



The Changing Face Of Jewellery Shopping In India – Exploring Online Trends And Eco- Friendly Choices.

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Abstract

This review explores the transformative landscape of jewellery shopping in India, characterized by the interplay of technology, evolving consumer preferences, and a growing commitment to environmental sustainability. The traditional in-store selection process for exquisite jewellery is giving way to a digital revolution, with consumers increasingly turning to online platforms. Simultaneously, heightened awareness of eco-friendly practices is shaping the choices of discerning buyers. The paper delves into the changing face of jewellery shopping, focusing on burgeoning online trends and the escalating demand for eco-friendly options. Consumers, armed with smartphones and a wealth of information from various sources, are becoming more discerning, posing intriguing challenges for the industry. The review chronicles the paradigm shift in India's jewellery market, from the liberalization of its economy in 1991 to the present, spotlighting key entities like the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation of India (MMTC) and the State Bank of India (SBI). The industry's evolution is examined through four themes: Digital Transformation, Customization and Personalization, Sustainability, and Social Media Influence. Methodologically, a comprehensive literature review spanning 2019 to 2023 was conducted using PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar, focusing on jewellery shopping trends, online consumer behavior, and eco-friendly choices. The results reveal a nuanced industry portrait, emphasizing the strategic imperative of digital transformation, the rise of consumer-driven customization and 3D printing, the increasing importance of eco-friendly practices, and the profound impact of social media on shaping jewellery trends.

Keywords

Jewellery, Eco friendly, Online Trends, India

Introduction

In the dynamic realm of Indian jewellery shopping, a profound transformation is currently unfolding, driven by the convergence of technology, evolving consumer preferences, and an increasing awareness of environmental sustainability. Traditionally, the process of selecting exquisite jewellery pieces involved in-store visits, but this is undergoing a substantial shift with the advent of a digital revolution. Consumers are now turning to online platforms for their adornment needs, marking a significant departure from conventional practices. At the same time, a burgeoning consciousness regarding eco-friendly and sustainable practices is reshaping the choices of discerning buyers.

Against the backdrop of India's status as the world's largest consumer of gold, a paradigm shift occurred with the liberalization of the economy in 1991. This pivotal moment allowed only designated entities such as the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation of India (MMTC) and the State Bank of India (SBI) the exclusive right to import gold, further shaping the trajectory of the nation's jewellery market.

As we delve into the exploration of "The Changing Face of Jewellery Shopping in India," our focus is directed toward two pivotal aspects shaping the industry: the burgeoning online trends and the escalating demand for eco-friendly jewellery options. In the contemporary era, consumers are well-informed, actively seeking information from various sources such as smartphones, iPads, and social media before committing to a purchase. This heightened awareness has introduced intriguing challenges, with a multitude of products available, rendering consumers more discerning about quality. Trivedi's study in 2016 illustrates this shift, particularly in consumer preferences for branded jewellery, indicating a market trend towards increased quality consciousness.

The Indian jewellery market is currently undergoing a paradigm shift, offering consumers a more diverse, sustainable, and technologically enriched shopping experience. From the convenience of virtual showrooms to the embrace of recycled materials and ethical sourcing, the industry is evolving to meet changing demands. Concurrently, environmental considerations have gained paramount importance in both governmental regulations and consumer expectations. Governments are actively exploring sustainable materials and technologies while emphasizing improved recycling practices within industries. Faced with persistent environmental challenges, communities worldwide are adopting proactive measures to address climate change and promote sustainable livelihoods.

The global green movement has profoundly influenced consumer behavior, fostering a heightened awareness of products aligned with sustainability and environmental stewardship. This shift is especially relevant in the context of jewellery, a significant aspect of personal adornment closely linked to garments. Beyond its ornamental role, jewellery completes and elevates the overall aesthetic of attire, becoming a profound expression of the wearer's personality. The exploration of online trends and the growing emphasis on eco-friendly choices in jewellery shopping in India represents a captivating intersection of consumer awareness, evolving preferences, and environmental consciousness.

This review aims to intricately follow the tapestry of jewellery shopping in India, where traditional craftsmanship converges with the digital age, and where eco-conscious choices seamlessly intertwine with the pursuit of timeless elegance and individual expression.

Methodology

This study's research methodology was designed to investigate the evolving landscape of jewellery shopping in India, with a specific focus on online trends and eco-friendly choices. The timeframe considered for this exploration spanned from 2019 to 2023, a period characterized by a substantial increase in social media usage and emerging trends within the retail sector.

