

Knowledge and Challenges of Rural Women towards Digital Payments: A Study in Cachar District, Assam

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Abstract: Digital payment method seems to be easy, convenient, flexible mode of payment which provides customers to make payments anywhere anytime. It can consider that cashless payment is an alternative to traditional method of payments which enhance speed up of transaction cycle. Various studies reveal that India is moving towards cashless economy. But it has not been acknowledged by all still now. Reason behinds are lack of trust, technical knowledge, infrastructure, security, fear, habits etc. In rural areas online financial transaction and e-commerce activities as well as digital mode of payments still lag behind despite demonetization and the special drive to promote digital payments over last few years. The rural women still unknown and under conflict about accepting and using digital payment methods. Therefore, it is essential that the women must know the uses and merits of using digital payment methods to make programme successful. The present study is made an attempt to know about the knowledge and challenges of rural women towards digital payments in Cachar District, Assam.

Objectives: To study knowledge and challenges of rural women towards digital payments in Cachar District, Assam. **Methodology:** The data will be collected from both **Primary and Secondary sources.**

Key Words: Rural Women, Demonetization, Digital Payment, Knowledge and Awareness, Development.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Digital payment is a way of payment which is made through digital modes. Digital payment happens when goods or services are purchased through the use of various electronic mediums. There is no use of cash in this type of payment method: payer and payee both use digital modes to send and receive money. It is also called electronic payment. All the transactions in digital payments are completely online. The money transfers from one account to another account immediately. This process is automatic and neither party is required to visit the bank. It is an instant and convenient way to make payments. The Digital India programme is launched in 1st July, 2015 by the Government of India with a vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society. It consists of three core components: development of secure and stable digital infrastructure, delivering government services digitally and universal digital literacy. “Faceless, Paperless, Cashless” is one of noticeable role of Digital India. The demonetization drive that was implemented in November 2016, gave a push to the digital payments industry across the country. Digital payments are slowly gaining popularity in India and there are many apps that are being launched.

2. Statement of the Problem:

Digital Payments are an important part of our life today. The Government of India has been taking several measures to promote and encourage digital payments in the country. However, the success of digital India mainly depends on the involvement of the all section of people, especially women. Because, the women also contributing a lot towards economic development of our country. According to 2011 census 48.5% constitute total rural women in India. The many women not know much about this programme. In rural areas, online financial transactions, e-commerce activities as well as digital payments still lag considerably, despite demonetization and the drive to promote digital payments over the last two years. Though various measures have been taken by the government to promote cashless transaction, the attitude and perception of the rural people play significant role in the growth of the digital economy. The rural consumers have to change their attitude about cashless transaction, change their daily habits in order to adopt and use digital payment system. Hence this paper made an attempt to know about the knowledge and challenges of rural women towards digital payments in Cachar District, Assam.

3. Objectives: To study knowledge and challenges of rural women towards digital payments in Cachar District, Assam.

4. METHODOLOGY:

4.1. Research Design:

The present study is descriptive and analytical in nature. The researcher for the purpose here had made use of primary data and secondary data. The researcher has made use of interview schedule to collect data. The data was

collected and was analysed by using Epi-Info software instead of SPSS. Secondary sources were also used with respect to Review of Literature, Journals and articles.

4.2. Limitation

- The present study is limited among educated employed women in rural area of Cachar district.
- The study is confined to only to 4 cluster i.e. North, South, East and West of the Cachar District
- Due to time constraints it was not possible to include more sample size.
- Primary information obtained is mainly based on the interviews. Hence there may be bias in the opinion given by the respondents.
- Whatever information collected is considered for the analysis and interpretation.

4.3. Sources of Data:

The data required for doing the research has been collected mainly by using primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include the interview schedule. The secondary source includes the various journals, research paper and internet websites.

4.4. Sampling Design

In order to collect primary data total 100 samples is selected for the study by using cluster sampling method in a simple random sampling way to achieve purpose of the study. From one (Cachar) district 4 clusters were chosen - North, South, East and West. Each cluster is considered as a geographical area. Further taking into consideration of time and cost researcher has used cluster sample method for the study because a geographically dispersed population can be expensive to survey.

5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Bamasak (2011) concluded that there was a grater future for m-payment. An illegal use of mobile phones and security of payments through mobile phones were the serious issues in digital payment system.

Padashetty and Kishore (2013) revealed that ease of use, expressiveness and trust influenced adoption of digital payment through wallets and these also acted as motivators to adopt digital payment.

Rouibah (2015) showed that poor security, lack of trust, fear of failure, high charges and poor familiarity were the major constraints that affected epayments. Besides, security features of internet, banking facilities, privacy and quality of services were also affecting adoption of e-payments.

Rathore (2016) stated that digital payment using wallet was highly convenient for consumers in purchasing products through online without physical movements across places.

