



Consumer Preferences and Influencing Factors in Mobile Handset Usage: A Regional Study of Maharashtra

Dr. Dnyaneshwar Ankushrao Yewale

Head, Dept. of Commerce, Kalikadevi Arts, Commerce and Science College Shirur (Kasar), Tq. Shirur (Kasar) Dist. Beed (MS)

ABSTRACT

The mobile handset industry in India has undergone rapid transformation in the past two decades due to technological innovation, affordability, and changing consumer lifestyles. This study explores the consumer behavior of mobile phone users across five regions of Maharashtra — Marathwada, Western Maharashtra, Kokan, Khandesh, and Vidarbha. Using primary data collected from 600 respondents during 2022–23, the research examines key factors influencing mobile handset selection, purchasing channels, preferred features, privacy concerns, and multimedia usage. The findings reveal that peer influence and franchise outlets dominate consumer decision-making, while quality and internet access are the most valued aspects of mobile phones.

Keywords: Mobile Handset Industry, Customer Behavior, purchasing channels, franchise.

1. Introduction

In the last two decades, the mobile handset industry in India has witnessed unprecedented growth, driven by technological innovation, falling prices, and the increasing penetration of the internet. Mobile phones are no longer just communication devices; they have become indispensable tools for information, education, business, and entertainment. The transformation of mobile phones into multi-functional smart devices has changed consumer lifestyles and preferences significantly.

Consumer behavior in mobile handset usage is influenced by multiple factors such as social recommendations, advertising, product quality, brand image, affordability, and multimedia features. At the same time, the choice of purchase channel—whether online, franchise outlets, or company-owned stores—reflects changing market dynamics. The availability of features like internet connectivity, high-definition cameras, sound quality, and multimedia facilities has further diversified consumer decision-making.

Maharashtra, being one of the most industrially advanced and demographically diverse states in India, provides an interesting case for studying these trends. The state's regions—Marathwada, Western Maharashtra, Kokan, Khandesh, and Vidarbha—differ not only in economic conditions but also in cultural and social practices, which directly influence consumer preferences. An analysis of these regional variations helps in understanding how mobile phone users select, purchase, and use their devices.

This research paper is an attempt to study the **influencing factors, purchase mediums, best aspects, multimedia facilities, privacy considerations, and feature preferences** of mobile phone users across these five regions of Maharashtra. The study is based on primary data collected from 600 respondents during 2022–23. The findings will provide insights into consumer behavior patterns and guide mobile handset companies in framing effective marketing and product strategies tailored to regional needs.

2. Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the most influential factors affecting cell phone selection.
2. To analyze the preferred channels for purchasing cell phones.
3. To examine the aspects of mobile phones most valued by consumers.
4. To study multimedia facilities and features preferred by respondents.
5. To assess consumer perception of privacy regarding information stored in mobile phones.

3.1 Research Methodology

The study is based on **primary data** collected from **600 respondents** across five major regions of Maharashtra: Marathwada, Western Maharashtra, Konkan, Khandesh, and Vidarbha during **2021–22**. A structured questionnaire was administered to collect data, which was analyzed using descriptive statistics, percentages, and tabular presentations.

- **Sample Size:** 600 respondents (120 per region)
- **Sampling Method:** Stratified random sampling
- **Analysis Tools:** Descriptive statistics, percentages, and tabular presentations

3.2 Literature Review

The study of consumer behavior in mobile handset selection and usage has attracted considerable attention from researchers, particularly in the past decade with the rapid expansion of smartphones. Several studies highlight that consumer preferences are shaped by a combination of social influence, product features, brand perception, and affordability.

Social Influence:

Kotler (2017) emphasizes that peer groups and family members play a critical role in shaping consumer decisions, particularly in durable goods like mobile phones. Similar findings were reported by Ling et al. (2012), who observed that young consumers are strongly influenced by friends and colleagues in adopting new mobile technologies.

Product Features and Quality:

According to **Karjaluoto et al. (2005)**, factors such as design, quality, camera, internet access, and multimedia functions are key determinants in mobile handset selection. A study by Aydin and Özer (2005) also indicated that consumers perceive product quality and brand image as central to their satisfaction and long-term loyalty.

Price Sensitivity and Purchase Mediums:

Research by **Duhan and Sheth (2010)** suggests that pricing plays a significant role in handset choice, particularly in developing markets where affordability influences adoption rates. With the growth of e-commerce, Sharma and Mehta (2017) note that online platforms are becoming increasingly popular for mobile purchases, though offline franchise outlets remain dominant in many regions due to trust and accessibility.

Multimedia Facilities and Internet Usage:

Srivastava (2015) highlighted that internet access and multimedia functions such as cameras and music players are critical motivators for smartphone adoption in India. Similarly, a Statista (2018) report showed that mobile internet penetration in India has driven the demand for smartphones, making internet availability the most valued feature for users.

