

# Digital Marketing Role on Promotion of Towards Handloom Sarees in Chennai City

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**Abstract** - The study measures the promotional role played by digital marketing in enhancing the product reach of Handloom Sarees. Also, it evaluates the challenges faced by consumers of handloom sarees in adopting digital marketing. The study decided to conduct the research using the field survey approach, and the study was developed as an empirical analysis. At first, the research determined how competitiveness is measured by assigning a weighted score to each promotional role and challenges faced based on digital marketing. A self-designed research instrument was developed for each construct, including digital marketing, promotional function, and obstacles. The use of judgment random sampling resulted in the acquisition of 310 interview schedules, with just 12 being refused on the grounds that the questionnaires presented were inadequate. This has given a final sample size of 298 consumers involved in the digital purchasing of sarees in the study area of Chennai. The study used the statistical tools of ANOVA and factor analysis to bring out relevant results based on the objectives of finding the promotional role of digital marketing and the challenges faced by consumers in adopting the purchase of sarees using digital mode. The study revealed that customer perception towards digital marketing of handloom sarees buying is significantly influenced by several factors: promotional role, risk perception, user experience, and informational features.

**Keywords:** Handloom Sarees, Consumer Perception, Digital Marketing, Challenges and Promotional Role

## I. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Over the course of India's history, the handloom has been there for as long as India itself has been. There is evidence from history that indicates that Indians have been acquainted with the art of hand weaving for more than 5,800 years. It is generally recognized that India is the residence of the most significant number of looms globally (Sweta & Sundaraman, 2021). During a very long period, it was also referred to as the "Land of Cotton Textiles." This was because India was perhaps the only nation that was both wealthy and skilled in the cultivation and weaving of cotton textiles. In India's political and historical awareness, the handloom

sector has gained iconic importance since the country's battle against colonialism (Brahma & Subrahmanyam, 2023). Ever since the country gained its independence, the government of India has enacted a number of legislation and programs to foster and enhance the performance of the handloom industry (Suri & Jayashree, 2018).

On the other hand, the situation of handloom weavers is, strangely, somewhat depressing. The buyer's choice to purchase traditional handloom clothing is influenced by concerns over the quality of the product. Traditional handloom clothing customers are primarily impacted by the problem of determining the uniqueness of items that are now accessible on the market (Alvanchi et al., 2018). These consumers are confronted with competition from power looms that produce products almost identical to those produced by handlooms (Singh & Srivastava, 2018). The counterfeit goods have a similar look to the handloom goods. However, they are of a worse quality than the handloom goods. As a result, the customer is often placed in a difficult position since they cannot frequently recognize authentic goods. When the imbalance of information hinders the customer's ability to make decisions, the notion of reputation provides a solution to the problem with the consumer.

To guarantee the efficacy of such a solution, it is possible to institutionalize the reduction of information dissimilarities associated with reputation. In India, there is an issue of asymmetric information between the traditional handloom garment manufacturers and the customers. This pertains to the fact that consumers cannot recognize authentic handloom clothes on the market since there is no identifying label (Stamenkovic et al., 2019). Consumers naturally tend to maximize utility by choosing the best possible choices; however, these choices can only be exercised after obtaining appropriate information from the market environment (Menaha et al., 2020). According to the theory of information and reputation, information asymmetry may give rise to

distortions in the market, which claims that this can occur when the characteristics of a product are being kept hidden from consumers.

In the context of price competition, it is quite probable that sellers of high-quality items would be confronted with unfair competition from sellers of low-quality products. Vendors can conceal information from potential buyers. At the same time, consumers look for information connected to the product to make judgments about whether or not to acquire it. The danger of adverse selection and moral hazard might be triggered when there is an imbalance in available information. It is possible that this knowledge gap could result in inefficiency and imperfect markets, both of which will be detrimental to the principal. Because of this, a customer in the market could make a selection that is not appropriate because the seller has provided them with inaccurate information. When a handloom customer is a primary one, they are confronted with unfavorable selection restrictions, which causes them to be reluctant when it comes to choosing to acquire authentic handloom clothing.