The research process commenced with an extensive literature review, delving into existing knowledge on jewellery shopping trends in India, online consumer behaviour, and the increasing significance of eco-friendly choices. Keyword searches were rigorously conducted on reputable databases such as PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar, utilizing terms such as 'jewellery shopping trends India,' 'online jewellery shopping,' and 'eco-friendly jewellery choices.' Inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to ensure the relevance of selected studies, and data extraction involved systematically retrieving key findings, methodologies, and statistical information.

The culmination of this methodology involves synthesizing the extracted data to construct a comprehensive narrative that illuminates the intricate dynamics of jewellery shopping in India, offering insights into online consumer behavior and the growing prominence of eco-friendly choices in the jewellery industry during the specified period.

Results and Thematic Evaluations

The examination of four key themes in the realm of jewellery shopping in India has yielded insightful results that collectively paint a nuanced picture of the industry's current state. First and foremost, the theme of "Digital Transformation in Jewellery Retail" elucidates the profound impact of technology on the sector. With the rise of e-commerce and omnichannel retailing, traditional brick-and-mortar stores are compelled to adapt to the digital age or risk obsolescence. The integration of technology, particularly through sophisticated point-of-sale systems and data analytics, not only enhances convenience but also strategically responds to evolving consumer expectations. Second, the exploration of "Customization and Personalization in Online Jewellery" reveals a paradigm shift in consumer preferences. The fusion of consumer-driven customization, exponential e-commerce growth, and transformative 3D printing technology ushers in a new era for online jewellery, allowing individuals to actively engage in crafting unique, personalized treasures while challenging traditional production methods. Third, the theme of "Sustainability and Eco-Friendly Jewellery Choices" highlights the increasing importance of environmentally conscious decisions in the jewellery industry. Consumers are encouraged to opt for recycled metals, lab-grown diamonds, artisanal and handcrafted jewellery, and certification-backed sustainable practices, contributing to a more sustainable and eco-friendly jewellery industry. Lastly, the "Social Media Influence on Jewellery Trends" theme underscores the pivotal role of social media platforms in shaping and influencing jewellery trends. From real-time trend updates to influencer marketing and platform-specific trends, social media emerges as a powerful force in disseminating fashion trends and fostering a sense of community among users.

Digital Transformation in Jewellery Retail:

Over the years, the retail sector has undergone significant transformations driven by technological advancements, the rise of the Internet of Things, and the recent impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. This changing global business environment is compelling companies to embrace digitalization as a strategic advantage to outperform their competitors [1]. The notion of a "retail apocalypse" gained prominence from 2015 onward, fuelled by the closure of malls and numerous physical stores [2].

At the heart of this transformation is the seamless integration of technology into every aspect of the jewellery retail ecosystem. Traditional point-of-sale systems are evolving into sophisticated platforms that

not only manage customer relationships and track inventory but also provide valuable insights through data analytics. The adoption of these technologies goes beyond mere convenience; it is a strategic response to the shifting landscape of consumer expectations [3].

E-commerce has emerged as a pivotal force, fundamentally reshaping the dynamics of jewellery retail. The growth of online platforms has presented a challenge to traditional brick-and-mortar stores, compelling them to adapt or risk obsolescence. Digital storefronts offer advantages such as accessibility, convenience, and an expanded customer base, making them irresistible for retailers [4].

In today's highly competitive retail environment, the multichannel concept is essential for retailers due to the dominance of the Internet, and it continues to evolve, shaping the industry's future. More retailers are entering this highly profitable channel, leading to a significant growth in e-commerce over the past few years. Concurrently, traditional retail channels express confidence in their future expectations, prompting the industry to seek innovation through the adoption of the latest technology solutions as consumers become omnichannel shoppers.

Omnichannel retailing, as a strategy that integrates multiple channels and touchpoints, aims to provide customers with a seamless and consistent shopping experience. This involves creating a unified approach across various online and offline channels, including e-commerce websites, mobile apps, physical stores, social media platforms, and customer service channels [5]. Retailers utilize these technologies to enhance the shopping experience for consumers, ultimately improving the performance and sales of merchants. Omnichannel consumers increasingly utilize multiple retail channels, leading to an increase in the average customer sales and the perceived value of Omni-channel customers. Communicating with retailers across multiple channels fosters strong relationships, increased trust, and lower risk for consumers [6]. Fashion retailers, in particular, are embracing technology-based insights, incorporating online communications into the shopping journey [6].

