

Attention Economy & Marketing Strategies in India

Dr. Ajinkya G. Deshpande

Assistant Professor, Commerce Department, R.S. Mundle Dharampeth Arts & Commerce College,
Nagpur

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51583/IJLTEMAS.2026.150300071>

Received: 28 March 2026; Accepted: 02 April 2026; Published: 16 April 2026

ABSTRACT

Due to hectic working hours and rapidly expanding digital infrastructure and usage of information and technology tools, there is bombarding of information. Due flood of information the human attention has become scarce. The average time spend by an Indian on mobile is more than 4.5 hours and total screen time is as about 7 to 8 hrs. Especially after covid the screen time habit shows increasing trend. With heavy population of 140 crore and high screen time the marketers see huge opportunity to promote the product. But attentions of the viewers is the biggest problem for them. The current paper aims to study the attention economy in India and the various marketing strategies used by the marketer to capture and convert the captured attention into revenue. Different strategies like visual hooks, flash sales, AI tools and many more are used to increase the sales turnover by the marketers.

Keywords: Attention economy, Orange Economy, Digital ecosystem, Influencer Marketing.

Objectives of Study:

- 1) To study the concept and relevance of Attention Economy in context of India.
- 2) To analyze the role of digital platform in Attention economy.
- 3) To identify different avenues for business in Attention Economy.
- 4) To examine the challenges related to ethics and regulations related to Attention Economy.
- 5) To propose recommendations for policy related to sustainable development in the context of Attention Economy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present paper is a Qualitative and explorative research based on renowned journals, Govt publications and other online sources.

INTRODUCTION

(Simon, 1971), The word 'Attention Economy' was first coined and explained by the Nobel Prize winner Psychologist and economist Herbert A. Simon. He introduced this concept in an article in 1971 in 'Designing Organisation for an Information-Rich World'. He said wealth of information creates scarcity of attention which make attention an important resource. While Simon introduced attention economy but in 1997 author and researcher Michael Goldhaber further expanded this concept.

The scarcity of a commodity makes that commodity a resource or wealth, it may be a machinery, money, land, gold or even time. In this digital world where there is flood of information of all kind, attention is vital.

This is a digital world where all the emotional expressions are showed in the form of likes, views, shares, chats and comments time and attention of viewers are scares resource. The hectic life style and tight working hour results in paucity of available time for social and personal time. In this background, due to internet and Information Technology revolution there is a flood of information. But due to lack of available time to scan such

information, attention become a crucial element. For a marketer *time & attention of the viewer* is as precious as *Gold*. The attention of the people become very important as the time is less. This attention is used by the marketers for commercial purpose. Thus, more interesting pictures, punchline, voice and colour compel the viewer to watch the screen as compared to boring and repetitive commercials. Thus, each second's attention is vital for the marketer.

In this Digital Ecosystem, attention ecosystem is very important. Digital ecosystem means a dynamic interconnected network that collaborate the digital platform to create a value. Digital ecosystem includes AI, Cloud computing, blockchain, IoT etc. The marketer uses this digital ecosystem to promote a particular brand or product.

(Behera, 2024), Globally there are 8.3 billion people in the world. Out of these 6.04 billion people are internet users, and 5.66 billion use social media. In other words, 72.77% of the global population is using internet. There are 1.34 billion websites but only 17% of the total are active. The total internet data globally is estimated to 1.82 zettabytes. The use of internet in India is growing extremely fast. In terms of number India is the second largest user of internet after China. There are 1 billion internet users in India, which is 68.66% of the total population of India. Majority of the Indian population prefer social media, online shopping and reels on entertainment and music. India had over 1.26 billion cellular mobile users. The urban users in India accounts for 57.21% and for rural users it is 42.79% of the total users, which indicates more penetration in urban areas compared to rural areas. The top internet user State in India includes Kerala, Goa and Maharashtra having 72%, 71% and 70% of their population respectively. Amongst the State using least internet includes Bihar, UP and Jharkhand with 43%, 46% and 50% of their population. Out of the internet users 54% are male and 46% are female. The age wise statistics of the internet users are as follows: -

Age group	% of Internet Users
12-17 Years	22%
18-34 Years	29.2%
35-54 Years	25.6%
55 year and older	15.3%

As per the above table about 50% of the internet user are between the age group of 12 to 34 i.e comparatively young age group. The marketers frame marketing strategies to catch the attention of this age group in particular.

In 2026 the per head data use is about 3 GB per day.