Privacy Concerns:

With the growing usage of smartphones for financial and personal data storage, privacy has emerged as a key concern. According to **Smith et al. (2011)**, consumer attitudes toward privacy vary, with some users being highly protective while others show only moderate concern. In the Indian context, Mishra (2019) noted that while awareness about data privacy is increasing, many users still underestimate risks associated with digital storage.

Regional Variations in Consumer Behavior:

Studies like those of **Singh and Goyal (2016)** have shown that regional differences in income levels, education, and lifestyle lead to variations in mobile usage patterns within states. Maharashtra, with its economic and cultural diversity, provides an important case for analyzing how such variations shape consumer preferences.

Research Gap:

While numerous studies have examined mobile phone usage at the national level, limited research has focused on regional analysis within a single state. This study attempts to fill that gap by analyzing how influencing factors, purchase channels, and feature preferences vary across five regions of Maharashtra — Marathwada, Western Maharashtra, Konkan, Khandesh, and Vidarbha.

4. Data Collection and Analysis (About Hand Set)

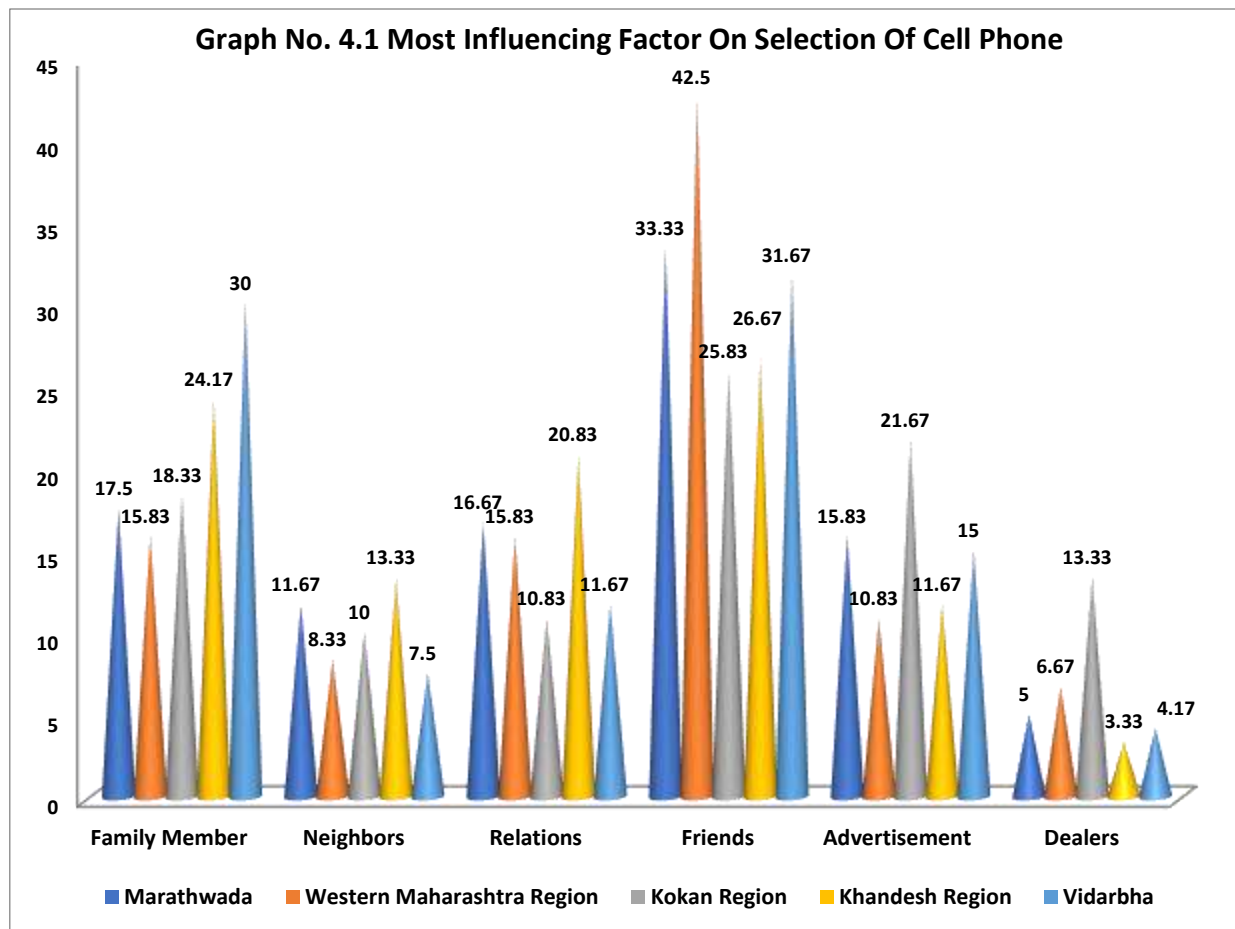
4.1 Most Influencing Factor On Selection Of Cell Phone