In conclusion, the digital transformation in the jewellery retail sector is not merely a response to technological advancements; it is a strategic imperative in navigating the evolving landscape of consumer expectations and global business dynamics. The integration of technology has reshaped traditional retail paradigms, with the adoption of omni-channel retailing emerging as a key strategy. This approach not only enhances the shopping experience for consumers but also fosters stronger relationships, increased trust, and lower risk, reflecting a commitment to meeting the diverse needs of modern consumers in this dynamic and tech-driven era. The shift towards omni-channel strategies is evidence that embracing technology is not just a matter of survival but a means to thrive in an increasingly competitive environment, redefining the very nature of the customer-retailer relationship.

Customization and Personalization in Online Jewellery:

In the ever-evolving landscape of online jewellery, a notable shift has occurred with the rise of customization and personalization choices. Contemporary consumers are not merely seeking accessories; they yearn for tailored pieces that reflect their individuality and personal stories. This transformative trend has propelled online jewellery platforms into a new era of craftsmanship, where customers actively engage in crafting their own unique treasures.

Amidst the dynamic growth of global online shopping, set to reach a staggering \$4.2 trillion by the close of 2021, encompassing 2.14 billion unique online shoppers worldwide, e-commerce has solidified its position as one of the largest industries globally (Statista, 2021). With projections exceeding the \$5.4 trillion mark in 2022, it stands out as one of the fastest-growing sectors internationally. (7)

From plastics to metals, and even living cells, the versatility of 3D printing technology empowers manufacturers to dictate the design, texture, and strength of a product to meet specific requirements [8]. Despite originating in the 80s, it's only in the last decade that 3D printing has experienced significant breakthroughs in markets, finding extensive utilization across various industries, from prototypes to end products. Technological advancements, coupled with decreasing prices for both 3D printers and raw materials, have played a pivotal role. Recognition of 3D printing's potential and its broad spectrum of production possibilities has further driven its adoption across diverse industries, including aerospace, medicine, construction, and jewellery (9).

Traditional jewellery production methods predominantly involve either manual craftsmanship or wax casting, with the latter being the more prevalent method. In the traditional lost-wax casting process, jewellers begin by manually carving jewellery designs in wax. The wax designs are then encased in a heat-resistant material, typically plaster, and subjected to heat, melting the wax and leaving behind a hardened Mold [10]. Precious metals like gold or silver, or more affordable alternatives like bronze, are poured into the mold cavity. Subsequently, the piece undergoes meticulous filing to rectify any imperfections, generating a considerable amount of waste. Finally, the piece is polished to achieve its desired lustre (10).

In contrast, digital methods involve the use of CAD software tools for crafting a 3D model of the jewellery either from scratch or by scanning an existing piece. The resultant 3D model is then sent to a high-resolution 3D printer to produce the design (11). There are two methods employed for 3D-printed jewellery production: Direct and Indirect 3D printing. Direct 3D printing involves using metal powder to print the jewellery piece directly, although it necessitates high-end 3D printers, making it a less popular and costlier method. On the other hand, indirect 3D printing produces an exact copy of the final piece in a cheaper material, typically wax. This wax model is then cast into a mold, following a similar process as traditional wax casting (12).

In conclusion, the fusion of consumer-driven customization, the exponential growth of e-commerce, and the transformative impact of 3D printing technology have ushered in a new era for online jewellery. This convergence empowers individuals to actively engage in crafting unique, personalized treasures while challenging traditional production methods. As the industry continues to evolve at the intersection of creativity, technology, and consumer preferences, the future of online jewellery promises a dynamic landscape where individual expression and innovative production techniques harmonize to redefine the notion of bespoke adornments.

Sustainability and Eco-Friendly Jewellery Choices:

Choosing sustainability and eco-friendly jewellery is a great way to reduce the environmental impact of the jewellery industry, which can often involve resource-intensive and environmentally harmful practices. Some considerations and options for sustainable and eco-friendly jewellery choices can be the use of recycled metals for jewellery made from recycled metals, such as recycled gold, silver, or platinum. This helps reduce the demand for newly mined metals and minimizes the environmental impact associated with mining. Lab-Grown Diamonds and Gemstones are another option. Choose diamonds and gemstones that are lab-grown or synthetic. These stones are created in a controlled environment, eliminating the environmental and ethical concerns associated with traditional mining. One must look for jewellery brands that prioritize ethical sourcing of materials. This includes ensuring fair labour practices, as well as sourcing gemstones and metals from environmentally responsible and socially conscious suppliers. (13)

