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|  <p>ISSN NO. 2320-5407</p> | <p>Journal Homepage: www.journalijar.com</p> <p>INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR)</p> <p>Article DOI:10.21474/IJAR01/20962 DOI URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/20962</p> |  |
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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE STARS ALIGN: HOW ASTROLOGY INFLUENCES CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND FESTIVAL SALES IN INDIA

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Manuscript Info

Manuscript History

Received: 02-June-2025

Final Accepted: 10-June-2025

Published: 12-June-2025

Key words:-

Astrology, Marketing Strategy,
Consumer Behavior, Color
Psychology, Festivals, Sales
Performance

Abstract

In the diverse cultural landscape of India, traditional beliefs and practices profoundly shape societal norms and individual behaviours. Among these, astrology, particularly Vedic astrology or Jyotish Shastra, holds a significant position, influencing daily decisions, life events, and even auspicious timings for significant undertakings. This pervasive cultural influence extends to economic activities, presenting a unique intersection between ancient wisdom and modern commerce. Specifically, during India's numerous vibrant festivals, which are often deeply rooted in spiritual and astrological calendars, consumer spending patterns can be observed to align with traditional beliefs. Understanding how astrology impacts purchasing decisions and sales performance during these peak consumer periods offers invaluable insights for businesses operating in the Indian market.

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1.Introduction: -

In the diverse cultural landscape of India, traditional beliefs and practices profoundly shape societal norms and individual behaviours. Among these, astrology, particularly Vedic astrology or Jyotish Shastra, holds a significant position, influencing daily decisions, life events, and even auspicious timings for significant undertakings. This pervasive cultural influence extends to economic activities, presenting a unique intersection between ancient wisdom and modern commerce. Specifically, during India's numerous vibrant festivals, which are often deeply rooted in spiritual and astrological calendars, consumer spending patterns can be observed to align with traditional beliefs. Understanding how astrology impacts purchasing decisions and sales performance during these peak consumer periods offers invaluable insights for businesses operating in the Indian market.

Despite the evident cultural significance of astrology, its deliberate and strategic integration into contemporary marketing practices remains underexplored. Businesses frequently launch festival campaigns, yet the extent to which these campaigns are informed by astrological considerations, such as shubhmuhurats (auspicious timings) or planetary transits, is not well-documented. This research seeks to bridge this knowledge gap by investigating the direct and perceived influence of astrology on consumer behaviour and sales outcomes during Indian festivals. By examining consumer awareness and belief in astrology, evaluating current business practices, and assessing the

observed impact on sales, this study aims to provide actionable recommendations for businesses to ethically and effectively leverage astrological insights in their festival marketing strategies.

2. Research Objectives

The primary objective of this research is to examine the influence of astrology on consumer behaviour and sales performance during Indian festivals. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To assess consumer awareness and belief in astrology as a factor influencing purchasing decisions.
2. To evaluate the extent to which businesses utilize astrology-based timing (e.g., shubhmuhurats, planetary transits) in planning festival campaigns.
3. To measure the perceived impact of astrologically significant dates on sales performance.
4. To explore consumer attitudes and openness toward astrology-integrated marketing strategies.
5. To provide practical recommendations for integrating astrology into festival-related marketing in a culturally resonant and ethically sound manner.

3. Methodology:

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining descriptive quantitative analysis with exploratory qualitative analysis. The research is cross-sectional in nature, aiming to collect data at a single point in time to explore behavioural patterns and perceptions associated with astrology and festival sales. This design allowed for a comprehensive understanding of both the prevalence of astrological beliefs and the reasons behind their influence on consumer behaviour.

3.2 Participants

Primary data was collected from a sample of 100 respondents (N=100). The participants comprised a diverse group intended to reflect the various perspectives relevant to the study's objectives. This included consumers who actively participate in festival-related shopping, small business owners involved in sales, and marketing professionals responsible for campaign planning. This purposive selection aimed to gather rich insights from individuals directly engaged with the intersection of astrology and commerce.

3.3 Sampling Method

A non-probability purposive sampling technique was utilized for participant selection. This method allowed the researchers to target individuals who were familiar with astrology and/or actively involved in festival marketing and shopping. While this approach enabled the collection of in-depth and relevant insights from a specific population, it also introduces limitations regarding the generalizability of the findings, which will be discussed later.

3.4 Data Collection

3.4.1 Primary Data

Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire developed for this study. The questionnaire comprised both close-ended questions (e.g., multiple-choice, Likert scales) to gather quantitative data and open-ended questions to elicit qualitative insights. The survey was distributed online via Google Forms to facilitate wider reach and ease of participation. Questions were designed to cover various aspects, including respondents' astrological beliefs, their observed consumer behaviour during festivals, and sales trends associated with astrologically favourable dates.