Table No.4.1

Most Influencing Factor On Selection Of Cell Phone

Influencing Factors.	Marathwada Region		Western Maharashtra Region		Kokan Region		Khandesh Region		Vidarbha Region		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Family Member	21	17.50	19	15.83	22	18.33	29	24.17	36	30.00	127	21.17
Neighbors	14	11.67	10	8.33	12	10.00	16	13.33	9	7.50	61	10.17
Relations	20	16.67	19	15.83	13	10.83	25	20.83	14	11.67	91	15.17
Friends	40	33.33	51	42.50	31	25.83	32	26.67	38	31.67	192	32.00
Advertisement	19	15.83	13	10.83	26	21.67	14	11.67	18	15.00	90	15.00
Dealers	6	5.00	8	6.67	16	13.33	4	3.33	5	4.17	39	6.50
Total	120	100.00	120	100.00	120	100.00	120	100.00	120	100.00	600	100.00

Source:- Primary Data. (2022-23)



The most influencing factor on selection of cell phone are shown in the table no. 4.1 The maximum respondents said that their influencing factor was friend i.e. 32.00% after that family members are 21.17% and only 6.50% respondents said dealers influenced them. These factors are same in the regions of the Maharashtra state.

The respondents having friends were observed maximum in the Western Maharashtra region 42.50% and minimum 25.83% in the Kokan region. After that respondents having family member's influence were observed maximum in the Vidarbha region 30% and minimum 15.83% in the Western Maharashtra region. Lastly respondents having relation's influence were observed maximum in the Khandesh region 20.83% and minimum 10.83% in the Kokan region.

It is therefore concluded that the most influencing factor in selection of cell phone was friends.

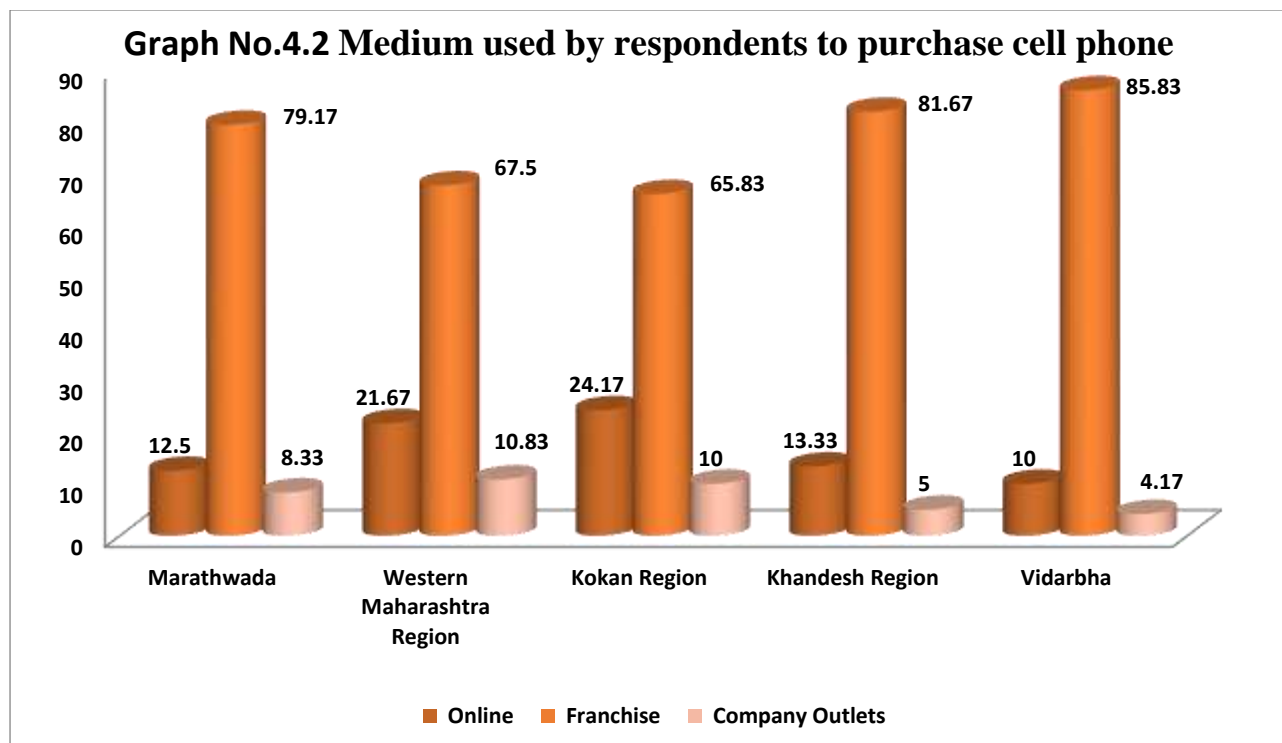
4.2 Medium used by respondents to purchase cell phone

Table No.4.2

Medium used by respondents to purchase cell phone

Channel	Marathwada Region		Western Maharashtra Region		Kokan Region		Khandesh Region		Vidarbha Region		Total	
	f	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Online	15	12.50	26	21.67	29	24.17	16	13.33	12	10.00	98	16.33
Franchise	95	79.17	81	67.50	79	65.83	98	81.67	103	85.83	456	76.00
Company Outlets	10	8.33	13	10.83	12	10.00	6	5.00	5	4.17	46	7.67
Total	120	100.00	120	100.00	120	100.00	120	100.00	120	100.00	600	100.00

Source:- Primary Data. (2022-23)



The table No.4.2 indicate the medium used by respondents to purchase cell phone. Maximum number of the respondents purchased cell phone through franchise i.e. 76.00%. below that 16.33% are the percentage of online purchase and only 7.67% respondents have purchased through company outlets.

