

Influences Of Digital Marketing On Consumer Perception Towards Buying Handloom Sarees

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ABSTRACT

The study measure the influences created by digital marketing on consumer perception towards buying of Handloom Sarees. There are many distinct types of surveys and fact-finding enquiries that are included in empirical research. Research techniques of various types, including comparative and correlated approaches, are used in empirical research. Through the use of interview schedules, the primary data was gathered from customers who are involved in purchasing handloom sarees that are being marketed through digital mode. The constructs have been put through preliminary testing based on the information that was gathered from the customers. The study has carried out the sample selection based on snowball sampling technique which helps to identify the consumers who are making digital modes to purchase handloom sarees. The sample size of the study was fixed to be 276 based on the pilot study results calculated using the mean and standard deviation of opinions given by consumers involved. The study has used path model for examining the impacts of diverse influences of digital marketing on consumer perception towards buying handloom sarees in the study area of Chennai. The consumers' perception is highly influenced in the areas of User Friendly Purchasing Process, Higher Level of Consumer Recall for Handloom Sarees and Efficacy in Comparing Prices and Economical Prices which is evaluated from the opinions given by digital consumers.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Consumer Perception, Handloom Sarees, User Friendly Purchasing and Efficacy in Economical Prices.

1. INTRODUCTION

A wide range of synthetic, mixed and printed textiles are now being inundated into Indian marketplaces, regardless of whether they are located in rural, urban, or metropolitan areas. Therefore, it is only logical that in order for handloom to flourish, the items that are manufactured using handloom should be designed in a way that is fascinating and compelling in terms of colour schemes, and they should also have the appropriate finish and texture in order to ensure their survival in this highly competitive climate. It is necessary to understand some of the historical developments dating back, particularly to the Raj period, in order to comprehend the saga of handlooms and the current status of the industry. Additionally, it is essential to comprehend the predicament of millions of artisans who rely on the industry to make a living. It is also necessary to trace the course of encouragement and impetus given by the government in order to ensure that handlooms have a proper place in our society and economy.

The companies that sell handloom items, whether via retail locations or through exhibits, are required to carry out a number of activities. The construction of systems that connect the distant market to the dispersed production method, in which a large number of weavers are spread out throughout a geographical region, is one example of these. It is necessary to bring together a wide range of items in significant quantities all at once. Despite the fact that the handloom business is a traditional one, it has a lengthy historical past and a living history of unparalleled artistry. This is especially true with regard to the Indian-

made silk and its goods, which have found a market and gained recognition all over the globe. For a long time, the handloom industry has been the most important cottage sector, particularly in India. The handloom business in India has been able to remain competitive despite the expansion of the mill sector and factory system.

This is mainly owing to the fact that the handloom industry has its own unique characteristics and indigenous processes, together with artistic talent and workmanship. Both in terms of its distinctiveness and in terms of the manufacture of high-quality items that are able to preserve their own character, it is exceptional. As an instance, the silk sarees and the bumper sarees are distinguished from other types of sarees by their exceptional level of artistry and finishing, which cannot be matched by any other industry. Additionally, the variety of handloom products produced in India is rather extensive. As a result of this additional benefit, handloom may be exported to a variety of countries and areas. Among the vast array of items that are produced by the handloom industry, silk products are now in the top spot in terms of both production and sales to international markets. .

One of the most dynamically expanding internal needs for silk textiles in India is the current market backdrop for silk in India, which is seeing growth rates of more than ten percent annually. It is primarily intended for traditional designs, such as those similar to saris, and it does not put any advanced quality criteria on the sector. Unless Indian sericulture is able to provide adequate amounts of raw silk at costs that are acceptable, it is probable that this scenario will persist. The current situation places a restriction on the ability of silk produced in India to experience price rises. This restriction applies to both the importation of silk from other nations that produce silk, such as China, Brazil, Korea, and others, as well as the replacement of silk with other fibres, including artificial silk. Additionally, it is very improbable that the current needs can be satisfied just by increasing the area of mulberry trees in order to boost the production of cocoons and raw silk respectively.