3.4.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data was gathered through a comprehensive review of scholarly articles, academic journals, and market reports. This literature focused on areas such as the psychology of consumer behaviour in relation to cultural beliefs, the role of astrology in various societies, traditional Indian festival rituals and their associated timings, and existing sales patterns observed during culturally significant events in India. This review was instrumental in shaping the theoretical framework of the study, informing the development of the survey instrument, and contextualizing the findings within established academic and industry research.

3.4.3 Data Analysis

Quantitative data obtained from the close-ended questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics. This included computing frequency distributions, percentages, and averages to summarize the responses. Cross-tabulations were

employed to explore potential relationships between variables, such as the correlation between belief in astrology and observed changes in consumer behaviour or sales performance.

Qualitative responses from the open-ended questions were subjected to thematic analysis. This involved systematically coding the responses, identifying recurring patterns, key beliefs, and sentiments expressed by participants. Thematic analysis allowed for the extraction of deeper, insights into the influence of astrology on commercial activities during festivals.

3.4.4 Scope and Limitations

This study focuses specifically on the Indian context, with astrology understood primarily through the lens of Vedic traditions (Jyotish Shastra). While the findings offer valuable insights into the influence of astrology on sales during major Indian festivals, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the small sample size (N=100) and the use of a non-random sampling method limit the generalizability of the results to the broader Indian population. Second, reliance on self-reported data introduces potential for social desirability bias or inaccuracies in recall. Finally, India's vast regional and cultural diversity means that astrological beliefs and their practical applications can vary significantly across different states and communities; these variations were not extensively analysed within the scope of this study.

4. Results:

The analysis of the collected data revealed several key findings aligned with the research objectives.

4.1 Astrology Awareness and Belief

The study found a high degree of awareness and belief in astrology among the respondents. A substantial majority (80%) reported being at least "familiar" with astrology, with a significant portion indicating "very familiar" (20%) or "somewhat familiar" (60%). Furthermore, the belief in astrology's influence on human behaviour and decisions was strong, with 75% of respondents indicating they "strongly believe" (40%) or "somewhat believe" (35%). Only a small minority expressed neutrality (15%) or disbelief (10%). This pervasive belief underscores the cultural foundation for astrology as a factor in decision-making within the target audience.

4.2 Astrology's Influence on Shopping Behaviour and Campaign Timing

When asked about astrology's effect on shopping behaviour during festivals, 55% of respondents confirmed "Yes," it does, while another 30% selected "Maybe," suggesting a significant perceived link. Only 10% believed "No," and 5% were "Not sure." This indicates a strong consumer perception that astrological factors play a role in purchasing decisions during festive periods.

Regarding business practices, the study revealed that a notable portion of respondents had, at some point, timed their product launches, sales, or campaigns based on astrological dates. Specifically, 25% reported doing so "always," and 30% "occasionally." However, 45% of businesses or individuals indicated they "No" (do not) use astrology for campaign timing, revealing an untapped potential.

4.3 Observed Impact on Sales Performance

Participants were asked about observed changes during astrologically significant dates (e.g., Akshaya Tritiya, Amavasya, Purnima). The findings showed a positive impact: 35% observed "increased sales," 30% noted "more foot traffic/online visits," and 20% reported "no noticeable change." A small percentage (15%) indicated they "don't track this." On a scale of 1-5, the perceived impact of astrology on sales during festivals averaged 3.6, signifying a moderate to significant influence. These quantitative findings are further supported by qualitative responses, where 35% noted more sales and 30% reported more visits during such auspicious times.

4.4 Consumer Attitudes Towards Astrology-Integrated Marketing

The study explored consumer openness to businesses integrating astrology into their marketing strategies. A large majority (80%) were receptive, with 50% voting "Yes" and 30% voting "Maybe." Only 20% responded "No." This strong receptiveness is further supported by the finding that 45% of respondents would be "more likely to buy" a product or service if it were aligned with a favourable astrological date, while 30% selected "Maybe" and 25% "No." This indicates a significant opportunity for businesses to align their offerings with astrological timings to enhance consumer appeal. Furthermore, 45% of consumers reported shopping on "Shubh Muhurat," and 30% avoid purchases during Rahu Kaal, demonstrating practical application of astrological beliefs in their purchasing behaviour.

4.5 Current Underutilization

Despite the clear consumer receptiveness and observed positive impact on sales, the data indicates a significant underutilization of astrology in marketing. Only 25% of businesses actively use astrology to time their campaigns, suggesting a considerable gap between market potential and current practice.

5. Discussion:

The findings of this study underscore the profound influence of astrology on consumer behaviour and sales performance during Indian festivals, aligning with the established cultural significance of Jyotish Shastra in India. The high familiarity and belief in astrology among respondents (80% familiar, 75% believing in its influence) firmly establish astrology as a legitimate behavioural driver in the Indian context. This strong cultural acceptance creates a fertile ground for marketing strategies that integrate astrological principles.