The respondents purchasing cell phone from franchise were observed maximum in the Vidarbha region 85.83% and minimum 65.83% in the Kokan region. After that respondents purchasing cell phone from online were observed maximum in the Western Maharashtra region 21.67% and minimum 10% in the Vidarbha region. Lastly respondents using company outlets as a medium for purchasing cell phone were maximum in the Western Maharashtra region 10.83% and only 4.17% in the Vidarbha region.

From the above table, it is found that the medium of purchasing cell phone from franchise is the most dominant factors.

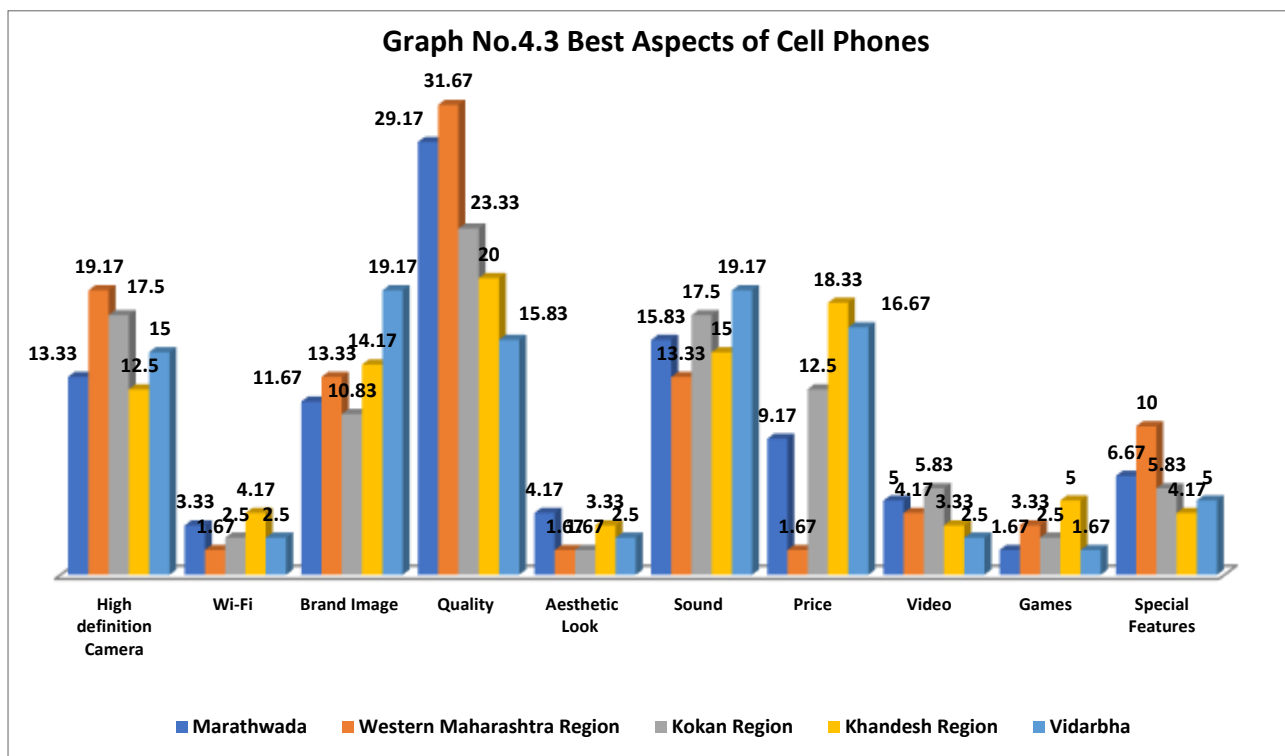
4.3 Best Aspects of Cell Phones

Table No.4.3

Best Aspects of Cell Phones

Best Aspects	Marathwada Region		Western Maharashtra Region		Kokan Region		Khandesh Region		Vidarbha Region		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
High definition Camera	16	13.33	23	19.17	21	17.50	15	12.50	18	15.00	93	15.50
Wi-Fi	4	3.33	2	1.67	3	2.50	5	4.17	3	2.50	17	2.83
Brand Image	14	11.67	16	13.33	13	10.83	17	14.17	23	19.17	83	13.83
Quality	35	29.17	38	31.67	28	23.33	24	20.00	19	15.83	144	24.00
Aesthetic Look	5	4.17	2	1.67	2	1.67	4	3.33	3	2.50	16	2.67
Sound	19	15.83	16	13.33	21	17.50	18	15.00	23	19.17	97	16.17
Price	11	9.17	2	1.67	15	12.50	22	18.33	20	16.67	70	11.67
Video	6	5.00	5	4.17	7	5.83	4	3.33	3	2.50	25	4.17
Games	2	1.67	4	3.33	3	2.50	6	5.00	2	1.67	17	2.83
Special Features	8	6.67	12	10.00	7	5.83	5	4.17	6	5.00	38	6.33
Total	120	100.00	120	100.00	120	100.00	120	100.00	120	100.00	600	100.00