(India, 2025), the time spent on internet can be shown in following table:

Category	Time spent on internet
Internet	6 Hrs 49 Minutes
Internet (Mobile Phone)	3 hrs 57 minutes
Internet (Laptop, Desktop and Tablet)	2 hrs 52 minutes
Social media	2 hrs 28 minutes
Music streaming	1 hr 49 minutes
TV (Streaming and online)	1 hr 43 minutes
TV (Linear or Broadcast)	1 hr 41 minutes
Games Console	1 hr 31 minutes
Podcasts	1 hr 19 minutes
Press (online)	1 hr 15 minutes

The Google's Year in search: India indicates the most searches and time spend on searched topics which shows- IPL, Women's World Cup, ICC trophy, Mahakumbh mela and many more. It is also reported that 43% of the internet users use English language, 24% Hindi and 6% in Tamil, Marathi 3% and other languages comprising remaining. The average internet penetration is about 68.49%. In India most of the internet user watch online games, reels/video, social media, music and online purchases.

(Basuroy, 2024), The Indian viewers spends hours on social media, following table shows time spend on different social media platform

Platform	Traffic share
Facebook	64.03%
Instagram	25.61%
Youtube	6.07%
X-Twitter	1.75%
Pinterest	1.69%

Obviously with such a huge people using internet there are greater chances of cyber-attacks, statistics shows that 28% of global malware attracts in India. Hospitality and Healthcare sectors affects by 350 million cyber-attacks. In 2025, a loss of ₹ 36,450 crores. Maharashtra, Gujrat and Delhi are the states where most of the cyber-attacks are targeted by cyber attackers with 36.1 million, 24.1 million and 15.4 million respectively.

In 2026, there are many people using e-commerce platform for online purchases; the following table shows users of different online platforms for online purchases-

Platforms	Monthly visits in millions
Amazon	530.8 million
Flipkart India	215.3 million
Myntra	113.8 million
Meesho	54.7 million
Indiamart	54.4 million

The above statistics shows that India is amongst the top internet users' country. With huge population, mobile access and internet penetration in India, the marketers have huge opportunity to market their products or services.

Attention Economy and Marketing Strategies:

With huge population base, internet penetration of about 70% and boom in social media use, the Indian people are spending significant time in front of screen. This gives an immense opportunity to the marketers for the promotional activities. The only challenge faced by the marketer is the attention of the viewers. In this information flooded world, focus and attention is like a currency. Every attention is like currency for the marketer. Capturing, sustaining and converting the attention into engagement and creating positive image of product is a challenge for every marketer. Every marketer tries to capture the attention of viewers and try to convert the attention into sales. (West, 2025), As per a study, millions of messages and advertisements are bombarded every second on the people, at least 2.5 seconds are required for focused attention on any advertisement. The marketers have to fight a difficult battle for seeking the attention of the viewers. The markets use many effective strategies to promote their products or services which includes.

Influencer Marketing:

Influencer marketing has an important place in the attention economy. There are various people who trust influencers and follow them blindly. This is used by the marketer to promote their products. You tube influencers and Instagram reels play an important role in capturing the attention of the people towards the product. For example, for promoting a health drink, the marketer may use influencer for sports /nutrient /yoga or like activities.

Personalised Recommendation:

With the use of AI tools, the personal recommendations are very much possible. It given more opportunity for the user to understand the product more deeply. It increases the attention span which increases the probability of future sale.

Use of AI tools:

The AI tools are the backbone of attention economy. The AI tools includes platform like YouTube, Facebook reels, generative AI and attention measuring platform like Lumen etc.

Brand ambassador:

The Indian people follow the celebrities particularly from Film industry/Bollywood or from cricketing world. For securing the attention the marketers use these celebrities as millions of people like the celebrities. The celebrities like Shahrukh Khan, Amitabh Bacchan, Sachin Tendulkar and many more are endorsed for the promotion of their products.

Guerrilla Marketing:

Guerrilla marketing uses unconventional, low cost and highly creative and effective to promote a product or a service. In Guerrilla marketing surprise of the target is key factor. It includes Ambient marketing, Ambush marketing and Street marketing. For example, sudden breaks in a TV serial or Film or in reels.

Content Personalisation:

It is tailoring digital contents to match the specific interest, experience and preference of a person. For example, e-commerce platforms like Flipkart and Amazon recommends certain product or shopping based on previous purchases made by a person.

Visual hooks:

Visual hooks in attention economy means use of certain bright colour, logo, picture to capture the attention of the viewers. For example, YouTube thumbnails, cuts in reels, Tourism ads shot by drones, sudden visual effect and many more.

