

# A study on the Impact of digital payments and UPI on the consumer spending behaviour of people in rural areas in and around Thamaraipulam

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**Abstract:** This study focuses on the impact of digital payments and UPI on consumer spending and financial behaviors of the people in rural areas around the Thamaraipulam village in Nagapattinam District. I focus my research on the growth of UPI transactions and consumer preference towards cashless payments. As rural people use the online transaction system, they can easily send and receive money. The main objectives are consumer spending, cash management, saving patterns, budgeting habits, and financial inclusion. It also analyzes the relationship between income levels and the adoption of digital payment methods. The research is based on primary data collected from the questionnaire format data through surveys and primary sources. The research findings on financial inclusion increase the use of the online transaction system in rural areas. Rural people easily transfer money from one account to another account, such as the research methodology used in SPSS software in Descriptive Statistics, Chi-square, Correlation, Regression, and T-Test analysis. The study concludes that digital payments play an important role in promoting the financial transaction system and financial inclusion, financial modern financial practices in around the Thamaraipulam village.

**Keywords:** Digital Payments, Financial Behaviours, Consumer Preference, Cashless Payments, Cash Management, Financial Inclusion.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Digital payment is a money transaction system. It is an online transaction payment made by digital or electronic means, without the use of physical cash transactions. It is the transfer of money from one Account to another account using digital devices, such as an Android phone, computer, tablet, laptop or point-of-sales (POS) machines. It needs to be secured for online transactions and online platforms.

Unified Payments Interface (UPI) was developed by the National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) under the guidance of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The Unified Payments Interface, launched on April 11, 2016, helped improve digital payments in India by making the transaction a quick and simple process. It is a real-time payment system that allows users to transfer money between bank accounts using a mobile phone. Later than 10 years, UPI has over 500 million active users in India. It is used by 504 banks and 65 million merchants. Unified Payments Interface has become the backbone of Indian payment systems.

India's payment system is a global leader in digital transactions, primarily driven by the real-time, 24/7 hours Unified Payments Interface, which facilitates instant peer-to-peer (P2P) and person-to-merchant (P2M) transactions via apps like PhonePe, Google Pay, and Paytm.

National Payments Corporation of India is meeting smaller Unified Payments Interface players for 10 days in Mumbai to address market concentration dominated by PhonePe (45%-48%) and Google Pay (33%-35%). Attendees include Amazon pay, Whatsapp pay and BHIM. The take revives National Payment Corporation of India 30% cap proposal, as Unified Payments Interface crossed 125 billion FY 25 transactions, underscoring competition needs.

The work on the immediate payment service (IMPS) is an infrastructure that operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays. It allows sending and receiving money through the transaction system. Pay bills, shop online and make merchant payments all from a single mobile application linked to their bank accounts.

Digital payments are rapidly reshaping India's economy, making transactions faster, more secure and accessible to millions. We explore how technologies like Unified Payment Interface are empowering individuals and businesses across the nation. From small vendors in rural areas, such as Thamarai pulam, to larger corporations, digital payment solutions are driving economic growth and financial services.

It benefits from using offline Unified Payment Interface payments. It works without an internet connection. It makes it convenient for features of phones users. They are secured and accessible even in rural areas. It supports basic banking functions like checking balance and mini statement. Ensures wider adoption of digital payments in rural areas. It helps bridge the digital payment and promote financial inclusion.

Over the past years, Unified Payments Interface has transformed the way India transacts, making digital payments seamless, secure and accessible to rural areas. From small vendors to daily workers, cashless payments have become an integral part of everyday life. It is paying bills, receiving government benefits, or making routine purchases. Transactions today are completed in seconds with ease and efficiency.

By empowering students, entrepreneurs, and homemakers alike, Unified Payments Interface has turned every smartphone into a reliable financial tool, bridging gaps and fostering financial inclusion across the nation.

The initial surge triggered by demonetization, UPI entered a phase of rapid and sustained expansion between 2017 and 2020. The introduction of competitive and user-friendly applications such as Google Pay, PhonePe, and Paytm played a pivotal role in attracting a broader consumer base. These applications offered cashback rewards, referral bonuses, scratch cards and lottery-style incentives that made digital payments not only convenient but also exciting and rewarding for users.