Source:- Primary Data. (2022-23)



The analysis of collected data as indicated in table 4.3 shows that 144 (24%) of respondent's best aspect of cell phone was quality which included maximum 29.17% respondents in the Marathwada region and minimum of 15.83% in the Vidarbha region. After 97 (16.17%) of respondents best aspect of cell phone was sound this included maximum 19.17% respondents in the Vidarbha region and minimum of 13.33% in the Western Maharashtra region. Nextly 93 (15.50%) of respondents best aspect of cell phone was high definition camera which included maximum 19.17% respondents in the Western Maharashtra region and minimum of 12.50% in the Khandesh region. While 83 (13.83%) of respondents best aspect of cell phone was brand image which included maximum 19.17% respondents in the Vidarbha region, minimum of 10.83% in the Kokan region and other not more than 12%

From the above table it is found that the most dominant factor for using best cell phones is quality.

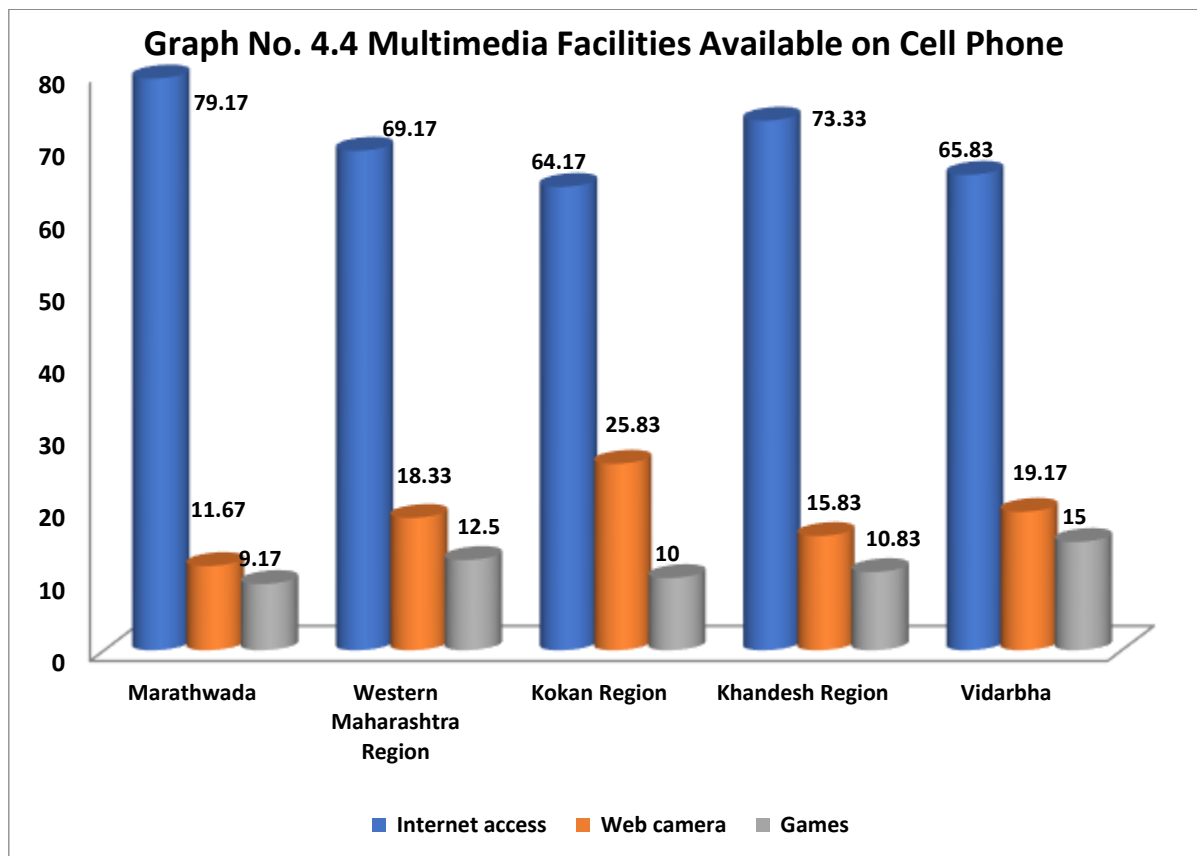
4.4 Multimedia Facilities Available on Cell Phone