Therefore, the majority of the future enhanced production in raw silk will have to come from significant gains in productivity, primarily in the areas of area and labour productivity. The term "information asymmetry" refers to the disparity in information that exists between buyers and sellers, in which the buyer has the impression that the seller is in possession of knowledge that is particular to the selling goods. Through the use of signals that allow the client to evaluate the goods, the sellers have the ability to provide information about the genuine quality of the individual product qualities. Given the imperfect nature of the market, it is possible for the seller to manipulate the product information in such a way that the buyer is put in a position of disadvantage when making a purchase choice. Buyers might use the sources of information as inputs to reduce the apparent information imbalance that exists between them and sellers. These information cues may serve as a reference to the quality of the product, allowing customers to compare it to their expectations and make any necessary adjustments. On the other hand, it was discovered that when customers are unable to assess the quality of the product based on its intrinsic quality, they have a tendency to utilise information about the place of origin as a substitute for quality indicators.

2. REVIEWS

Agrawal, M. A. (2021)¹

Moreover, the research shown that consumers are eager to purchase handloom and handmade items; nevertheless, they are unable to determine whether they are spending their money on the actual product or an imitation of it. According to the findings of studies, it is necessary to conduct awareness efforts on a big scale in order to ensure its continued existence. With the use of digital streaming between buyers and producers, the interaction between the artisan community and the consumer community will be strengthened, and this will also contribute to the supply of items of a higher quality with more availability. The use of mobile apps has led to a rise in the exposure of handlooms and handicrafts in the fashion and textile market. Additionally, the handicraft industry is expected to evolve into a brand in its own right, resulting in an enhanced consumer experience.

Chatterjee, A. (2023)²

They planned to bring the traditional Indian saree back into their life, and as part of the process of revitalising the ethnicity, they also became storytellers, narrating the history and storylines that were woven into each of their sarees. In the years that followed, the 100sareepact became a phenomenon on the internet, garnering the attention of media outlets all over the globe. The purpose of this study is to explore the history of the Indian saree and also to investigate the ways in which the saree-pact has provided women in the Zuckerberg cyberspace with opportunities to form virtual friendships with one another. The rebirth of interest in traditional Indian weaves is another consequence of this phenomenon, in addition to the fact that it has resulted in the creation of a new fashion statement all over the globe.

Saad, S. (2021)³

This study's findings highlight the need of ground-level preparation for the Indian government's "vocal for local" objective.

¹ Agrawal, M. A. (2021). Handloom and handicraft sector in India: A review of literature on its demand in the market and availability of original product. *International Journal of Education, Modern Management, Applied Science & Social Science*, 3(2), 203-208.

² Chatterjee, A. (2023). Weaves and Voices: Tracing the Journey of the Indian Saree. *TEXTILE*, 21(1), 224-234.

³ Saad, S. (2021). Culture and Handicraft Tourism in India: Tourism supporting sustainable development goals.

This proves that these programs are helping the handloom sector and its weavers advance. It would seem that the government's cluster-wise growth strategy is contributing to the handloom sector's overall development. Nevertheless, it seems that the weavers' lack of knowledge about different plans (whether they pertain to business or personal welfare) is preventing them from attaining rapid growth.

Mishra, S. S., & Mohapatra, A. K. (2021)⁴

Because of the widespread cancellation and postponement of orders, the weavers, who are mostly located in rural and isolated locations, have lost their means of subsistence. Weavers, who are valued for their expertise and depend on the money they make from their daily jobs, are now sitting at home, surrounded by their equipment, without any actual work to do. The purpose of this article is to look at how the handloom business has changed and adapted because of the epidemic and the lockdowns that followed. Additionally, the article makes an effort to shed light on the assistance that the Indian government offers in order to revitalise the handloom sector.

Suresh, R., Saha, P., & James, J. (2024)⁵

This research, which blends quantitative techniques with theme analysis, use narrative marketing to generate awareness and association with handlooms. It then explores the connection between hedonic and utilitarian motivation and handloom purchase intention. These dimensions were examined by a survey of 512 people. Eleven handloom influencers were also interviewed for their data. The findings show that hedonic motivation was found to be minor, whereas narrative marketing and utilitarian motivation were the most powerful constructs influencing circular handloom purchasing intention.

Sarkar, B., & Pradeepa, S. V. (2024)⁶

As a result of women craftsmen becoming guardians of skills and weaving various textile materials from it, almost every home in an Assam village is involved in weaving. Furthermore, these ladies are crucial in maintaining the cultural identity and legacy of Assam. The social influence of women's engagement in weaving handicrafts and creating communal togetherness is further illuminated by the study. The sustainability of cultural identities in Assam, women's empowerment, and traditional weaving are the main topics of this research. We have spoken at length about how women play a crucial role in preserving culture, becoming economically independent, enhancing skills, and strengthening communal bonds.