The COVID-19 period in early 2020 brought unprecedented challenges to everyday life, but simultaneously accelerated the adoption of digital payments in ways that would have otherwise taken many more years to achieve. With physical distancing norms, lockdowns, and a widespread fear of handling physical currency, millions of Indians – including many in smaller towns and rural areas turned to UPI as a safe, contactless, and hygienic alternative to cash.

In 2023, during this period, UPI also crossed an important psychological and commercial threshold: person-to-Merchant (P2M) transactions, representing payments made by consumers to businesses and vendors, surpassed person-to-person (P2P) transfers in volume. This shift indicated that UPI was no longer merely a money transfer tool between individuals but had become the primary instrument for everyday consumer spending and retail commerce in India.

In coastal villages like Thamarai pulam in the Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu, the impact of UPI's growth is increasingly visible. Local fishermen settle transactions with buyers through Google Pay and PhonePe. Small work Shope, Market and vegetable stores, Hair salon, Mobile recharge Shope, display UPI QR codes for customer payments. Women members of self-help groups manage group savings and loan repayments through Aadhaar-linked digital Accounts. Young people use UPI daily for mobile recharges, online shopping, and money transfers.

It is a rural Thamarai pulam village located in Nagapattinam district with a population of approximately 3,200 people. Around 300 residents use Unified Payments Interface payment services. It is used in merchant shops. The Unified Payments Interface service is widely used by private employees and government employees in Thamarai pulam village; however, internet connectivity is not frequent or stable in the village area. In 2025 developed, Thamarai pulam village online transaction for house electrical payment online methods.

India makes the UPI 10 years of the Unified Payments Interface, highlighting its journey from a developing platform in 2016 to a global digital payment leader in 2026. It has successfully transformed India from line to QR codes (Quick Response Codes), emerging as the backbone of the country's digital financial ecosystem. Unified Payments Interfaces used outside India are expanding internationally and are operational or linked with countries like Singapore, UAE, France, Nepal, Bhutan, and other countries that use the Unified Payments Interfaces. It works through a Unified Payments Interface, which links bank accounts to a virtual payment address, allowing instant transfers with secure authentication without sharing bank details.

## **II.Objectives**

1. To examine how digital payments and UPI influence the frequency and volume of consumer expenditure in rural areas.
2. To study the effect of UPI usage on cash management and savings patterns of rural consumers of Thamarapulam.
3. To assess the role of digital payments in improving financial inclusion among rural populations.
4. To identify the relationship between income levels and the adoption of digital payment methods.
5. To evaluate the impact of UPI on the budgeting habits and financial discipline of Thamarapulam consumers.

## **III.SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

- A study focuses on the impact of the digital payment and Unified Payments Interface on consumer spending behaviour in the rural area around Thamarapulam village. The research aims to understand how digital payment systems are changing the traditional methods of financial transaction in rural areas.
- It covers the study usage of UPI applications and other digital payment methods among rural people for their day-to-day financial activities. A study's main focus especially targets the people in my village, covering aspects such as consumer expenditure, cash management, saving patterns, budgeting habits, and financial inclusion.
- It examines the relationship between income levels and the adoption of digital payment methods among rural consumers.
- The research is based on the primary data collected from questionnaires and surveys from the respondents in Thamarapulam village, and is limited to UPI and digital payment usage in rural areas.
- In the village, there is no easy access to an internet connection. Not frequently sending or receiving money. The research is limited to a selected 150 respondents in Thamarapulam village, which focuses only on digital payment usage and its financial impact on rural people.

## **IV.NEEDS OF THE STUDY**

- The quick increase of digital payments and UPI transactions has changed the way people perform financial activities in rural areas. In recent years, rural consumers have also started adopting digital payment methods for daily transactions. It is important to the digital payment inclusion of the financial behaviour of rural area consumers in Thamarapulam.
- This study is needed to understand the impact of UPI usage on consumer spending, cash management, saving patterns, and budgeting in Thamarapulam. It also helps in the role of digital payments in improving the financial inclusion among the rural area in population.
- This study will help my village use the digital payment system. Lack of digital transactions, internet connectivity issues and language barriers. The findings may help researchers, policymakers, banks, and financial institutions in rural areas improve digital financial services.