A key revelation is the demonstrable link between astrological timing and consumer purchasing decisions. The fact that 55% of respondents believe astrology affects festival shopping behaviour, and 65% have personally or professionally aligned purchases or campaigns with astrological dates, indicates that astrology is not merely a passive belief but an active factor influencing market dynamics. The observed increase in sales (35%) and traffic (30%) during astrologically significant dates further confirms this link, transitioning from a perceived influence on a tangible impact on business outcomes. The average perceived impact score of 3.6 out of five further reinforces the notion that astrology contributes meaningfully to buying behavior during festivals.

The study also highlights a significant opportunity for businesses to leverage this cultural phenomenon. With 80% of participants open to businesses using astrology in their festival marketing, and 45% expressing a greater likelihood of purchasing if a product launch aligned with a favorable astrological date, consumer receptiveness is undeniable. This suggests that marketing messages incorporating terms like "shubhmuhurat" or emphasizing "planet-blessed offers" could resonate deeply with the target audience, adding an emotional and ritualistic value to branding that goes beyond mere product features. This aligns with existing literature on culturally resonant marketing, where aligning with local beliefs and traditions can build stronger brand connections and trust.

However, the study also identifies a critical gap: despite the clear consumer inclination, only a minority of businesses (25%) currently utilize astrology to strategically time their campaigns. This underutilization suggests a significant missed opportunity for enhanced consumer engagement and increased sales. Businesses that are currently not incorporating astrological considerations may be inadvertently missing opportunities to connect with a large segment of their target audience on a deeper, culturally significant level.

The limitations of this study, such as the small sample size and non-random sampling, warrant caution in generalizing the findings. Regional and cultural variations in astrological beliefs across India could also lead to differing impacts, which were not extensively explored. Future research could address these limitations by employing larger, more diverse samples and conducting comparative studies across different regions of India to capture the nuances of astrological influence. Further qualitative research could also delve deeper into the specific psychological mechanisms through which astrological beliefs influence purchasing decisions, providing more granular insights for marketing practitioners.

6.Recommendations:

Based on the findings of this study, the following practical recommendations are proposed for businesses seeking to enhance their festival marketing strategies in India:

1. **Incorporate Astrology into Annual Marketing Calendars:** Businesses should proactively identify and mark astrologically significant dates (e.g., Akshaya Tritiya, specific Purnima or Amavasya days, Guru Purnima, auspicious Nakshatras) on their annual marketing calendars. Collaborating with professional astrologers or utilizing reliable Panchangs (Hindu almanacs) can help in accurately identifying these periods. Align product launches, special offers, promotional campaigns, and social media content to coincide with these auspicious timings to maximize consumer engagement. For example, promoting gold or property purchases during Akshaya Tritiya, or launching new ventures during astrologically favourable planetary alignments.
2. **Leverage Technology for "Astro-Marketing" Personalization:** Utilize digital platforms and customer relationship management (CRM) systems to integrate astrological data. This could involve offering customized deals based on customers' zodiac signs or birth dates (e.g., "Birthday Special Offer for [Zodiac Sign]"), sending notifications for auspicious shopping timings via apps or email, or developing branded content that explains the connection between product value and astrological timing in an engaging manner. For instance, an e-commerce platform could curate a list of "Shubh Muhurat Deals" for the day.

3. **Educate the Audience:** Instead of merely making claims, businesses can educate their audience about the cultural significance of astrological timings and their perceived benefits. This can be done through informative blog posts, short videos (reels), infographics, or social media campaigns that explain why a particular date is considered astrologically powerful for certain purchases. This approach turns marketing campaigns into cultural storytelling, building trust and authenticity rather than appearing exploitative. Emphasize the alignment with tradition and positive intent.
4. **Match Product Categories with Astrological Themes:** Strategically align product categories with appropriate festivals and planetary energies. For instance, luxury purchases might be promoted during periods traditionally associated with Venus (planet of luxury), while detox products could be featured during Navaratri or specific lunar phases. Understanding the traditional associations of different planets and celestial events with various aspects of life can guide product placement and messaging.
5. **Monitor and Track Performance Rigorously:** Implement robust tracking mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of astrology-integrated campaigns. Begin by tracking sales patterns, website traffic, and customer engagement during astrologically significant periods over 2-3 festival cycles. This data will be crucial for evaluating the ROI of these strategies, refining future campaigns, and building a strong internal business case for continued astrological integration.

7. Conclusion:

The intersection of astrology, consumer psychology, and the vibrant festival culture in India presents a compelling, yet untapped, opportunity for businesses. This study has demonstrated that astrology is not just a deeply ingrained belief system but a tangible behavioural driver that influences when and how people choose to buy, particularly during culturally significant times like Indian festivals.

While current business practices show a significant underutilization of astrological insights, the overwhelming consumer openness and the observed positive impact on sales patterns indicate substantial potential. Brands that adopt culturally intelligent, ethically grounded, and strategically timed "astro-marketing" approaches stand to gain a competitive edge. By acknowledging and integrating this ancient wisdom into modern marketing strategies, businesses can foster deeper emotional engagement with their customers, build greater trust, and translate cultural resonance into enhanced sales performance and brand loyalty. The stars, it seems, are indeed aligning for those willing to look.

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