Metri and Jindappa (2017), Impact of cashless economy on common man in India. The study focuses on effect of going cashless on a common man living in India and the challenges related to going cashless. The study shows that India can never turn into a fully cashless economy as cash has been the dominating factor and always will be. Going cashless will only be feasible for a very small section of the society but not the whole nation.

Kokila and Ushadevi (2017), A study on consumer behaviour on cashless transaction in U.T. of Puducherry. The paper was focussed towards understanding the awareness and trust among the customers about cashless transactions. It was seen that people were aware about the cashless transaction but were still in doubt with implementing the same in daily routine.

Shrikala K.K. (2017), Cashless Transaction: Opportunities and Challenges with special reference to Kodagu district of Karnataka. The paper is aimed to find the opportunities available in the rural part of India and the challenges which may be faced while moving towards a cashless economy. It was seen that there are many opportunities and every opportunity come with its own challenges, but they can be avoided with proper implementation.

Singh (2017) concluded that there was significant difference between education of consumers and adoption of digital payment. The perception of consumers for digital payment had positive and significant effect on adoption of digital payment among consumers.

Prasad Rajendra Byakod & Chaya U. et al (2017) in their paper views that Usage of UPIs and portable wallets need to be addressed and enhanced security of transactions need to be ensured. This would prompt more potential improvements and greater adoption of DPS in the rural areas.

Mr. Pradeep H. Tawade (2017), "Future and scope of cashless economy in India." This paper helps in assessing the future trends and the impact of going cashless in the Indian economic scenario. After the study was conducted it was seen that the Government of India should consider many more steps in digitalizing India. And payment methods should be made more secure and risk-free.

Dr. Rashmi Gujrati (2017), India's march towards faceless, paperless, cashless economy. The paper is aimed towards creating a sense of awareness about cashless economy, its benefits, challenges and the steps taken by government toward cashless economy. After the research conducted it was seen that cashless economy comes with various benefits but brings in a lot more challenges with it.

Dr. Asha Sharma (2017), Potential for cashless economy in India. The study was conducted to find the scope of India becoming a cashless economy, challenges and opportunities related to cashless economy. The study shows that there is a significant scope of Cashless India as we can abolish various problems we face today but we must be prepared for the challenges and problems which cashless economy will bring.

Dominic, Saranya, and Rajani (2018), A study on transformation in behaviour of individual towards cashless economy. The study is aimed towards studying the behavioural changes in individual towards cashless economy. After the study conducted it was seen that many individuals have already moved or are moving towards a cashless nation but there is still a long way for India to become cashless.

6. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

6.1. Age and Marital status of the Respondents:

The present study reveals that majority of the respondents are in between the age of 31-40, 39% of the respondents are in between the age of 41-50 while, 9% of the respondents are in between the age of 20-30 and only 4% of the respondents is 50 or above, out of total respondent it is also seen that 90% of them are married and only 10% of them are unmarried.

6.2. Educational and Employment status of the Respondents:

Though the present study is carried out among educated employed women in rural area of Cachar district, the data reveals that majority (94%) of the respondents are qualified college and above and only 6% of the respondents are qualified up to high school level and out of the total respondents it is found that 55% of them are engaged in private job, 45% are engaged in Govt.job.

6.3. Monthly Income of the respondents:

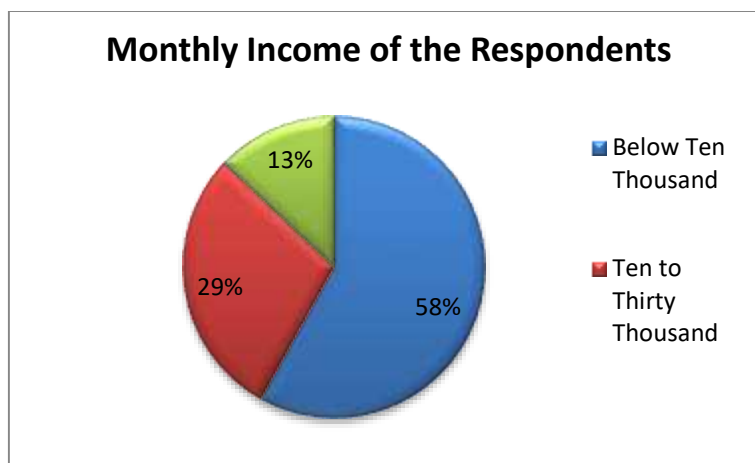


Figure 1. Source: Field Data

To measure the digital transaction among rural educated employed women it also become important to know monthly income of the respondent .From the above figure: 01 it is found that majority of the respondents earning below ten thousand, while 29% of the respondents are earning between ten to thirty thousand in a month and only 13% of the respondents earn above thirty thousand.

