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A STUDY OF MOBILE WALLET USAGE IN PALGHAR DISTRICT, MAHARASHTRA

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ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of digital payment systems has transformed the financial landscape of India, with mobile wallets emerging as a dominant mode of transaction. Government initiatives, increasing smartphone penetration, and the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) have accelerated the shift toward cashless payments. While metropolitan areas have shown high adoption levels, semi-urban and rural districts such as Palghar require focused empirical analysis. This study examines the extent of mobile wallet usage, factors influencing adoption, purposes of usage, and challenges faced by users in Palghar District. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to residents of the district. The findings reveal a high level of mobile wallet adoption, especially among youth and educated respondents, driven mainly by convenience and speed. However, challenges such as internet connectivity issues, security concerns, and limited digital literacy persist. The study highlights the need for targeted digital financial inclusion policies to ensure balanced regional development.

KEYWORDS: *Mobile Wallets, Digital Payments, UPI, Financial Inclusion, Palghar District*

1. INTRODUCTION

Digitalization of financial services has become a key driver of economic transformation in India. Mobile wallets enable users to store money electronically and conduct transactions such as bill payments, fund transfers, and retail purchases using smartphones. According to national statistics, India recorded mobile wallet transaction values of ₹202.8 lakh crore in 2023, which are projected to reach ₹531.8 lakh crore by 2028, growing at an annual rate of 18.3 percent.

Palghar District, carved out from Thane district, represents a unique socio-economic structure consisting of urban, semi-urban, rural, and tribal populations. The increasing penetration of smartphones and internet connectivity has created new opportunities for digital payment adoption in the district. However, regional disparities in infrastructure and digital literacy necessitate a localized study of mobile wallet usage patterns.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Previous studies indicate that convenience, ease of use, and promotional incentives significantly influence mobile wallet adoption. Research conducted across Indian cities suggests that younger populations exhibit higher adoption rates compared to older age groups. Studies also highlight security concerns and lack of digital awareness as major barriers to adoption, especially in rural areas.

A limited number of studies focusing on Palghar District reveal that university students demonstrate a strong preference for mobile wallets, primarily for peer-to-peer transfers and online transactions. However, comprehensive district-level analysis covering broader demographic groups remains limited, justifying the present study.

Sr. No.	Author(s)	Year	Methodology	Key Findings	Research Gap Identified
1	Davis, F.D.	1989	Theoretical Model Development (TAM)	Identified Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) as primary determinants of technology adoption.	Does not consider trust, security, or social influence factors relevant to mobile wallets in rural contexts.
2	Venkatesh et al.	2003	Theoretical Model (UTAUT) with empirical validation	Performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions significantly influence behavioural intention.	Model is generic; lacks district-level or rural-specific contextual application.

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3	Singh, N. et al.	2019	Quantitative survey; Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	Trust, perceived security, and ease of use significantly affect mobile wallet adoption in India.	Focused on urban users; limited rural representation.
4	Sharma, S.K. & Sharma, M.	2018	Survey-based empirical study	Social influence and compatibility with lifestyle strongly predict behavioural intention to use mobile wallets.	Did not examine post-adoption satisfaction or long-term usage patterns.
5	Gupta, K.P. & Arora, N.	2020	Extended TAM; PLS-SEM analysis	Personal innovativeness and anxiety significantly affect adoption intention.	Limited to specific age groups; lacks district-level micro analysis.
6	Patil, P. & Kulkarni, R.	2021	Survey of rural Maharashtra respondents	Digital literacy, trust, and familiarity influence rural mobile wallet usage.	Did not analyze demographic variations (gender, income, occupation).
7	Joshi, A.	2022	Descriptive research; questionnaire method (Palghar students)	Students prefer mobile wallets for convenience and speed; moderate security concerns observed.	Small sample size; focused only on university students in Palghar District.
8	Kaur, P. et al.	2020	Mixed-method study	Promotional offers and cashback significantly influence initial adoption.	Does not examine sustained usage or behavioural loyalty.
9	Sinha, M. & Singh, R.	2021	Quantitative rural women-focused study	Ease of use and social norms drive adoption; perceived risk acts as a barrier.	Limited geographic coverage; not district-specific.
10	RBI Digital Payments Report	2022	Secondary data analysis	Significant growth in digital payments across semi-urban and rural India.	Macro-level data; lacks micro-level district behavioural analysis.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the extent of mobile wallet usage in Palghar District.
2. To analyze factors influencing the adoption of mobile wallets.
3. To study the purposes for which mobile wallets are used.
4. To identify challenges faced by users while using mobile wallets.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

The study follows a descriptive and analytical research design.

4.2 Data Collection

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire. Secondary data were sourced from government reports, journals, and published studies.