Arunarjun, K. (2024)⁷

The purpose of this research was to determine what factors influence customers to purchase handloom goods. The addition of the customer satisfaction (CS) and e-commerce (ECOM) variables to Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour (TPB) allowed us to construct a more comprehensive model that may assist us in achieving this objective. This research shows that CS has an effect on PHSS's buying habits. Similarly, whereas ECOM had a substantial effect on PIs, it had no effect on PHSS buying behaviour, attitudes, or perceived controls. The PHSS product PIs are negatively impacted by subjective standards.

Mohitkumar Trivedi, P., Vasavada-Oza, F., & Krishna, R. (2023)⁸

The results show that the perceived value of Indian handloom items acts as a mediator between narrative marketing and ROO of products, which in turn greatly affects customers' attitude and buy intentions. Story marketing and ROO are significant antecedents to shape customers' buy intentions for Indian handloom items in general, according to this study's substantial addition in terms of empirical data. Marketing professionals may use the information to better position and frame messages for Indian handloom items and cultural goods in general.

Singh, S. (2018)⁹

The government is also making great efforts to promote this industry by launching a number of programs that would help weavers. The intricate patterns that are characteristic of handloom goods give them a distinct identity. A master weaver's cheap transaction cost and high social capital give them a leg up in many situations. This article will provide an overview of the business model used by entrepreneurs and master weavers, as well as discuss how government actions might encourage entrepreneurial behaviour among individual weavers. In order for young weavers to succeed as handloom entrepreneurs, the government is intervening through various schemes to educate them in technical and managerial matters. These schemes will also help them develop their computer skills, entrepreneurship, and awareness of issues related to quality control, packaging, zero defect and zero effect.

⁴ Mishra, S. S., & Mohapatra, A. K. (2021). Revisting Handloom Industry after COVID 19 Pandemic 2020. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(5).

⁵ Suresh, R., Saha, P., & James, J. (2024). Handloom and resource equity-A circularity narrative from India in the Global South. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 468, 143081.

⁶ Sarkar, B., & Pradeepa, S. V. (2024). Women empowerment through handloom and handicraft: unveiling the weaving cultural identities of assam.

⁷ Arunarjun, K. (2024). Beyond the loom: understanding handloom product purchase motivations using the extended theory of planned behavior. *Research Journal of Textile and Apparel*, (ahead-of-print).

⁸ Mohitkumar Trivedi, P., Vasavada-Oza, F., & Krishna, R. (2023). Tell me a story! Antecedents to purchase of handloom products in India. *Global Business Review*, 24(4), 704-720.

⁹ Singh, S. (2018). Handloom entrepreneurship & government intervention-a case study of Varanasi. *Pacific Business Review International*, 10(9), 126-134.

Poongodi, B., Ramakrishnan, G., & SK, M. T. (2021)¹⁰

The ability to understand and implement new technological developments and designs into finished products within the allotted time frame is essential for weavers. Apprentices learn the ropes from more experienced weavers. A master weaver's cheap transaction cost and high social capital give them a leg up in many situations. The entrepreneurial spirit at work here is fascinating. Additionally, the government is doing tremendous effort to promote this industry.

Research Gap

In spite of the considerable and growing body of literature on marketing, which encompasses topics such as rural marketing, pro-poor marketing, inclusive business, social enterprises, and financial inclusion, among others, there are not many studies that concentrate just on inclusive marketing. From the examination of the relevant literature, one can deduce that digital business models and other types of business models are employed interchangeably. It has been determined, on the basis of the aforementioned exhaustive literature analysis that the majority of research works have concentrated on the issues that are associated with the Handloom Industry, which is an established sector in India. It has also been noticed that the research studies were not conducted from the perspective of the perceptions that weavers have on the handloom industry. It should be noted that these studies did not do extensive study on the notion of digital marketing methods. A researcher in this study makes an effort to analyse the affects that digital marketing has on customer perceptions about the purchase of handloom sarees and this study is done in an effort to fill the gap that has been identified.