The reason for this is that the market is flooded with items that are comparable to those produced by mechanized looms. An average buyer may not be able to differentiate between traditional handloom clothing and counterfeit handloom clothing based only on the physical evaluation of the item. There is a possibility that this may be addressed by monitoring efforts made by a genuine third party other than the vendor, with the goal of providing more information. Customers might hold a variety of perspectives on the quality of a product. When it comes to acquiring services and goods, buyers are concerned about quality and search for characteristics that indicate quality. It is possible to notice a customer who is worried about quality as a utilitarian shopper who tries to locate things of the highest possible quality.

The customers who are quality sensitive also have a tendency to be brand conscious and put a greater amount of faith in the performance of brands that are well-known and well publicised. customers may rely on GI certification labels when it comes to the buying of traditional handloom garments. These labels can serve as indicators for inferring quality criteria, which in turn can influence customers' intents to make a purchase. Additionally, the location of manufacturing is a factor that usually influences the quality of GI goods.

## II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Patra, (2021) The need for handloom products continues to exist in both the domestic and foreign markets via the Internet due to the quality, pricing, and design of these products. Through the internet platform, the E-market is marketing the handloom items, resulting in increased popularity. Because of this, the handloom industry in Odisha has seen tremendous success due to the surge in demand for handloom items in the modern age. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the e-market plays a key role in marketing items made using handlooms.

Verma & Mishra, (2018) Within the context of the Banarsi Saree, the research examines the present developments in the industry as well as the market drivers for handloom goods. There has been a lack of planning and execution of post-GI actions to realize the economic potential of the art of weaving, even though there have been attempts done to conserve the true art of weaving, and the granting of GI status had been a milestone in this respect. The research suggests several tactics for developing the brand and marketing of "Banaras Brocades and Sarees" for both the Indian market and foreign markets. This is done to capitalize on the "GI" tag's commercial advantages.

Attri & Bairagi, (2022) The rural economy of India has relied on the handloom and handicraft industries for many years. People in both urban and rural areas depend on it as a source of income, making it one of the most critical industries in the nation. The case's heroine had a deep appreciation for the arts and crafts, and her enthusiasm for these pursuits launched her business, Guthali. Through her venture, she bought handlooms and other handicrafts from local artisans, gave them a facelift with painting, block printing, and other techniques, and then sold them to customers. Brands like Fab India had a significant following and excellent name recognition, but marketing was a constant struggle. The protagonist in this case study encounters many obstacles while trying to sell handloom and Indian handicrafts in a city setting. Case readers would have insight into the process of creating digital marketing strategies via its many steps (Blazic et al., 2023).

Mishra, (2020) With a digital platform, Western Odisha's handloom goods may reach a broad audience and satisfy their needs (Guerra et al., 2024; Nwosu & Adeloye, 2023). These days, internet purchasing isn't only for city dwellers. Therefore, the current research summarises the advantages to the weavers of developing a digital roadmap for western Odisha's handloom goods (Chaudhuri & Bhattacharyya, 2023). Empowering the rural people of the Undivided Sambalpur district via digitization and meeting their needs as weavers requires that they be tech-savvy and given access to e-business opportunities.

Mishra & Mohapatra, (2020) Due to its high cultural and aesthetic value, handloom will undoubtedly continue to sell well; nonetheless, it must contend with direct competition in all its forms to maintain its historical significance and market share. Weavers in rural areas can't build their economies without a robust and accessible market for their handloom goods. This research aims to conduct an exhaustive examination of the many factors that have contributed to the long-term success of the handloom industry. In order to find ways to help rural weaving communities improve their economic standing via the long-term viability of the handloom industry, this study primarily explores the extensive literature on the subject.

Khatoon & Iffat, (2022) According to the statistics, government assistance systems had the lowest level of awareness. However, just a handful of weavers and related

workers benefited from the programs. Furthermore, it was shown that most of the participants were unhappy with the advantages. As bad as things are for those who work with handlooms, the COVID-19 epidemic has worsened things. Weavers and related laborers might see a return on income via Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan's initiatives.

Vyshnavi & Nair, (2020) The handloom sector has a unique and distinct position within the textile business. The diligent and skilled labor of the weavers, when combined with the appropriate marketing methods, has the potential to generate profit. The present situation, on the other hand, paints an entirely different image of the industry, with weavers receiving very dismal earnings. Even though weavers are using marketing methods that are not apparent to the public, the well-being of the weavers remains a significant concern.