4.3 Sample Size

A sample of **200 respondents** from Palghar District was selected using convenient sampling.

4.4 Tools of Analysis

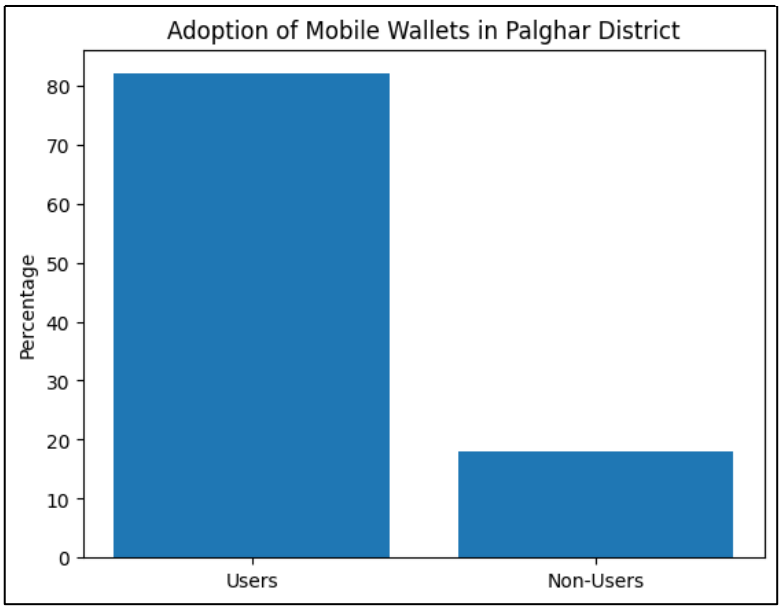
Data were analyzed using **percentage analysis and SPSS-style descriptive statistics**.

5. DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Adoption of Mobile Wallets

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	164	82.0
No	36	18.0
Total	**200**	**100.0**

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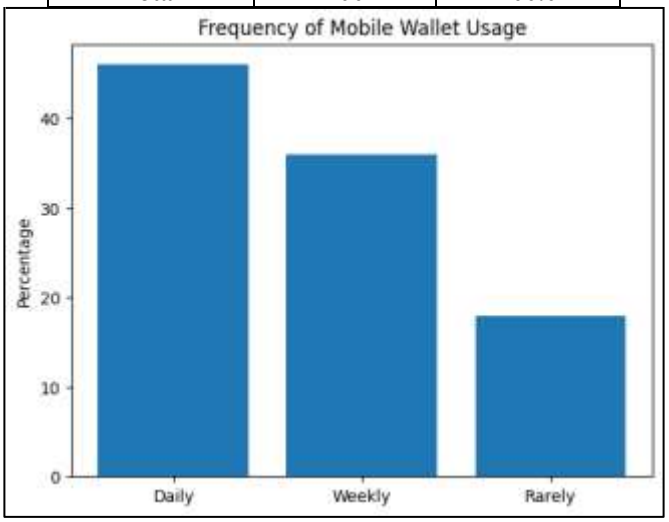


Interpretation

Figure 1 shows that **82 percent** of respondents use mobile wallets, while **18 percent** do not. This indicates a **high level of adoption** of mobile wallet services in Palghar District, reflecting increasing acceptance of digital payment systems even in semi-urban and rural regions.

Table 2: Frequency of Mobile Wallet Usage

Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	92	46.0
Weekly	72	36.0
Rarely	36	18.0
Total	**200**	**100.0**



Interpretation

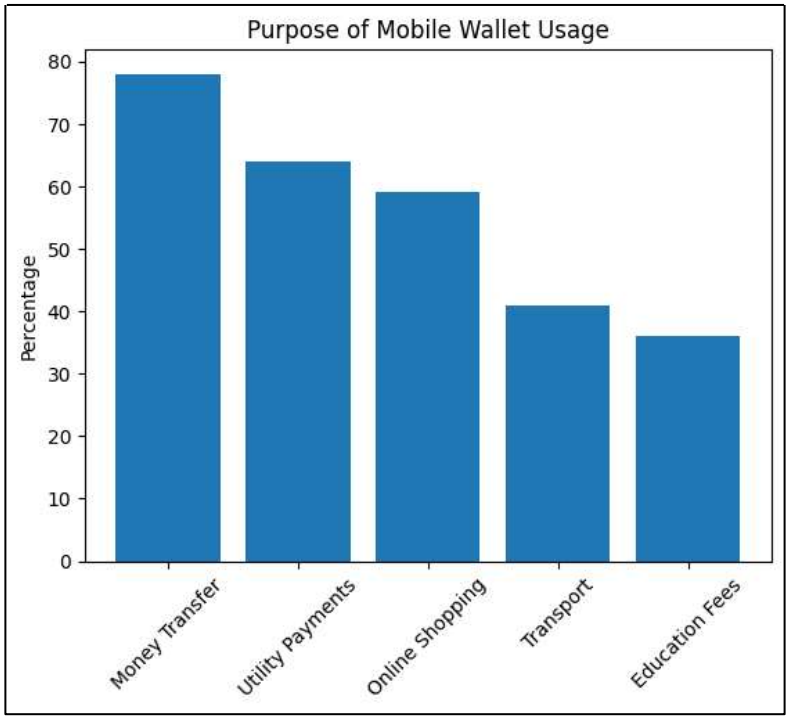
Figure 2 reveals that **46 percent** of respondents use mobile wallets on a **daily basis**, followed by **36 percent** who use them weekly. Only **18 percent** use mobile wallets rarely. This demonstrates that mobile wallets are not used occasionally but have become a **regular mode of transaction** for a large segment of users.