6.4. Awareness about Digital Payments:

The awareness of rural women towards digital payments has been analysed in three aspects namely, general awareness, sources of awareness and level of awareness about digital transaction. The present study indicates that 100% of the respondents taken for the study are generally aware about the digital payments and sources of their awareness towards digital payments indicate that 33% of the respondents aware about digital payments through neighbour/friends, 24% of them are aware through promotional campaign telecasted in the television and also from neighbour/ friends, while 21% of them are aware through sources like social media ,newspapers, journal and also from Neighbour/Friends and 16% of the respondents are aware from Prime Minister speech and also from Neighbour/Friends and only a few

respondents i.e. 6% of the respondents are aware from all the mentioned sources. Further it is also observed from the data that 81% of them are having partial knowledge about digital payments and only 19% of them were having moderate knowledge about digital payments.

6.5. Related Perception on Digital Payments:

Related to digital payment the respondents have their own perception. All respondents have knowledge of digital payment and all have bank account too. 99% of them have android mobile and out of that only 70% of them know about bank app. Many of them have clear idea that digital payment system is easy, it saves time, it is not costly, it is safe, it reduces corruption and it helps for the development of the country. But they have the opinion that illiterate people cannot use it easily and it cannot be executed effectively in rural areas due to lack of knowledge, Infrastructure and network problem. Though respondents' are educated therefore it is also analysed that whether digital payment reduce corruptions, reduce tax evasion, helps in the development of the country in regards to that majority of them are disagree and few of them do not have clear ideas about all these.

6.6. Challenges towards Digital Payments:

Majority of the respondents are preferred digital payment than cash payment because of convenience, easiness, quickness, discount and cash back all are equally important attractive points about digital payment but from the study, data reveals that 43% have not yet paid on digital way and 57% of them have make digital payment sometimes and among those who have paid, most of them opined that in many shops in this region the facilities for digital payments are not available.

6.7. Reason for not preferring digital payments:

Out of the total respondents it is found that majority of them have security, Privacy and lack of Technical Knowledge issue for not preferring digital method of payments rest of the respondents do not prefer due to fear of online fraud and habit and lack of access to required infrastructure.

6.8. Preferred method of digital payments:

Digital payment through debit card, mobile wallet and mobile banking are equally important methods preferred by the respondents.

7. Opinion about Necessity of Digital payments:

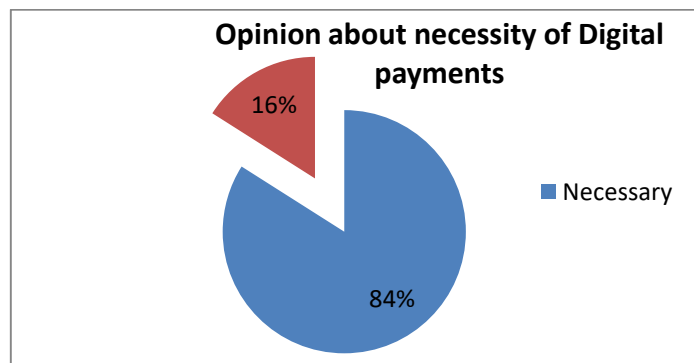


Figure: 2. Source: Field Data

It is observed that almost all the respondents taken for the study expressed that cashless transaction is also necessary in rural areas in the present society whereas majority of the respondents dislike the demonetization introduced by government of India.

8. Study Suggest that:

- The government should take up different strategies to educate the non-literates about the cashless economy because people are not conscious of the various modes of cashless payments and how to use these modes effectively.
- Training will be a necessity in rural parts of the country. The government has to bring transparency and efficiency in digital transaction. The conversion of the cash payment system to a cashless one may not be promising in the near future, but nonstop advancement in technology will certainly expand the society's openness to cashless payment.

- NGOs can be a major source for rolling out Digital Payment System in rural areas by providing handhold support at door to door level among all sections of society in regard to this a pilot study may be started.
- The self-help groups (SHGs) can be of awesome help to the general population in the advancement of computerized keeping money frameworks in the provincial regions. More SHGs must be given the charge of Bank Mithras (companion) who can stretch out their assistance to the bank, post workplaces and Bank comparing for expansion of computerized economy.
- Rural social foundation, for example, Panchayati Raj Institutions and others organisation should be empowered for the creation of DPS by providing essential training at village level.
- The Gram Sabhas in Panchayati Raj Institutions must take up the issue of advanced economy at the village level.
- All the line division functionaries, for example, teachers, wellbeing specialists, Rural Development officers, Anganwadi workers, and so forth should instruct the general population about the monetary consideration and advanced economy.
- Like vaccines Campaign, the Digital India Campaign should be carried out nationwide, on a mass scale twice or thrice in a year which will enhance to propagate the advanced India.

9. CONCLUSION:

The dream project of the Indian government Digital India- transform India in a digitally empowered and knowledge economy would be very difficult to achieve unless there is awareness amongst the people. No doubt, Slowly India is moving from cash to cashless economy. But still it has not been accepted by all. The reasons may be lack of trust, lack of technical knowledge, fear, habit etc. In rural areas, online financial transactions still lag considerably, despite demonetization and the drive to promote digital payments over the last few years. Therefore, it is essential that rural women also must know digital payment methods and take it as a habit to make this programme successful.

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