Table No.4.4

Multimedia Facilities Available on Cell Phone

Particulars	Marathwada Region		Western Maharashtra Region		Kokan Region		Khandesh Region		Vidarbha Region		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Internet access	95	79.17	83	69.17	77	64.17	88	73.33	79	65.83	422	70.33
Web camera	14	11.67	22	18.33	31	25.83	19	15.83	23	19.17	109	18.17
Games	11	9.17	15	12.50	12	10.00	13	10.83	18	15.00	69	11.50
Total	120	100.00	120	100.00	120	100.00	120	100.00	120	100.00	600	100.00

Source:- Primary Data. (2022-23)



The analysis of collected data as indicated in table 4.4 shows that 422 (70.33%) of respondents cell phone had internet access available on cell phone included maximum 79.17% respondents in the Marathwada region and minimum of 64.17% in the Kokan region. While 109 (18.17%) of respondents cell phone had web camera available on included maximum 25.83% respondents in the Kokan region and minimum of 11.67% in the Marathwada region and only 69 (11.50%) respondents had games available on the cell phone.

It is found that most of the respondent 70.33% use cell phone for internet access.

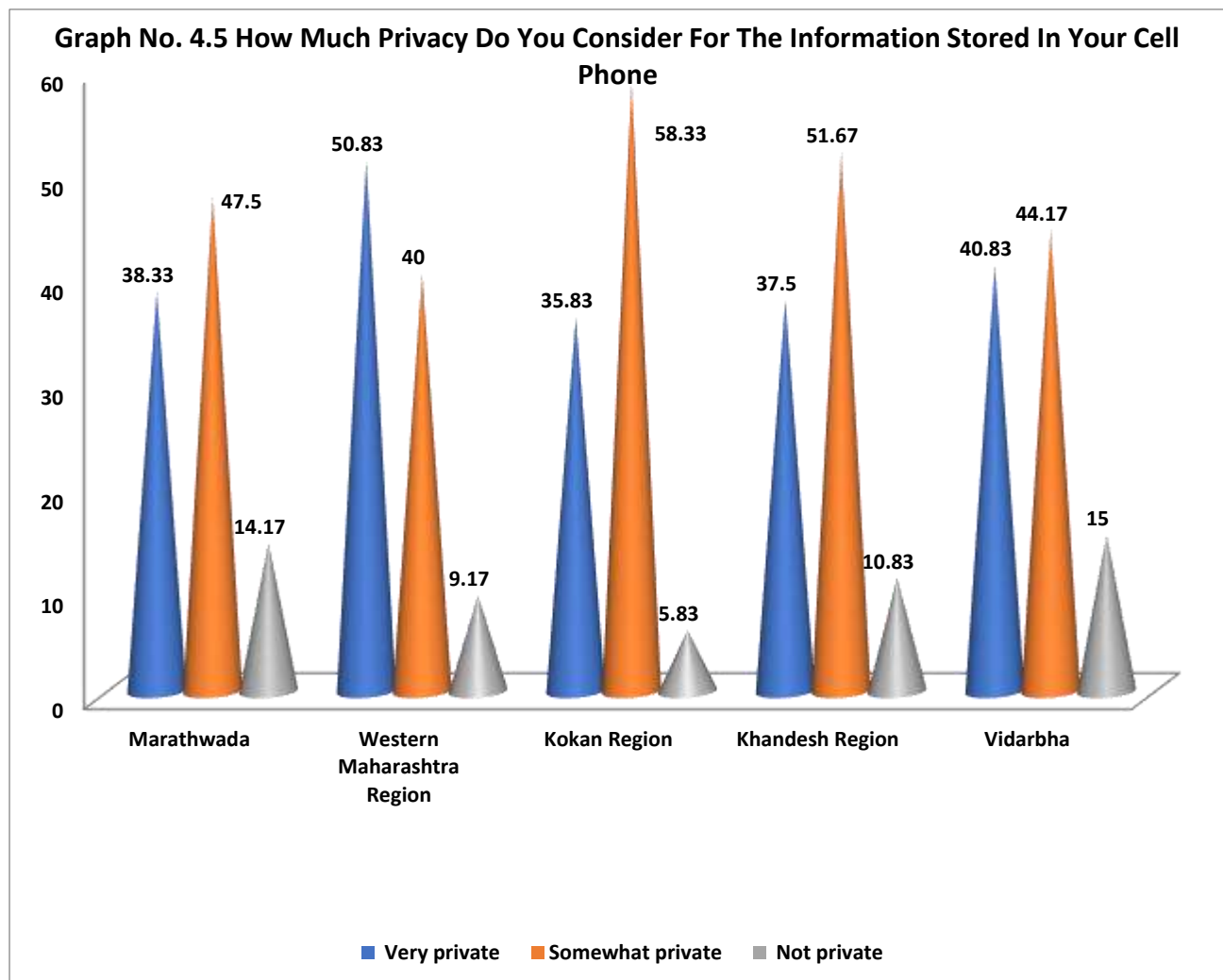
4.5 How Much Privacy Do You Consider For The Information Stored In Your Cell Phone