Artisanal and Handcrafted jewellery are these days in vogue to support small scale industries and artists. People do consider purchasing jewellery from artisans who use sustainable and traditional crafting methods. Handcrafted pieces often have a smaller environmental footprint compared to mass-produced

items. Exploring upcycled or vintage jewellery options. (14) This involves repurposing old or unused pieces into new designs, giving them a new life and reducing the need for new materials. Look for jewellery that comes with certifications, such as Fair Trade or certifications from organizations like the Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC), which ensures that the jewellery has been produced in an environmentally and socially responsible manner. Choosing timeless and versatile designs that you'll wear for a long time. Avoid trends that may lead to more frequent purchases and contribute to a cycle of waste. For packaging and shipping, one must consider the packaging and shipping practices of the jewellery brand. Opting for companies that use sustainable packaging materials and eco-friendly shipping methods. Local and Independent Designers should be supported for local and independent jewellery designers who often have more control over their supply chains and may prioritize sustainability. (15)

Instead of buying new jewellery, consider repairing or repurposing existing pieces. This reduces waste and extends the life of your jewellery. By making conscious choices and supporting environmentally responsible practices, you can contribute to a more sustainable and eco-friendly jewellery industry.

Social Media Influence on Jewellery Trends:

Social media has a significant impact on shaping and influencing jewellery trends. Various platforms, such as Instagram, Pinterest, TikTok, and others, play a crucial role in setting fashion trends and creating a demand for specific styles. Social media platforms are visually oriented, making them ideal for showcasing jewellery designs. Users often discover new and unique pieces through visually appealing content posted by influencers, brands, and other users. Influencer Marketing for jewellery brands often collaborate with influencers who have a significant following on social media. Influencers can showcase and promote specific jewellery pieces, making them more popular and desirable among their audience. [16]

Real-Time Trend Updates on social media provides real-time updates on fashion and style trends. Users can quickly learn about the latest jewellery designs, materials, and styles, keeping them informed and influencing their purchasing decisions. Very often, users share their own jewellery choices and styles, creating a sense of community and encouraging others to try similar pieces. This user-generated content contributes to the spread of trends and influences the broader audience. Platform-Specific Trends and different social media platforms may have unique trends. For example, Instagram is known for its curated and visually appealing content, while TikTok often features short-form videos showcasing creative and dynamic jewellery styles. Social media allows jewellery brands to share their stories, values, and design philosophies. This storytelling aspect can create a connection between consumers and brands, influencing consumers to choose jewellery that aligns with their values and preferences. Some social media platforms and jewellery brands leverage augmented reality (AR) technology to offer virtual try-ons. This allows users to see how a piece of jewellery would look on them before making a purchase, enhancing the online shopping experience. Social media challenges and campaigns, often driven by hashtags, can go viral and lead to the widespread adoption of specific jewellery trends. Brands may create challenges to engage users and encourage them to share their own interpretations of a trend. (17)

Social media connects users from around the world, enabling the rapid spread of global fashion trends. Styles that gain popularity in one region can quickly influence and inspire jewellery choices in other parts of the world. Direct shopping features on several social media platforms now offer direct shopping features, allowing users to purchase products without leaving the app. This seamless shopping experience can contribute to impulse purchases and the adoption of trending jewellery styles. In summary, social media has a profound impact on jewellery trends by providing a platform for visual inspiration, influencer collaborations, real-time trend updates, and a sense of community among users. Brands and consumers alike actively participate in shaping and following the latest jewellery styles through these digital channels.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this review provides a holistic understanding of the evolving landscape of jewellery shopping in India. The industry's metamorphosis, driven by technology, consumer preferences, and sustainability considerations, underscores the imperative for adaptation. The digital transformation, marked by e-commerce and omnichannel strategies, is not just a response to technological advancements but a strategic imperative in meeting evolving consumer expectations. The fusion of customization, e-commerce growth, and 3D printing is ushering in a new era for online jewellery, empowering consumers to craft personalized treasures while challenging traditional production methods. The emphasis on sustainability and eco-friendly choices reflects a paradigm shift in consumer values, encouraging responsible practices in material sourcing and design. Social media emerges as a powerful force, influencing trends, fostering community, and reshaping the consumer-brand relationship. Collectively, these themes present a dynamic industry at the intersection of tradition and innovation, where individual expression harmonizes with technological advancements and environmental consciousness. As the jewellery shopping landscape continues to evolve, the industry's ability to navigate these complexities will be pivotal in meeting the diverse needs of modern consumers.

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