

Avik Ahmad
MBA,
International Marketing Department,
India
ahmadaav14@yahoo.com

E-COMMERCE DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

The Government of India has taken significant initiatives to strengthen the economic credentials of the country and make it one of the strongest economies in the world. India is fast becoming home to start-ups focused on high growth areas such as mobility, e-commerce and other vertical specific solutions - creating new markets and driving innovation.

Owing to higher infrastructure spending, increased fiscal devolution to states, and continued reforms in fiscal and monetary policy, the Indian economic outlook has strengthened. The Government of India is striving to move steadily to minimise structural and political bottlenecks, attract higher investment and improve economic performance.

E-Commerce is a term for any type of business, or commercial transaction, that involves the transfer of information across the Internet. E-Commerce allows consumers to electronically exchange goods and services with no barriers of time or distance. The sharing of business information, maintaining business relationships, and the conducting business transactions by means of telecommunications networks. A business online does not have to make a site for every language. With the right marketing, every customer around the globe can find the business site, products, and information without leaving home.

The e-commerce has transformed the way business is done in India. The Indian e-commerce market is expected to grow to US\$ 200 billion by 2026 from US\$ 38.5 billion as of 2017. Much growth of the industry has been triggered by increasing internet and smartphone penetration. The ongoing digital transformation in the country is expected to increase India's total internet user base to 829 million by 2021 from 560.01 million as of September 2018. India's internet economy is expected to double from US\$125 billion as of April 2017 to US\$ 250 billion by 2020, majorly backed by ecommerce.

India's E-commerce revenue is expected to jump from US\$ 39 billion in 2017 to US\$ 120 billion in 2020, growing at an annual rate of 51 per cent, the highest in the world. During 2018, electronics were the biggest contributor to online retail sales in India with a share of 48 per cent, followed closely by apparel at 29 per cent.

Some of the major developments in the Indian e-commerce sector are as follows:

- Flipkart, after getting acquired by Walmart for US\$ 16 billion, is expected to launch more offline retail stores in India to promote private labels in segments such as fashion and electronics. In September 2018, Flipkart acquired Israel based analytics start-up Upstream Commerce that will help the firm to price and position its products in an efficient way.
- Paytm has launched its bank - Paytm Payment Bank. Paytm bank is India's first bank with zero charges on online transactions, no minimum balance requirement and free virtual debit card
- As of June 2018, Google is also planning to enter into the E-commerce space by November 2018. India is expected to be its first market.
- E-commerce industry in India witnessed 21 private equity and venture capital deals worth US\$ 2.1 billion in 2017 and 40 deals worth US\$ 1,129 million in the first half of 2018.
- Google and Tata Trust have collaborated for the project 'Internet Saathi' to improve internet penetration among rural women in India

Since 2014, the Government of India has announced various initiatives namely, Digital India, Make in India, Start-up India, Skill India and Innovation Fund. The timely and effective implementation of such programs will likely support the e-commerce growth in the country. Some of the major initiatives taken by the government to promote the e-commerce sector in India are as follows:

- In order to increase the participation of foreign players in the e-commerce field, the Indian Government hiked the limit of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the E-commerce marketplace model for up to 100 per cent (in B2B models).
- In the Union Budget of 2018-19, government has allocated Rs 8,000 crore (US\$ 1.24 billion) to BharatNet Project, to provide broadband services to 150,000 gram panchayats
- As of August 2018, the government is working on the second draft of e-commerce policy, incorporating inputs from various industry stakeholders.

Following are the achievements of the government in the past four years:

- Under the Digital India movement, government launched various initiatives like Udaan, Umang, Start-up India Portal etc.
- Under the project 'Internet Saathi', the government has influenced over 16 million women in India and reached 166,000 villages
- Udaan, a B2B online trade platform that connect small and medium size manufacturers and wholesalers with online retailers and also provide them logistics, payments and technology support, has sellers in over 80 cities of India and delivers to over 500 cities.
- According to the UN's eGovernance index, India has jumped 11 positions to 107 in 2016 from 2018 in 2014.
- The government introduced Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM), a simple mobile based platform for digital payments.

The e-commerce industry been directly impacting the micro, small & medium enterprises (MSME) in India by providing means of financing, technology and training and has a favourable cascading effect on other industries as well. The Indian e-commerce industry has been on an upward growth trajectory and is expected to surpass the US to become the second largest e-commerce market in the world by 2034. Technology enabled innovations like digital payments, hyper-local logistics, analytics driven customer engagement and digital advertisements will likely support the growth in the sector. The growth in e-commerce sector will also boost employment, increase revenues from export, increase tax collection by ex-chequers, and provide better products and services to customers in the long-term.

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