Research Problem

This purpose of providing ongoing employment to weavers cannot be realised on a consistent basis unless the items that are produced on handlooms are sold in the market. This indicates that the cooperative societies of weavers need to develop new designs and patterns in order to satisfy the expectations of the customers. As well as making it simpler for customers to recognise the items or services they purchase, brands also act as a method of quality control. When exhibited on show-room shelves, brands are something that can be marketed to buyers and will be recognised by them. This is something that sellers may do. Because of this, a product's brand has evolved into an essential component of the product, and producers strive to establish a reputation in the market on all levels via the use of branding.

The people that buy handloom textiles come from a variety of states, speak a variety of languages, and come from a variety of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. It is quite challenging to find a suitable media strategy that is geared at reaching clients who speak many languages. The many different sales promotional methods, such as the consumer rebate, the consumer discount, the special discount, the reward awards to workers and coupons, the trade discount, the credit sale, the guarantee for quick colour, the quality assurance on silk textiles, and the honouring of sales returns. Throughout the course of the year, several sales promotional methods were used, with the exception of customer rebates and special discounts. Among the most common types of channel intermediates were the private retailers and dealers. The capacity of digital marketing to recruit private traders as channel members to a significant degree is an indicator of their ability to compete with other businesses in the industry.

The difficulty that has been recognised is that the handloom sarees business is an unorganised sector that has begun trading in digital marketing platforms in addition to the conventional offline shopping. Several steps have been launched by the government in order to promote handlooms using a variety of digital platforms, and they have signed a memorandum of understanding with these platforms. Taking all of these factors into consideration, it is of the utmost importance to comprehend and assess the efficacy of digital marketing in terms of generating a favourable promotional role for digital shopping of handloom sarees, as well as to identify the challenges that buyers continue to face within the context of the current situation. In the present study, the objective is to investigate the impact that internet marketing has had on the promotion of handloom sarees in the region under investigation.

Research Aims

- To measure the influences created by digital marketing on consumer perception towards buying of Handloom Sarees

Significance of Study

Through the use of digital marketing, customers are provided with the opportunity to purchase any goods or service without having to physically visit any store. Additionally, digital marketing makes it easier for customers to make payments by providing a variety of payment options and as well as providing credit facilities. Additionally, customers are able to compare the prices of products and services. Before purchasing any goods, customers have the ability to read other customers' reviews and comments, and they may browse through the whole selection of handloom sarees. The preferences and interests of consumers are altered as a result of these triggers, which leads to customers abandoning the conventional ways of acquiring handloom sarees.

¹⁰ Poongodi, B., Ramakrishnan, G., & SK, M. T. (2021). Entrepreneurial Pursuits Of Weavers In Low Resource Handloom Industry. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(6).

A significant role that digital marketing plays in maintaining social distance and safety in the modern world is an important one. The use of digital marketing also results in time and financial savings. Individual, psychological, social, and cultural effects, as well as personal influences, are some of the elements that drive consumer behaviour, such as internet shopping. One's own When it comes to making a purchase of a product or service, customers are constantly impacted by both internal and external stimulating factors. There are many instances of internal stimuli, which are often referred to as personal stimuli. Some examples of internal stimuli include attitudes, perceptions, learning, motivation, lifestyle, and roles. Customers' perceptions are aroused and their lives are affected as a consequence of digital marketing. Customer lifestyles are also altered. consumers' preferences and tastes are altered as a result of these triggers, which are responsible for consumers abandoning conventional means of acquiring handloom items. Now that individuals have more options for discovering information before purchasing a product or service, digital marketing is offering new opportunities for both organisations and customers of handloom silk sarees.

Additionally, organisations are able to quickly access the largest number of prospective clients. At this time, there is no need for consumers to physically travel anywhere in order to purchase a thing; instead, they can quickly purchase a product with just one click and compare it to other products in terms of both quality and price. In the realm of handloom silk sarees, digital marketing has brought about a transformation in the way business is conducted, hence presenting opportunities for both consumers and organisations. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence that digital marketing has on the viewpoints of consumers about digital marketing.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

