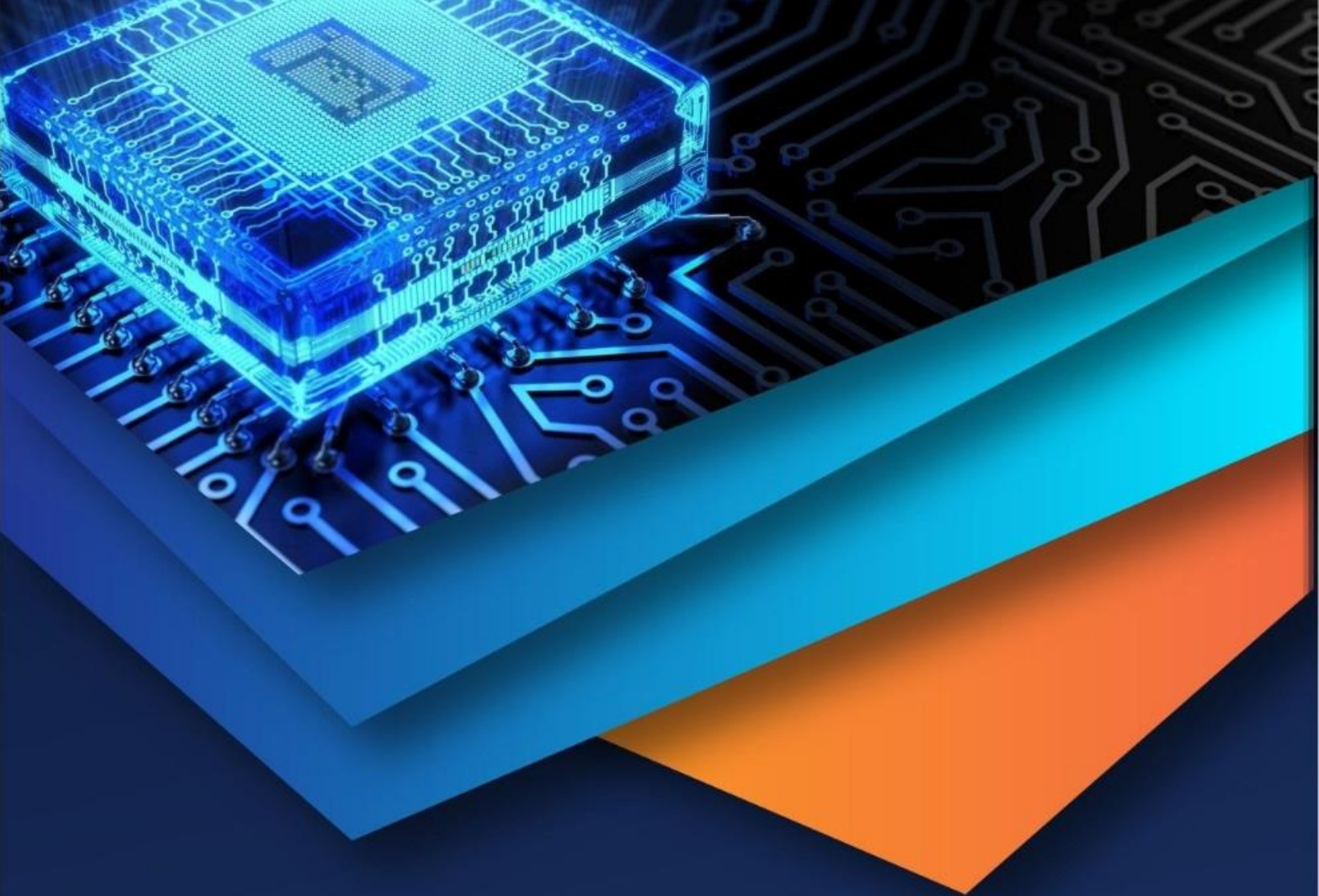
This paper has been written for the purpose of analysing the perception of consumers and their buying behaviour regarding OGS (Online Grocery Shopping) in the Ranchi district. Primary data have been used in this study. A structured questionnaire was prepared for obtaining data from the 152 respondents of the study. Suitable techniques like percentage analysis, Likert scale analysis, and regression analysis have been used for interpreting the data. Results of the study suggest that OGS is widely accepted by consumers in the Ranchi district. It is found that the maximum number of respondents know about the OG platforms and are comfortable with the purchase of groceries from this medium. Convenient shopping, time-saving features, availability of a wide range of products, and easy orderliness have been found to be the main features affecting the buying decision of consumers.

XII. RECOMMENDATION

The online grocery marketers must have a good return policy system, so that the products can be replaced in case of damage or other related problems. In order to improve on the products and services provided, the online grocery companies should have a reviews and ratings feature. This will help them, know about the feedback of the customers and they could improve easily. There should be multiple payment options on their online grocery sites, as the consumers may not be satisfied by a single payment option. If they do not find a particular payment option that are preferred by them they might shift to other sites. Also, it was observed that maximum consumers prefer using cash on delivery, so this payment option should surely be available. This will make the costumers satisfied.

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