Table No.4.5

How Much Privacy Do You Consider For The Information Stored In Your Cell Phone

Response	Marathwada Region		Western Maharashtra Region		Kokan Region		Khandesh Region		Vidarbha Region		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very private	46	38.33	61	50.83	43	35.83	45	37.50	49	40.83	244	40.67
Some what private	57	47.50	48	40.00	70	58.33	62	51.67	53	44.17	290	48.33
Not private	17	14.17	11	9.17	7	5.83	13	10.83	18	15.00	66	11.00
Total	120	100.00	120	100.00	120	100.00	120	100.00	120	100.00	600	100.00

Source:- Primary Data. (2022-23)



The analysis of collected data is indicated in table 4.5 shows that 290 (48.33%) of respondents had some privacy for the information stored in their cell phone which included maximum 58.33% respondents in the Kokan region and minimum of 40% in the Western Maharashtra region. While 244 (40.67%) respondents had very private concern for the information stored in their cell phone included maximum 50.83% the Western Maharashtra region and minimum 35.83% in the Kokan region and not private not more than 11%.

It is found that 48.33% respondents said that their cell phone was having some what private information.

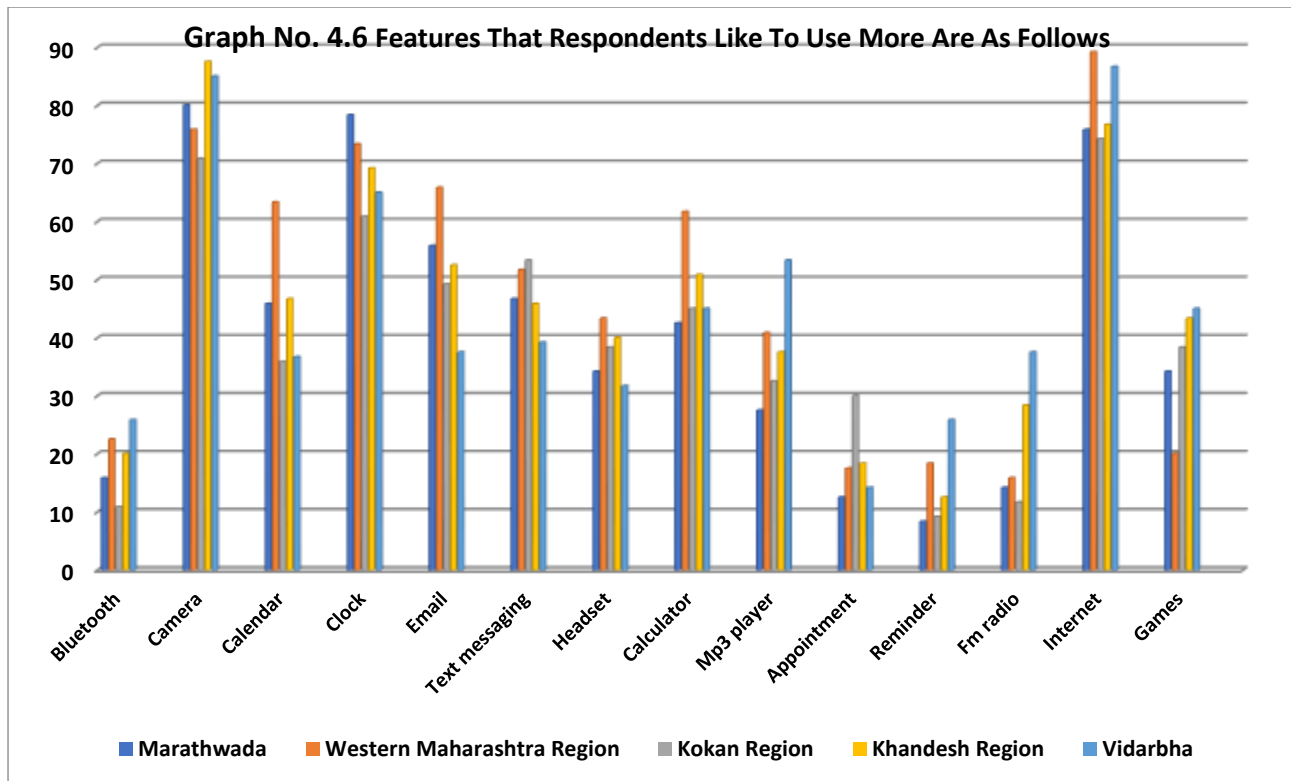
4.6 Features That Respondents Like To Use More Are As Follows