There are many distinct types of surveys and fact-finding enquiries that are included in descriptive research. The primary objective of descriptive research is to provide a description of the current state of circumstances with regard to the current state of affairs. Research techniques of various types, including comparative and correlated approaches, are used in descriptive research. These methods of research are employed to gather information. Through the use of cross-sectional analysis, it is a method for gathering information that is primarily concerned with the present and abstracting generalisations. These two key data sources provided the information that was used to compile the study's findings. When it comes to research, primary data is regarded to be the most reliable sort of data since it is often received directly from the source of the data. Through the use of interview schedules, the main data was gathered from customers who are interested in purchasing handloom sarees that are being marketed through digital mode. The constructs have been put through preliminary testing based on the information that was gathered from the customers. The study has carried out the sample selection based on snowball sampling technique which helps to identify the consumers who are making digital modes to purchase handloom sarees. The sample size of the study was fixed to be 276 based on the pilot study results calculated using the mean and standard deviation of opinions given by consumers involved. The study has used path model for examining the impacts of diverse influences of digital marketing on consumer perception towards buying handloom sarees in the study area of Chennai.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

The data analysis was done based on opinions provided by the digital users for buying handloom sarees which is evaluated using modeling techniques to bring out a quantitative outcome among the variables involved in the study which includes

Independents

- Ease of Consumer Purchases
- Efficacy in Comparing Prices and Economical Prices
- Diversified Purchase Options
- Higher Level of Consumer Recall for Silk Saree Purchases
- Reduced Expenses for Purchases
- User Friendly Purchasing Process

Dependent

- Consumer Perception

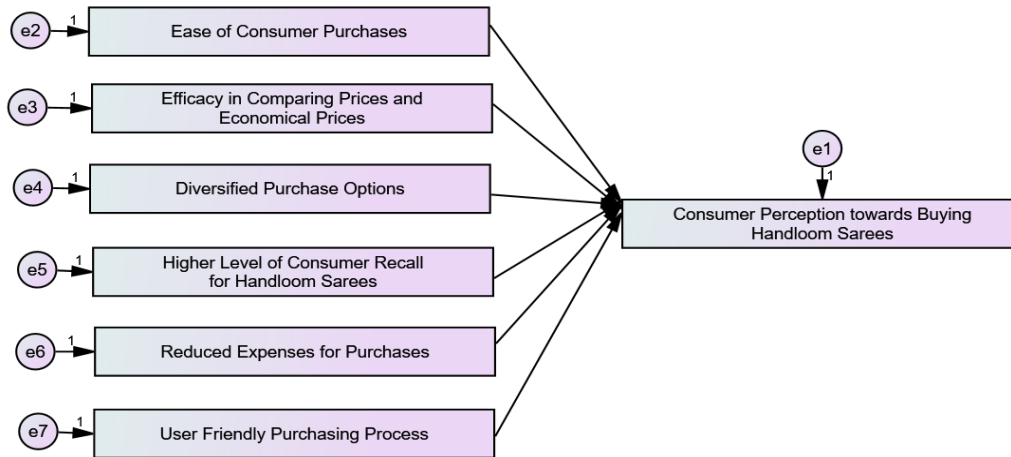


Chart - 1 – Theoretical Path Model - Influences of Digital Marketing on Consumer Perception towards Buying Handloom Sarees