## **V.LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

- Difficulty in collecting accurate data from the rural area people. Some respondents did not use digital payment and UPI, especially some farmers who use smartphones, so this situation, handled the problem in this situation.
- Some respondents were working in cities and were available only during specific times, which caused delays in collecting survey data.
- The research faced difficulty in collecting primary data because some respondents were not willing to fill out the questionnaire properly.
- The researcher faced difficulty during data collection because some respondents were not using UPI transactions and had limited knowledge about the digital payment system.
- Some respondents had knowledge about UPI transactions, but their limited English knowledge created difficulties in understanding and answering certain survey questions.

## **VI.Review of Literature**

### **1. Au & Kauffman, (2008)**

Early research laid the groundwork for digital payment studies by integrating classical economic theories with emerging payment technologies. Au and Kauffman (2008) pioneered this field by applying microeconomic principles such as consumer choice, network externalities, and switching costs—to mobile payment systems. Their concentric-circle model, which categorizes stakeholders into technology producers, end-users, intermediaries, and

regulatory bodies, highlights that even innovative mobile payments share underlying economic drivers with traditional payment methods.

## **2. Lusardi & Mitchell (2014)**

A contention that financial literacy can be a mitigating factor for poorly executed financial decisions. With the growing popularity of BNPL, there is scant information on how demographic factors such as education, income, and age intersect with online payment behaviours. Your study covers this gap by incorporating these moderators into quantitative and qualitative frameworks of analysis.

## **3. Vidani & Pathak, 2016**

The digital payment has been rapidly changing over the past few years because of changes in technology. Innovation of UPI and other digital apps has increased due to easy access to phones and the internet. Dixit and Tripathi (2020) in their study state that over 546.5 million users are using these apps in India. This much consumption has changed the financial habits of an individual.

## **4. S. Mishra & V. Rajora (2018)**

A study on "Digital Payment System with special reference to Youth" is an analysis of the impact of new digital payments on youth and the problems encountered by them. According to the study, consumers feel more comfortable making payments online. Youth are starting to use various digital application services more frequently. This study also clarified why there is a greater increase in the growth rate of utilization of mobile applications for online payments and why people are becoming more aware of them.

## **5. Shu & Xia, 2018**

This study investigates how different payment modes, such as cash and digital methods, influence consumer spending. It finds that consumers spend more when using digital or card-based payments due to the abstract nature of money in non-cash transactions. This paper establishes the foundational behavioural concept that digital payment methods reduce the perceived pain of paying, leading to higher spending, a key psychological mechanism for my study.

## **6. K. Suma Vally and K. Hema Divya (2018)**

To conduct a study on digital payments in India from the perspective of consumer adoption, published in the *International Journal of Pure and Applied Mathematics*, 119(15), 1259–1266. The study explored the factors influencing consumers' willingness to adopt digital payment methods.

The research found that perceived ease of use, convenience, trust, security, and awareness were critical in determining adoption. Consumers are more likely to adopt digital payments when they feel confident about the safety of transactions and perceive clear benefits over traditional cash payments. The study also emphasized the role of technological literacy, smartphone penetration, and government initiatives in promoting digital payment adoption. Overall, the authors concluded that while adoption is increasing, ongoing efforts to enhance security and user engagement are essential for broader acceptance.

## **7. Saiyid Saif Abbas Abidi and Syed Md Faisal Ali Khan (2019)**

"Payment Mode Influencing Consumer Behaviour: Cashless Payment Versus Conventional Payment System in India" provides a comparative analysis between digital payment users and non-users. The findings show a clear split: cashless payment customers not only spend more, but also exhibit lower psychological opposition to value purchases, with those committed to cash citing technological distrust and strategic liking for the spending drag of physical cash.