Munshi, (2022) Even though artisan groups are trained in using certain apps for online financial transactions to improve the volume of their company, experts believe that after the training is over, craftsmen do not practice the applications of what they have learned. It is stated that the knowledge and expectations of rapid answers and instant financial benefit may not necessarily be attainable and that it is necessary to have the resilience to persevere with the application of training inputs to expand a firm.

Ruma et al., (2019) The handloom business in Bangladesh has a long and illustrious history, and practically all everyday clothing worn now is made using handloom manufactured locally (Tarai, 2022). However, many firms have decreased production since their business model has been outmoded. To overcome the many obstacles associated with the marketing of the handloom Jamdani company, the growth of information technology and the advent of social media are playing a significant role. Based on the findings of the case study of Jamdani Ville, it was determined that the most critical contributor to the handloom fashion business is the development of internet and communication technologies. "Jamdani Ville" communicates the picture of the product to its followers; this is the method by which they market, promote, and comprehend their clients' requirements via social media. Helping to connect consumers, satisfying customers' needs, promoting the traditional handloom Jamdani, and empowering the handloom Jamdani weavers are all goals of the image-sharing service available on social media.

### III. RESEARCH GAP

The literature review brought to light the fact that the primary focus of early researchers was on gaining an understanding of the challenges faced by the handloom sector. These challenges include a lack of information and awareness about handloom saree products, extremely high levels of competition, and promotional and advertising strategies unsuitable for the current situation. On the other hand, this problem may be resolved by using digital marketing effectively, which is a solution since the promotional strategies it employs have the potential to breathe new life

into this industry. When all of these factors are taken into consideration, there is a pressing need to investigate the impact that digital marketing has had on the thinking of customers about handloom sarees. This may be accomplished by raising awareness about the exposure that this industry has received as a result of digital marketing. The study, which lacks considerable research in the literature mentioned above, evaluates the advantages it offers to consumers buying handloom sarees, mainly though they are doing so via an online marketplace in both metropolitan locations.

### IV. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The traditional handloom sector has faced a significant challenge from the contemporary textile industry. The rapid technical advancement and automation that has taken place in the textile industry has resulted in the manufacturing of a large quantity of high-quality synthetic and cotton textile goods, which has given the industry a competitive edge over the products that are produced using handlooms. The handloom industry, together with its enormous rural workforce, particularly that of weaver communities, is presented with the issue of a competitive economic climate. This challenge is faced by both the cooperative and private sectors simultaneously. A significant risk has been given to the socioeconomic lives of traditional weaver communities, in general, and to the socioeconomic status of weavers, in particular, due to the deteriorating position of the handloom sector due to the global rivalry of the textile industry.

When it comes to the market, the supply channels are responsible for providing the producer with information about the market. Conversely, they are the face of the producer to the market, taking the place of brand presence and advertising. The producers are required to have an understanding of what the consumers believe to be quality in the market. At the same time, the customers begin to discover the value of the quality that is provided by the producers. Production structure is characterized by slow production, one of its features. While building these systems, the companies need to widen the handloom specialty by shifting into more expansive market areas that appreciate their expertise as being more than just handcrafted.

The most significant obstacle that companies must overcome is gaining entry into the market space based on diverse digital marketing techniques. After that, they will need to expand and move away from the specialized handloom sarees market, which is their source of support (Pandit et al., 2020). Because the market is sufficiently organized, it can manage vast quantities of standardized and homogenous textile items using digital marketing. With the product, production cycles are much longer, leading to less standardization and higher usage of digital marketing channels. This study focuses on the areas of using digital marketing channels in the promotion of sarees and the challenges consumers face in adopting digital marketing.

### Research Aims

- To examine the promotional role of digital marketing in enhancing the product reach of Handloom Sarees in Chennai.
- To evaluate the challenges faced by the consumers of handloom sarees in adopting digital marketing.

### Significance of Study

When one considers that the handloom industry in India is responsible for satisfying about one-third of the overall textile needs of the people, one can get an idea of the importance of this sector (Kar & Bhuyan, 2012). When it comes to the growth of the handloom sector, it has been learned from experience that the cooperative pattern would be an appropriate sort of organization to establish. The handloom is significant not only because it satisfies the needs of the people in terms of clothes but also because it makes it possible for Indian art, culture, craftsmanship, and legacy to be expressed (Promee et al., 2021). Because of its advantages, which include the flexibility of small production, originality, innovation, and adaptation to the requirements of export, the handloom sector plays a very significant part in the Indian economy.