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Table 3: Purpose of Mobile Wallet Usage

Purpose	Frequency	Percentage
Money transfer	156	78.0
Utility payments	128	64.0
Online shopping	118	59.0
Transport	82	41.0
Educational fees	72	36.0

(Multiple responses)



Interpretation

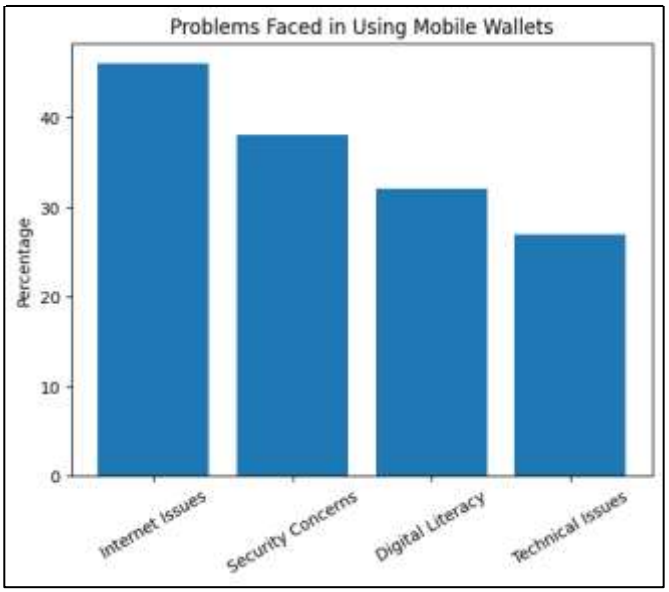
Figure 3 indicates that the primary purpose of mobile wallet usage is **money transfer (78%)**, followed by **utility bill payments (64%)** and **online shopping (59%)**. This suggests that mobile wallets are increasingly used for **essential financial transactions**, rather than being limited to non-essential or discretionary spending.

Table 4: Factors Influencing Adoption

Factor	Mean Score
Convenience & speed	4.32
Cashback & rewards	3.98
Ease of use	3.85
Contactless payment	3.61
Government initiatives	3.42

(5-point Likert Scale)

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Interpretation

Figure 4 highlights that **internet connectivity issues (46%)** are the most significant problem faced by users, followed by **security concerns (38%)** and **lack of digital literacy (32%)**. These findings indicate that despite high adoption, infrastructural and awareness-related challenges continue to hinder the smooth use of mobile wallets in Palghar District.

Table 5: Problems Faced While Using Mobile Wallets

Problem	Frequency	Percentage
Internet connectivity	92	46.0
Security concerns	76	38.0
Lack of digital literacy	64	32.0
Technical issues	54	27.0

Interpretation

Connectivity issues remain the most significant barrier, particularly in rural parts of Palghar District.

Table 6: Overall Satisfaction Level

Satisfaction Level	Frequency	Percentage
Highly satisfied	78	39.0
Satisfied	86	43.0
Neutral	22	11.0
Dissatisfied	14	7.0
Total	**200**	**100.0**

Interpretation

A large majority (82%) of respondents express satisfaction with mobile wallet services.

6. FINDINGS

1. Mobile wallet adoption in Palghar District is high.
2. Youth and educated users show higher frequency of usage.
3. Convenience is the most influential adoption factor.
4. Internet connectivity and security concerns remain major challenges.

7. SUGGESTIONS

1. Improve digital infrastructure in rural areas.
2. Conduct digital financial literacy programs.
3. Strengthen cybersecurity awareness among users.
4. Encourage local merchants to adopt QR-based payments.

8. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that mobile wallets have become an integral part of the payment ecosystem in Palghar District. While adoption levels are encouraging, addressing infrastructural and literacy-related challenges is essential to achieve inclusive digital financial growth. Focused policy interventions can significantly

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enhance the effectiveness of mobile wallets in promoting financial inclusion.

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