"Perception and Awareness of Digital Payment Systems among Smallholder"

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Abstract -The goal of this study is to find out how happy customers are with digital payment wallets and how they use them. The study looked at important factors that affect how people act, such as how safe they think a service is, how easy it is to use, how much they trust the service provider, and how useful they think it is overall. These things make people want to use and keep using digital payment networks. We looked at how demographic factors like age, income, and education affect how people spend money. We got primary data by giving a structured questionnaire to a wide range of people who use well-known digital wallet services like Paytm, PhonePe, and Google Pay. We used both descriptive and inferential statistics to look at the data, find trends, and look into the connections that affect how happy customers are. The results should help payment service providers understand what customers want and how happy they are, which will help them improve their goods, deal with customer complaints, and come up with ways to get more people to use their services and keep them. This study adds to the body of research on digital payment systems, especially in small markets and the overall growth of financial technologies.

Key words - Digital Wallets, Small Markets, Online Transactions, Digital Payment Systems, Technology Adoption, Transaction Efficiency

Introduction - Adding features like faster money transfers, bill payments, cashback rewards, and easier communication with banks has changed the way people do financial transactions in a big way. Still, things like Security and fraud risks, problems with technology and operations, and a lack of knowledge of wallet features all affect their acceptance and user happiness. People sometimes don't fully use digital wallets because they are afraid about data breaches, hacking, phishing, and other illegal actions. Even with two-factor authentication and encryption, fraud is still happening, which makes people less trusting of security measures. Some technical and operational problems are failed transactions, late returns, hidden fees, and apps that don't work right. Technical problems, server outages, and poor network connection could cause transactions to fail or not be completed, which would make customers angry. Some digital wallets have user interfaces that are very complicated, which could make it hard for people who aren't very good with technology to utilise them well. The goal of this study is to look at the several ways that digital wallets can be used and find out what makes customers happy. Digital payment service providers may improve security, speed up transactions, and provide great customer service by learning about their clients' needs, wants, and concerns. The results will help us come up with ways to make digital wallets more useful and widely used in digital transactions.

Objectives - This study's goal is to find out what the most important aspects are that affect the use of digital payment wallets in small markets, as well as the problems that consumers face when they try to use them. It also wants to look at how digital wallets affect how people shop, how well they improve the entire shopping experience, and how happy people are with the different features and functions that these payment systems offer.

Research Design & Data Collection- This study uses a mixed-methodologies research strategy, which combines both quantitative and qualitative methods to get a whole picture of how people use payment wallets. The main goal is to look at the traits of users, figure out what makes them use digital wallets, and see how happy they are with them. The study uses a descriptive design framework to focus on creating profiles of people who use payment wallets in agricultural markets, especially in smaller towns and semi-urban areas. An online structured questionnaire with both close-ended and Likert-scale questions was used to gather primary data. This made it possible to gather measurable information about things like consumer happiness, usability perceptions, security concerns, and demographic factors like age, income, and education. At the same time, secondary data was gathered by thoroughly reviewing the literature and analysing content from books, academic publications, government reports, and trustworthy digital sources. This included data mined from pre-tested and coded information found on social media platforms. Stratified random

sampling is the method used for sampling. This means that the population is divided into groups based on shared traits, such age, job, or geography, and then samples are chosen at random from each category. This makes sure that the sample is more representative and less biased. The study's sample included 112 people from Akole Taluka, Maharashtra, who were chosen because they were easy to reach and relevant to the study's focus on small markets. The researcher used a sampling plan to decide how many people to include in the sample based on how many people in the target area were willing and able to answer. We used a number of statistical and visualisation techniques to help us understand trends and patterns in user behaviour and satisfaction. These included percentage analysis, frequency tables, bar and pie charts, and other graphs. This structured and multi-faceted study design helps us get a full picture of how people in agri-markets view and use digital payment wallets. The findings can help shape digital financial service initiatives and legislative changes.