The significance of the handloom industry in the national economy cannot be overstated because of these advantages. The handloom business has been confronted with several difficulties and concerns since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The basis of the sector has also been shaken down as a result of globalization. The marketing of items made using handlooms has several challenges. Even though the handloom sector meets human requirements, the marketing operations of handlooms are encountering a great deal of difficulty. Changes in customer preferences, an increase in the cost of materials, a decrease in the pricing of handloom goods, and competition from mills, garments, and exceptionally high-quality synthetic products are all factors that are contributing to an excessive number of challenges for the marketing of handloom products.

There is a distinction between the market's rural and urban segments. Even though there is a potential demand for handloom items in rural areas, there are no appropriate digital marketing channels to offer these handloom products in the various markets that are widely dispersed. When it comes to the market, the supply channels are responsible for providing the consumers with information about the market. Consumers are required to have an understanding of what digital marketing channels are to evaluate quality in the market and various available alternatives. While creating these systems, the consumers need to widen the handloom saree niche by migrating into wider market locations that appreciate their specialization as being more than just hand produced (Sandhu, 2022).

### V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It has been decided to conduct the research using the field survey approach. The study has been developed as an empirical analysis. For the purpose of data interpretation, high-quality tools have been used since the research places a greater emphasis on the collecting of qualitative data. At first, the study concentrates on determining how competitiveness is measured by assigning a weighted score to each promotional role and the challenges faced based on digital marketing. A research instrument that was self-designed was developed for each of the constructs, including digital marketing, promotional function, and obstacles. To identify the many aspects that have an impact on digital marketing and the function that it plays in the marketing of handloom sarees, a comprehensive literature analysis was carried out. The use of judgment random sampling resulted in the acquisition of 310 interview schedules, with just 12 being refused on the grounds that the questionnaires presented were inadequate. This has given a final sample size of 298 consumers who are involved in the digital purchasing of sarees in the study area of Chennai. There is a requirement that the survey be filled out by just those individuals who have previously engaged in online shopping at least once. The participants in the research were selected with great care, taking into consideration their educational credentials, their conceptual comprehension, and their level of acquaintance with internet purchasing. The study used the statistical tools of ANOVA and factor analysis to bring out relevant results based on the objectives of finding the promotional role of digital marketing and the challenges faced by consumers in adopting the purchase of sarees using digital mode, as displayed in Table I.

### VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The study has given made vital assessment about the impacts created by the buying habits of the digital users on role played by the digital marketing to purchase these products and evaluate the differences in the problems faced by them based on adapting to digital marketing.

TABLE I DIGITAL BUYING NATURE AND CHALLENGES FACED IN ADOPTION OF DIGITAL MARKETING

	<i>P- Value</i>		
	<i>Digital Buying Expenses for Sarees</i>	<i>Frequency of Buying Digitally</i>	<i>Post Purchase Experience</i>
The Higher Complexity of Technology	0.025*	<0.001**	0.293
Lack of Personal Touch in purchases	0.653	0.004**	<0.001**
Cost of Packing and other logistics are covered in consumer prices	0.325	0.023*	0.284
Delivery dates fluctuate	0.017*	0.022*	0.837
Differences in the product exhibited and received	0.354	0.249	0.779

Alternative selection is difficult	0.036*	<0.001**	0.158
Technological updates are missing	0.012*	0.002**	0.137
Higher Frequency Ads are proving to be annoying	0.153	<0.001**	0.246
Lacks coverage of all payment options	0.057	<0.001**	0.215
Post purchases queries are not addressed	0.094	0.021*	0.535

(\*\* - Highlights relationship @ 1% level & \* - Highlights relationship @ 5% level)

#### Digital Buying Expenses for Sarees

The consumers of the sarees are spending different amount on digital buying which affects their perception towards the promotional role played by digital marketing on the areas of Higher complexity of Technology, Delivery dates are fluctuating, Alternatives selection are difficult and Technological updates are missing.

#### Frequency of Buying Digitally

The frequency of buying the sarees digitally is creating significant differences in the perception level among majority of variables used in the study. The buying frequency has vital impacts on the perception held by consumers towards buying sarees digitally. The perception level is impacted due to the usage experience they obtained over various purchases of sarees.