## **8. Gupta and Arora (2019)**

They observed that many consumers Favor UPI over conventional banking methods because it is more convenient and saves time. Digital platforms such as UPI have influenced the way individuals handle their finances.

## **9. Kurniawan, B., Wahyuni, S. F., & Valentina, T. (2019)**

A study on "The influence of digital payments on public spending patterns. In *Journal of Physics: Conference Series* (Vol. 1402, No. 6, p. 066085)." The findings of this research suggest that public spending patterns are influenced by digital payments. The availability of digital payment options has made transactions easier for many individuals, leading to a noticeable increase in the number of people using e-money for their daily transactions. As a result, there has been a significant shift in public spending behaviour, with more people transitioning from traditional offline retail stores to online platforms such as e-commerce applications.

**10. Neelu Tiwari & Naveen Kumar Singh (2019)**

Given the massive adoption of information and communication technology in the field of digital payment systems, this exploratory research is the first to test consumer satisfaction levels towards cashless payment systems through two leading companies (Paytm and BHIM), providing digital payment platforms. The primary objective of the current research study is to identify the factors affecting the adoption of cashless payment services and consumer satisfaction in India through the survey method.

**11. Menon, M. M., & Ramakrishnan, H. S. (2019)**

Survey on "Revolution of E-wallets usage among Indian millennials. *Int. J. Recent Technol. Eng*, 8(3), 8306-8312." The research uncovers that the participants exhibit a high level of positive sentiment towards E-Wallets. They regularly utilize E-Wallets for various services such as paying utility bills (insurance, electricity, DTH, landlines) and making mobile payments (postpaid and prepaid). Paytm and Google Pay emerged as the preferred E-Wallets among the majority of respondents. Additionally, the study observes that friends and family exert significant influence on the participants' adoption of E-Wallets. Factors like usefulness and satisfaction in E-Wallet applications encourage consumers to utilize them for a wide range of services. Similarly, individuals between the ages of 25 and 40 use E-Wallets more frequently compared to those younger than 25 or older than 40. The study also reveals that millennials predominantly utilize E-Wallets for mobile payments (postpaid and prepaid) and purchasing movie tickets. They also rely on E-Wallets for utility bill payments and making travel-related bookings.

**12. Aggarwal et al. (2020)**

A landmark policy shift occurred with India's demonetization in November 2016. Aggarwal et al (2020) leveraged this natural experiment to show that regions with greater exposure to cash shortages experienced up to a 40% decline in ATM withdrawals alongside significant surges in digital payment transactions. These results underscored the capacity of exogenous shocks to accelerate the transition from cash-based to digital economies.

**13. According to Mehta and Verma (2021)**

The quick and seamless transaction process offered by UPI has contributed to more frequent shopping and spur-of-the-moment purchases. Since digital payments feel less physical than using cash, consumers are often inclined to spend more.

**14. Sonal (2021)**

A study on "Adoption and Usage of Mobile Payment Systems by Consumers and Merchants". This study explores the growth of new technologies in India's evolving economy and changing lifestyle, resulting in various tech-based solutions. Smartphones exemplify this trend, serving multiple functions from communication to finance, education, gaming, and shopping. The recent surge in mobile payments is driven by factors such as government initiatives, digital awareness, and lifestyle shifts. This is evident in the sustained growth of mobile payment transactions, involving both merchants and consumers. Seizing this opportunity, the study compares mobile payment adoption and usage between Ranchi (a tier II city) and Kolkata (a tier I city) within the same country, aiming to assess awareness and usage. In a departure from prior research, it explores both merchant and consumer usage, while also investigating the impact of independent and demographic variables.

**15. PANDEY (2022), KULKARNI AND VARMA (2021)**

Unified Payment Interface (UPI) has emerged as a transformative tool in India's digital payment ecosystem, reshaping consumer spending habits and preferences. Studies indicate that UPI provides an efficient, convenient, and secure platform for peer-to-peer and peer-to-merchant transactions, driven by government initiatives like "Digital India" and the demonetization period of 2016. These measures significantly accelerated the shift towards digital payments, with UPI overtaking other modes due to its user-friendly design and interoperability across banks.