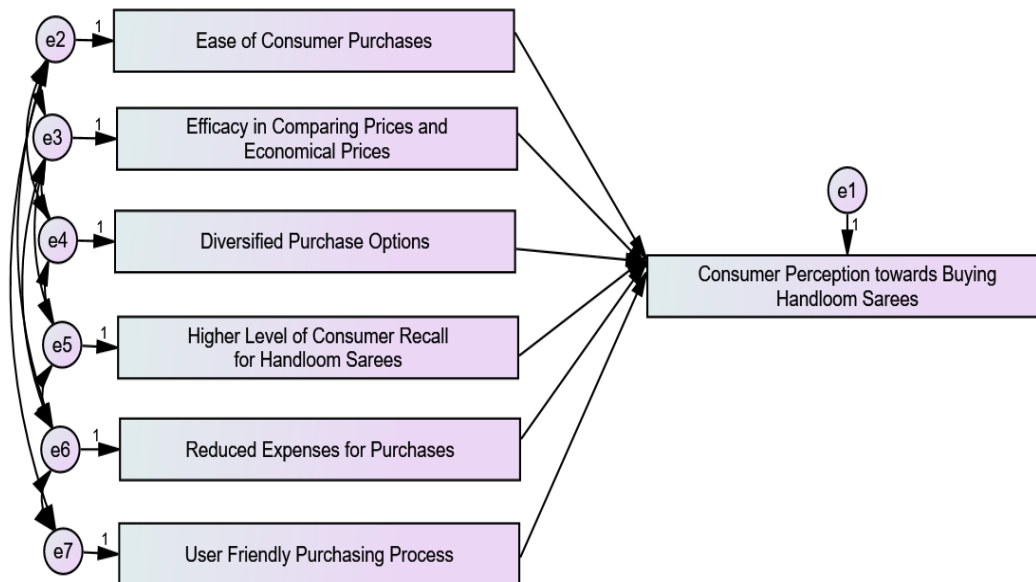


Chart - 2 – Fit Path Model - Influences of Digital Marketing on Consumer Perception towards Buying Handloom Sarees

Relationship among the Independents and Dependent of Consumer Perception

The regression weights of each relationship tested in the model were evaluated using the path model which provides significant quantitative measurement of relationships and helps to understand the impacts created by the digital marketing on consumer perception towards handloom sarees

Table – 1 Regression Estimates

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Consumer Perception	<---	Ease of Consumer Purchases	0.081	0.064	4.265	***
Consumer Perception	<---	Efficacy in Comparing Prices and Economical Prices	0.181	0.053	3.405	***

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Consumer Perception	<---	Diversified Purchase Options	-0.057	0.060	-.961	.336
Consumer Perception	<---	Higher Level of Consumer Recall for Handloom Sarees	0.261	0.060	4.332	***
Consumer Perception	<---	Reduced Expenses for Purchases	0.024	0.047	2.500	***
Consumer Perception	<---	User Friendly Purchasing Process	0.352	0.058	6.055	***

(Source: Outcome of Path Model)

The factors of Ease of Consumer Purchases (0.081), Efficacy in Comparing Prices and Economical Prices (0.181), Higher Level of Consumer Recall for Handloom Sarees (0.261), Reduced Expenses for Purchases (0.024) and User Friendly Purchasing Process (0.352) is having significant values which rejects the null hypothesis of no relationship among the independents towards dependent variables of consumer perception towards buying handloom sarees. The diversified purchase options are having insignificant p-values which reveal the lack of relationship with consumer perception. The quantitative evaluation results examines that the factors of User Friendly Purchasing Process, Higher Level of Consumer Recall for Handloom Sarees and Efficacy in Comparing Prices and Economical Prices has got top three ranks in influencing the consumer perception towards buying the handloom sarees based on the effects created by digital marketing.

Table – 2 Model Fit Evaluation'

S. No	Parameter	Calculated Model Values	Fit Values from Literature
1.	Chi-Square	2.040	<5.000
2.	GFI	0.990	>0.080
3.	AGFI	0.946	>0.080
4.	NFI	0.972	>0.080
5.	CFI	0.985	>0.080
6.	RMR	0.034	<0.080
7.	RMSEA	0.059	<0.080

(Source: Compiled by Author)

The model fit is evaluated based on the goodness of fit indices that are explained in the table. The calculated values suggests that model is having significant reliability in predicting the outcome of consumer perception towards buying handloom sarees based on digital marketing effects. The model has attained significant reliability in evaluating the consumer perception based on opinions given by the digital consumers.

4. DISCUSSIONS

During the manufacturing process, the handloom items that are produced need to be created and planned in such a manner that they meet the requirements and expectations of the clients. When marketing handloom items, two crucial factors to consider are the expectations of the buyer and the level of happiness they experience. In the event that these two aspects are addressed, the business of handloom items will not be significantly impacted by the presence of many competitors. Despite the fact that customer happiness is the most important factor in determining the success of any company, the handloom industry is particularly susceptible to this issue due to the fact that it is a traditional industry that has managed to flourish alongside contemporary businesses. The research work has created emphasis to shift towards digital marketing which improves the reach of the handloom sarees and reduces the cost associated with the marketing paradigm. The consumers' perception is highly influenced in the areas of User Friendly Purchasing Process, Higher Level of Consumer Recall for Handloom Sarees and Efficacy in Comparing Prices and Economical Prices which is evaluated from the opinions given by digital consumers. The digital marketing will create a vital market place for the handloom sarees which promotes the turnover also ensures the development of the sector.

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