#### Post Purchase Experiences

The post-purchase experiences are grouped into three categories: higher level of positive purchase experience, neutral category, and negative level of purchase experience. The diverse categories have little impact on the perception held by the consumers towards the promotional role played by digital marketing. The post-purchase experiences do not have any major relationship with the consumer perception.

TABLE II FACTOR ANALYSIS - CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS PROMOTIONAL ROLE OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN INCREASING REACH OF HANDLOOM SAREES

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.838		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1822.420		
	df	91		
	Sig.	<0.001**		
	Communalities	Component		
		1	2	3
<b>Variance of Factors Formed</b>		<b>25%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>11%</b>
Enables to reach the global market of Sarees	0.687	0.782		
Higher level of consumer attraction	0.650	0.741		
Attractive prices in comparison with traditional methods	0.590	0.707		
Improves the consumer reach towards the products	0.604	0.694		
Enables to save the ads for future purchases	0.641	0.669		
Diversified consumer base	0.353	0.569		
Reduces the conventional cost of purchases	0.745		0.838	
Promotes impulsive buying of sarees	0.649		0.771	
The frequency of Ads is higher	0.499		0.691	
Minimize the cost involved in distribution	0.489		0.665	
Enhances the efficacy of Advertising	0.563		0.583	
Helps to recommend to friends and potential consumers	0.470			0.784
Minimizes the consumer movement for purchases	0.672			0.668
Increases the recalling capacity of consumers	0.686			0.489

(\*\* - Highlights normality @ 1% level & \* - Highlights normality @ 5% level)

The factor analysis was carried out to evaluate the impacts created by digital marketing on consumer perception towards the promotional aspects of enhancing the reach of Handloom sarees, which is displayed in Fig. 1. The KMO test evaluates that the null hypothesis is rejected, which highlights the normal distribution of opinions given by the digital buyers of handloom sarees. The outcome obtained by this analysis will be highly reliable in measuring the impacts caused by digital marketing on promoting the sarees. The communalities explain the various extracted values that played a crucial role in the forming three factors influencing the promotional role played by digital marketing. The three factors formed reflect

59 percent of overall opinions, which is explained by the variance column. The diverse factors formed are presented in the table II along with the variables that are crucial in the formation of the factors.

#### Consumer Perception Factor – I- Consumer Attraction and Global Outreach

The significant factor loadings of the variables that resulted in the formation of the factor is Enables to reach global market of Sarees (0.782), Higher level of consumers attraction (0.741), Attractive prices in comparison with

traditional methods (0.707), Improves the consumer reach towards the products (0.694), Enables to save the ads for future purchases (0.669) and Diversified consumer base (0.569).

#### *Consumer Perception Factor – II- Reduces Shopping Expenses*

The diverse variables that are vital in the derivation of the factor are Reduces the conventional cost of purchases (0.838), Promotes impulsive buying of sarees (0.771), Frequency of Ads are higher (0.691), Minimise the cost involved in distribution (0.665) and Enhances the efficacy of Advertising (0.583)

#### *Consumer Perception Factor – III- Recalling of the Products*

The factors is derived from the variables of Helps to recommend for friends and potential consumers (0.784),

Minimises the consumer movement for purchases (0.668) and Increases the recalling capacity of consumers (0.489).

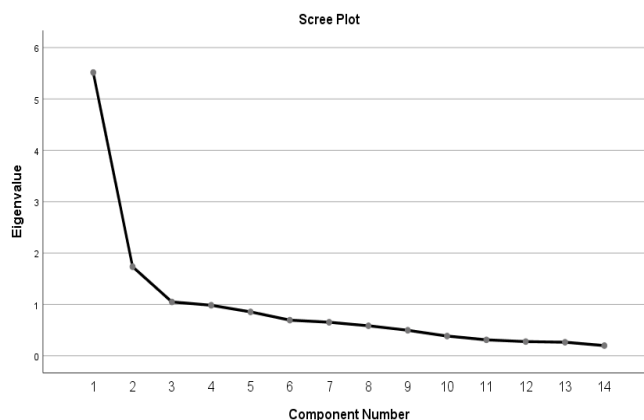


Fig. 1 Scree Plot - Consumer Perception towards Promotional Role of Digital Marketing in Increasing Reach of Handloom Sarees