Flash sales /Limited time offers:

All the consumers want to purchase goods at a heavy discount. Flash sale or heavy discount for a very short time is the most effective tool used by marketer. For seeking the attention heavy discount or offers increases the attention. For example, heavy discount of 60% till 5 pm today or up to certain date is very effective way to seek the attention of the viewers.

Orange Economy Vs Attention Economy:

(India, 2026), both the terms ‘Orange Economy’ and ‘Attention Economy’ are closely related. While Orange Economy is related to creativity, culture and Intellectual Property; Attention economy. The main difference are as follows-

Orange economy	Attention economy
The core resources are creativity and intellectual property	The core resources are human attention and time
It includes films, design, gaming digital arts etc	It includes social media advertising, influencer marketing etc
It has the risk of IP theft	It has a risk of addiction, misinformation etc

Challenges for the Marketers:

The markets may face many challenges in future with respect to attention economy, it includes:

1) Over exposure of online ads:

One of the biggest challenges for the marketers of the attention economy is the already exhausted viewers because of over exposure of online ads. This make the viewers uninterest in any further ads. After a certain time, this factor becomes very important for the marketer.

2) Lack of trust:

It is also a common mentality that the viewers are lacking trust on the ads. Due to this genuine ad also suffers. This creates many problems for the marketers.

3) Privacy:

There are various issues relating to the data privacy. The data of the viewers may be commercially used which may create a problem for the viewers.

4) Misinformation:

At various time the advertisement claims some thing which are not practically possible. Exaggerated claims can mislead the viewers. The customer after believing in the advertisement may feel cheated. There are various serious problems created due to misinformation in the ads.

5) Digital Divide:

Although in the modern age every body is equipped with mobile phone and internet, but due to economic backwardness and infrastructural problems in rural areas there may be a problem of digital divide. The people in rural areas may face difficulties of internet connectivity and power shortage.

6) Mental Health:

Due to over use of mobile the mental health issue may arise it may be related to attention and focus. This is the biggest probable challenge for the marketer in attention economy.

CONCLUSION

The Attention Economy in India accounts to nearly 1.7 to 2 lakh crores including over 3,300 crore accounting for micro and nano influencers in 2026 and it nearly contributes 2.3% of GDP. Such promising figure indicates optimistic future for the marketers to promote the products. The viewers use digital media for their entertainment, investment, education, online shopping, searching information, social media etc. The marketers use the digital platform to target these platforms intelligently to seek the attention for few seconds and advertisement his product. The consumers may be empowered or exploited in this digital world. It is sometimes effective but at the same time the ethical issues like privacy and misinformation should not be neglected. Attention economy is a sea of opportunity which creates jobs and innovative start-ups. The attention economy has a great impact on the Indian Economy in these digital eras. In future the Attention economy will shape digital future.

REFERENCES

1. India, O. (2026, February 11). Orange Economy Of India And Attention Economy Risks | Techno Legal Online Dispute Resolution Services In India. Odrindia.in. https://www.odrindia.in/2026/02/11/orange-economy-of-india-and-attention-economy-risks/?utm_source=copilot.com
2. Simon, H. (1971). Designing Organizations for an Information-Rich World. The Johns Hopkins Press. <https://gwern.net/doc/design/1971-simon.pdf>
3. Basuroy, T. (2024, November 5). India: leading social media sites 2023. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1115648/india-leading-social-media-sites/>
4. Behera, T. R. (2024, September 10). Internet Statistics in India: Usage and Penetration Rate (2026). GrabOn's Indulge - Online Shopping Tips, Buying Guide, Savings. https://www.grabon.in/indulge/tech/internet-users-statistics/?utm_source=copilot.com
5. India. (2025, November 5). DataReportal – Global Digital Insights. DataReportal – Global Digital Insights. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2026-india>

6. India, O. (2026, February 11). Orange Economy Of India And Attention Economy Risks | Techno Legal Online Dispute Resolution Services In India. Odrindia.in. <https://www.odrindia.in/2026/02/11/orange-economy-of-india-and-attention-economy-risks/>
7. Simon, H. (1971). Designing Organizations for an Information-Rich World. The Johns Hopkins Press. <https://gwnet.net/doc/design/1971-simon.pdf>
8. West, P. (2025). Marketing in 2025: winning in the attention economy | Startups Magazine. Startups Magazine. <https://startupsmagazine.co.uk/article-marketing-2025-winning-attention-economy>