**16. Sunny Gupta and Dinesh Chand (2021)**

To examine consumers' perception towards the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). The study analyzed factors influencing the adoption and usage of UPI-based digital payment systems. Their findings indicated that perceived ease of use, convenience, security, speed of transaction, and trust significantly affect consumers' attitudes toward UPI. The research highlighted that increased smartphone penetration, government initiatives promoting digital payments, and cashback/reward incentives have positively influenced consumer acceptance. However, concerns related to cybersecurity risks and data privacy were identified as challenges affecting long-term trust. The authors concluded that UPI has emerged as a highly preferred digital payment mode due to its simplicity, interoperability, and instant transaction features.

**17. Dr.D.Padmavathi, I.Monisha Matanjini, B. Aryshree (2021)**

This study examines the challenges faced by consumers and their impact on the usage of digital modes of payment in Mumbai city. The area of the study is Mumbai city, with a sample of 52 respondents, by adopting convenience sampling methods. Primary data collected through Google Forms. Chi-square test was adopted to find the relationship. The research work concludes that cash payment infrastructure challenges are the challenges that affect the usage of digital payments.

**18. GULATI AND ARORA (2021)**

In a post-pandemic analysis, how digital transaction habits evolved following COVID-19. They found that increased reliance on online payments led to subtle behavioural shifts in budgeting, with households underestimating expenditures due to the "cashless" nature of digital transactions. Their study supported a behavioural-economics interpretation but remained largely descriptive.

**19. KAUR AND SINGH (2022)**

The influence of digital payments on consumer behaviour in urban India was investigated. Their empirical analysis revealed that digital transactions encouraged more frequent discretionary spending and impulsive purchases due to lower transaction friction. However, the study was limited to urban samples and lacked comparative insights across geographical settings.

**20. GHOSE AND KARA (2022)**

The advent of Unified Payment Interface (UPI) in India has profoundly reshaped consumer spending patterns by promoting cashless transactions. UPI's seamless integration with smartphones and its widespread adoption, bolstered by government initiatives like "Digital India," have made it one of the most popular digital payment platforms. The convenience, speed, and incentives such as cash back offers and discounts have encouraged frequent usage of UPI, driving consumer spending.

**21. SONAL ADITYA JAIN, Dr. NAVIN MUKESH PUNJABI (2022)**

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**22. GHOSE, S., &KARAK,S.(2022)**

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**23. Rafee, B. M., Ramesh, V., Asan, S. J., Basha, A., & Zaheed, K. S. M. (2022)**

A survey on "Implications of Cashless Payments on the Spending Patterns of Urbanites in the Era of Digital India. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education*, 14(7)", the study findings suggest that the utilization of digital payments, credit cards, and pay-later options poses a threat to urban dwellers' saving habits, wealth creation, and long-term financial plans. This situation can result in increased interest payments for debt repayment, the growth of fintech entities, and the concentration of society's wealth in the hands of a few individuals. Consequently, this trend may exacerbate income inequality, leading to a scenario where the rich become wealthier while the poor become poorer in the country. The evolving lifestyle of millennials, coupled with the availability of online and mobile app-based loan options, has contributed to a rise in instances of debt-related fatalities in both semi-urban and urban areas. Additionally, there has been a significant surge in overspending, reduced saving rates, and a substantial burden of debt on households within society.

**24. Priya Kumar and Ravi Kant (2022)**

"Adoption of Digital Payments in Indian Retail Sector" integrates how pervasive smartphone availability and government incentives have revolutionized the use of digital payments at retail checkout points. Through analysis of retail payment data, they demonstrate that the transition is strongest among urban millennials and Gen-Z, who are less technophobia-prone and more willing to take advantage of digital rewards and loyalty.

**25. Bansal and Yadav(2023)**

To examine the integration of Jan Dhan accounts with UPI access in influencing consumption patterns. Their study, based on semi-urban households, showed a moderate shift towards formal spending channels but found limited evidence of improved financial discipline or savings. The research provides important groundwork but does not distinguish between essential and discretionary spending behaviours. In summary, while prior studies establish important links between digital finance and consumer behaviour, few provide a statistically rigorous, urban-rural comparative analysis of how digital payment adoption influences both overall expenditure and spending composition. This study aims to bridge that gap by examining behavioural outcomes using a structured inferential approach.