TABLE III FACTOR ANALYSIS - CHALLENGES FACED IN ADOPTION OF DIGITAL MARKETING TOWARDS HANDLOOM SAREES

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.770		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1425.945		
	df	45		
	Sig.	<0.001**		
Variance of Factors Formed	Communalities	Component		
		1	2	3
Lacks coverage of all payment options	0.876	0.882		
Higher frequency ads are proving to be annoying	0.846	0.863		
Technological updates are missing	0.747	0.828		
Higher Complexity of Technology	0.785		0.841	
Alternatives selection are difficult	0.703		0.809	
Lack of Personal touch in purchases	0.682		0.795	
Post purchases queries are not addressed	0.675			0.760
Differences in the product exhibited and received	0.539			0.696
Delivery dates are fluctuating	0.518			0.690
Cost of packing and other logistics are covered in consumer prices	0.572			0.633

(\*\* - Highlights normality @ 1% level & \* - Highlights normality @ 5% level)

The dimension reduction has helped to outline the diverse challenges faced by the consumers in adopting towards the digital marketing of handloom sarees. The KMO test explains that the perception held towards challenges faced by the consumers are following normal distributions. The extracted values of the communalities are presented in the table III which represents the role played by each variable in dimension reductions. The three factors that determine the challenges faced by the consumers in adopting towards digital marketing in handloom sector which is depicted in Fig. 2, are having 69 percent of overall opinions given by consumers. The three major challenges factor and associated variables are explained in the following

#### *Challenges Factor – I- Updated Purchasing Environment*

The factor is dependent on the variables of Lacks coverage of all payment options (0.882), Higher Frequency Ads are

proving to be annoying (0.863) and Technological updates are missing (0.828).

#### *Challenges Factor – II- Technological Difficulties*

The factors is derived from the variables of Higher complexity of Technology (0.841), Alternatives selection is difficult (0.809) and Lack of Personal touch in purchases (0.795).

#### *Challenges Factor – III- Lack of Updating Real Time Information*

The variables crucial in the formation of factor are Post purchases queries are not addressed (0.760), Differences in the product exhibited and received (0.696), Delivery dates are fluctuating (0.690) and Cost of Packing and other logistics are covered in consumer prices (0.401).

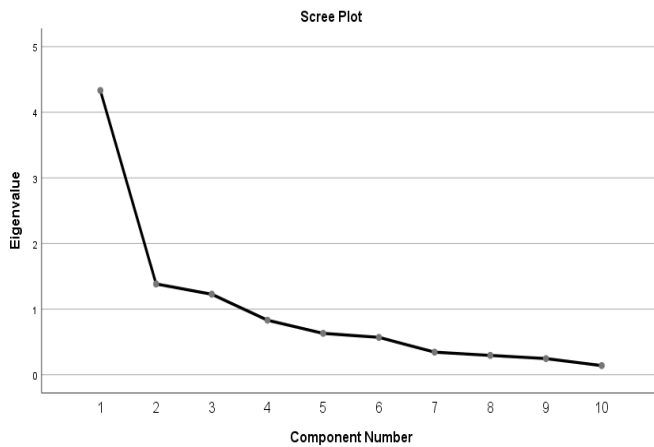


Fig. 2 Scree Plot - Challenges Faced in Adoption of Digital Marketing Towards Handloom Sarees

## VII. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Consumers also have access to a plethora of alternatives that are accessible on digital platforms, which makes it simpler for them to make purchase decisions. Additionally, consumers have access to comprehensive information on product and price breakdowns, which enables them to readily discover any hidden costs that may be there. Therefore, digital marketing provides customers with a variety of benefits, including the opportunity to compare products, get financing, easily access products, and a variety of payment choices, all of which save consumers both time and money. Through the use of digital platforms, individuals are able to work, purchase products, get information, and pay bills in a timely manner. As a result of the completion of a number of studies, the research presented a number of results that are representative of the customers' perceptions about the handloom sales promotion activities that were carried out by these digital marketing activities via certain online portals. Nearly all of the people who participated in the survey believed that digital marketing is now an important part of their life and a reliable source of information. A lot of people have trust in online businesses and think that buying online is a secure method to do their purchasing. When evaluating the manner in which customers make purchases of garments online, a number of factors will be taken into consideration, including a straightforward cancellation policy, a straightforward dispute resolution method, a money-back guarantee, the quality of the apparel, and the ease of shopping online. The study revealed that customer perception towards digital marketing of handloom sarees buying is significantly influenced by a number of factors promotional role, risk perception, user experience and informational features.

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