Data Analysis and Interpretation -

The following section presents an analysis of the primary data collected from respondents regarding their experiences and perceptions of digital wallet usage in agri-markets. Key dimensions explored include coverage, security, transaction performance, ease of use, and user commitment to continued usage.

1. Overall Coverage of Digital Wallets

The study found that a significant proportion of users (42.9%) rated the overall coverage of digital payment wallets as high, suggesting that a majority of merchants and businesses within the surveyed regions accept digital transactions. However, approximately 15.2% of respondents rated coverage as low, indicating persistent gaps in acceptance, particularly in remote or less-digitally integrated areas. These findings suggest that while digital wallets are gaining prominence as a preferred mode of payment, full-scale adoption is hindered by infrastructural and awareness limitations.

2. Security Concerns and Trust Issues

Regarding perceptions of security, 34.8% of respondents provided a positive assessment of the safety associated with using digital wallets. In contrast, 24.1% expressed ongoing concerns related to security risks, including fears of fraud, scams, and data privacy violations. This data highlights the critical role that trust and perceived safety play in influencing user behavior. Continued apprehension among a segment of users underscores the need for enhanced consumer protection mechanisms and awareness campaigns.

3. Transaction Speed and Reliability

The efficiency of digital wallet transactions was evaluated positively by 41.1% of respondents, who reported that transaction speed was excellent. This affirms the general reliability and convenience of digital payments. Nonetheless, 7.1% of users rated the transaction speed poorly, reflecting occasional issues such as delays, failed transactions, or connectivity problems. Such inconsistencies—often due to server downtime or unstable internet access—can impact user satisfaction and confidence in digital platforms.

4. Ease of Use and Consumer Experience

User-friendliness was another key factor analysed. About 32.1% of respondents considered payment wallets very easy to use, while an additional 29.5% found them moderately easy. However, 10.7% reported difficulties, potentially due to technical glitches, non-intuitive user interfaces, or a general lack of digital literacy. These findings highlight the importance of designing inclusive and accessible platforms that cater to a diverse user base, including those less familiar with technology.

5. Likelihood of Continued Usage

With respect to long-term adoption, 46.4% of users indicated that they are likely to continue using digital wallets regularly. This suggests a strong level of satisfaction and commitment among nearly half the sample population. However, 31.3% of users reported occasional usage, implying a continued reliance on traditional cash-based transactions. A smaller portion (12.5%) stated that they rarely use payment wallets, which may stem from trust issues, limited merchant participation, or insufficient awareness of the benefits.

Summary -

- 42.9% of users rated digital wallet coverage as high, but 15.2% reported limited merchant acceptance in certain areas.
- 34.8% of respondents viewed digital wallets as secure, while 24.1% expressed ongoing concerns about safety and trust.
- 41.1% of users praised transaction speed and reliability, though 7.1% experienced delays or failures.
- 32.1% found digital wallets very easy to use, but 10.7% faced difficulties due to technical or usability issues.
- 46.4% of users indicated regular continued usage, whereas 12.5% rarely used them, citing trust, awareness, or accessibility issues.

Conclusion –

This study looked at how small and semi-urban markets adopted and used digital payment wallets, as well as how consumers felt about them. It focused on what made people happy with them and why they kept using them. The results show that digital wallets are becoming more popular, mostly because they are easy to use, fast to process transactions, and have a growing market presence. However, there are still some big problems that need to be solved, such as the fact that certain merchants don't accept it in some areas, there are still security concerns, and users have different levels of digital literacy. A lot of people who answered said they were happy with digital wallets and planned to keep using them. However, a considerable number of people still use traditional payment methods, which shows that digital transition in financial behaviour is still happening, not finished. Concerns about trust, convenience of use, and the stability of infrastructure still affect how many people utilise it. In general, the report shows both the

advances and the limitations in how digital payments are being used in markets. It shows that service providers, lawmakers, and financial educators need to keep working to create confidence, make user interfaces easier to use, and grow merchant networks in order to get more people to utilise the service. The information gained from this study adds to the expanding body of knowledge about fin tech in rural economies and provides a solid base for future research and real-world actions aimed at improving digital financial inclusion.

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