Table No.4.6

Features That Respondents Like To Use More Are As Follows

Particulars	Marathwada Region		Western Maharashtra Region		Kokan Region		Khandesh Region		Vidarbha Region		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bluetooth	19	15.83	27	22.50	13	10.83	24	20.00	31	25.83	114	19.00
											(600)	(100)
Camera	96	80.00	91	75.83	85	70.83	105	87.50	102	85.00	479	79.83
											(600)	(100)
Calendar	55	45.83	76	63.33	43	35.83	56	46.67	44	36.67	274	45.67
											(600)	(100)
Clock	94	78.33	88	73.33	73	60.83	83	69.17	78	65.00	416	69.33
											(600)	(100)
Email	67	55.83	79	65.83	59	49.17	63	52.50	45	37.50	313	52.17
											(600)	(100)
Text messaging	56	46.67	62	51.67	64	53.33	55	45.83	47	39.17	284	47.33
											(600)	(100)
Headset	41	34.17	52	43.33	46	38.33	48	40.00	38	31.67	225	37.50
											(600)	(100)
Calculator	51	42.50	74	61.67	54	45.00	61	50.83	54	45.00	294	49.00
											(600)	(100)
Mp3 player	33	27.50	49	40.83	39	32.50	45	37.50	64	53.33	230	38.33
											(600)	(100)
Appointment	15	12.50	21	17.50	36	30.00	22	18.33	17	14.17	111	18.50
											(600)	(100)
Reminder	10	8.33	22	18.33	11	9.17	15	12.50	31	25.83	89	14.83
											(600)	(100)
Fm radio	17	14.17	19	15.83	14	11.67	34	28.33	45	37.50	129	21.50
											(600)	(100)
Internet	91	75.83	107	89.17	89	74.17	92	76.67	104	86.67	483	80.50
											(600)	(100)
Games	41	34.17	24	20.00	46	38.33	52	43.33	54	45.00	217	36.17
											(600)	(100)

Source:- Primary Data. (2022-23)



In the following table no. 4.6 features of cell phone used by respondents is presented. Out of 600 respondents highest number respondents 483 (80.50%) said that they like to use internet facility more. Were as 479 (79.83%) respondents they like to use camera, after 416 (67.33%) respondents they like to use clock, 313 (52.17%) of the respondents they like to use Email, 294 (49%) of the respondents they like to use calculator, 284 (47.33%) of the respondents they like to use Text messaging, 274 (45.67%) of the respondents they like to use calendar, 230 (38.33%) of the respondents they like to use Mp3 player, 225 (37.50%) of the respondents they like to use headset, 217 (36.17%) of the respondents they like to use games, 119 (21.50%) of the respondents they like to use Fm radio, 114 (19%) of the respondents they like to use bluetooth, 111 (18.50%) of the respondents they like to use appointment and reminder are 89 (14.83%) respondents are only.

It is found that 80.50% respondents said that they like to use internet services in cell phone.

5. Findings

1. Friends are the most influential factor in cell phone selection.
2. Franchises are the most common purchase channel across regions.
3. Consumers value **quality** and **internet connectivity** above other aspects.
4. Most users access the internet on their phones, showing growing digital dependency.
5. Privacy is a concern, but not absolute, indicating a gap in awareness.
6. Internet and camera are the most used features, reflecting a shift towards social media and online communication.

6. Conclusion

The present study highlights the changing dynamics of consumer behavior in mobile handset selection, purchase, and usage across five regions of Maharashtra. The findings show that **social influence, particularly from friends, plays the most significant role** in handset selection, while family members and relations also contribute to the decision-making process. Dealers, however, have minimal influence on consumers.

In terms of purchasing channels, **franchise outlets dominate** as the most preferred medium across all regions, though online purchasing has emerged as a growing trend, especially in Western Maharashtra. This reflects a balance between traditional trust-based buying behavior and the rising influence of digital commerce.

Regarding product attributes, **quality emerged as the most valued aspect**, followed by sound and high-definition cameras. While features like games and Wi-Fi were acknowledged, they were not primary determinants of satisfaction. The analysis of multimedia facilities revealed that **internet access is the most essential and widely used feature**, emphasizing the central role of digital connectivity in consumers' daily lives.

The study also found that while a considerable portion of respondents considered the information stored on their phones to be private, the majority categorized it as only *somewhat private*. This indicates a moderate level of concern for data security and points towards the need for greater awareness regarding digital privacy.

In terms of feature preferences, **internet and camera usage dominate consumer behavior**, followed by practical utilities like clock, email, calculator, and text messaging. Entertainment features such as games, MP3 players, and FM radio were moderately popular but secondary to functional and connectivity-related applications.

Overall, the study concludes that **consumers in Maharashtra are highly influenced by peers, prefer franchise-based purchases, and prioritize quality and internet connectivity in mobile phones**. While entertainment functions are appreciated, practical features and online access remain central to user preferences. Mobile handset companies should therefore focus on strengthening peer-driven marketing strategies, ensuring product quality, expanding franchise networks, and enhancing internet-based features to meet consumer expectations.

7. Suggestions

1. **Mobile companies** should strengthen their franchise networks but also enhance online sales strategies.
2. **Marketing campaigns** should emphasize quality, internet speed, and camera performance to appeal to young users.
3. **Privacy awareness programs** should be introduced to educate consumers on data safety.
4. **Product innovation** should focus on internet-driven applications, long battery life, and durability.
5. **Regional customization** may help as preferences slightly differ across Marathwada, Vidarbha, Kokan, and other regions.

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