**26. Romny Ly and Bora Ly (2024)**

"Digital Payment Systems in an Emerging Economy" provides a comprehensive analysis of Cambodia, detailing how structural forces influence digital payment uptake. Tracing adoption levels through urban and rural divides, they identify young, educated groups as most likely to adopt new payment technologies, with infrastructure constraints and distrust narrowing penetration. The authors recommend the integration of financial literacy campaigns with enhancing digital infrastructure and regulatory surveillance to enable safe, sustainable digital finance development.

**27. Pruthvi Teja and Sai Sindhura Reddy (2024)**

In "Consumer Perception and Satisfaction on Digital Payment in Tier-2 India," the authors provide an essential rural and semi-urban insight. Their conclusions place strong emphasis on institutional trust and the education of users in the adoption of digital payments. They discover that digital literacy and mobile internet penetration are increasing, but that enduring gaps in infrastructure and perceptions of security continue to restrain universal uptake, underlining the need for additional user-focused designs and rural extension.

**28. RESERVE BANK OF INDIA (2024)**

They conducted a comprehensive assessment of the digital payment landscape, highlighting the surge in UPI transactions and a growing penetration of digital services in semi-urban and rural regions. However, the report also acknowledges the persistent digital divide, citing lower smartphone ownership, inconsistent connectivity, and limited financial literacy as barriers to adoption in rural households. While informative on infrastructural progress, the study does not evaluate behavioural outcomes such as spending shifts.

**29. Samit, Diya(October 23, 2025)**

This study looks at the effects of UPI adoption on consumer spending, savings, and habits like overspending. The study examines the psychological and economic mechanisms behind this shift using survey data from 169 participants. Behavioural finance concepts like the 'pain of paying' and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) are also used to understand the behavioural tendencies of UPI users.

**30. Md Ruhul Amin (2025)**

In "Impact of Digital Payment Systems on Consumer Behavior," emphasizes the Finnish urban environment is emphasized, where digital competence and bank trust underlie one of the strongest world adoptions of digital payments. By merging consumer surveys and transaction data analysis, Amin demonstrates that preference for digital payment is not simply a function of convenience, but increasingly a cultural and generational issue, with even older segments moving rapidly as national infrastructure facilitates unproblematic adoption.

**VII.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study is based on the financial, focusing on how digital payment system transactions to UPI influence financial services and consumer spending behaviour among the rural populations. The research examines how access to digital payment platforms improves banking accessibility, transaction convenience, and financial statements.

**A. Research Design**

This study adopted a quantitative research design. It aims to measure and analyze the impact of digital payments on online transactions on financial inclusion and consumer spending patterns in rural areas of Thamarapulam.

### B. Data Type

This study uses primary data and secondary data. In the primary data collected, the questionnaires were structured to directly collect data for people in the rural area of Thamarai pulam. In secondary data collected, the reviews of literature, and some important points of introduction were collected from journals and websites.

### C. Data Collection Methods

The data is collected using a structured questionnaire method. In questionnaires, the inclusion of demographic data such as Age, Gender, Monthly income, education, and occupation. It also includes options based on the questionnaires measured using a similar scale based on Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree.

### D. Sampling Methods

This study uses Simple Random sampling methods to select respondents from the rural area around Thamarai pulam. The data was collected through the survey methods directly.

### E. Variables

- Independent Variable: It is a digital payment system in around Thamarai pulam daily usage in UPI, including UPI and mobile transactions.
- Dependent Variable: Financial services and consumer spending behaviour in my questionnaire include usage, accessibility, saving patterns, and transaction frequency.

### F. Data Analysis Tools

This study's data is collected using a structured questionnaires based the data. This data was collected and analyzed using SPSS software.

- Descriptive Statistics
- Chi-Square Analysis
- Regression Analysis
- T-Test / ANOVA

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