



## Social Media Influencing Consumer Buying Behaviour

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**ABSTRACT:** In order to deliver better and appropriate product to the customer, marketers do a lot of research on consumer buying behaviour consisting of need recognition, information search, evaluation of information, purchase and post purchase behaviour. Understanding consumer behaviour helps the marketers not only to identifying his potential customers but also in customer satisfaction, influence customer, creating competitive advantage, helps in making marketing strategies, increase customer base etc. On the basis of literature review, it is found that due emergence of social media marketing customers able to access the product information easily. Customer reviews, two-way communication, evaluation and comparison of alternatives on social media, effects the purchase decision of customers. There were lot of challenges in carrying out this study, which included gathering and compiling information on need recognition and information search. The social media being a recent phenomenon, very limited research has been carried out on these aspects. Due to the emergence of social media marketing, marketers are able to communicate and serve their customer in more personalized manner as compare to mass media marketing, which add more credence to the significance of the study. In this study it was observed that different social media play pivotal rule in purchase of promotion of products.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Social Media Marketing, Post Purchase Behaviour, Evaluation of information, Consumer Buying Behaviour.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Consumer buying behaviour is a combination of customer's attitudes, intentions, preferences and decisions while purchasing a product or services. Consumer buying behaviour is a complex process, a consumer has to identify his needs, then searching the product for fulfilling their requirements, study product features and then taking the final decision whether to purchase that product or not.

Earlier companies used Mass Media (Television, Radio, Newspaper etc.) to engage and interact with their customer. In Mass media companies having the control over the message which was delivered, but now social media changed the way business interacts with their customer. Due to social media the control shifts from companies to customer, now the customers access the information which they feel important, interesting & knowledgeable as per their interest. The television, radio & newspaper advertising is not as efficient as before, because customer choose when they want to be reached by business.

With the help of internet people can easily access their account on social media everywhere at anytime. Nowadays people are highly active and engage on social media platform. The companies always are looking towards innovative methods as effective

mechanisms for interacting more effectively and efficiently with their customers.

Social Media provides real time information and facilitates like two way communications between retailer and consumers which allows retailers to serve their consumers more efficiently and effectively through better customer relationship management, extended product lines, cost effectiveness and customized offers [1, 2]. By doing so it offers unique competitive advantage to the online retailers over traditional retailers.

Michael Porter had visualized in 2001 that internet impact the purchase decision as all the five forces are getting impacted and different strategies are required by companies to maintain competitive advantage. Turban *et al.*, (2015) [6] Activities related to purchase decisions like information seeking, searching for bargains and expressing dissatisfaction about services by visiting retail store is matter of past now. Social Media has completely altered the activities related with buying process.

Many consumers are searching product online through social media shows that there are number of benefits of having presence on Social Media that the marketers are lacking in the traditional Marketing. The researches as mentioned above have touched upon the various aspects of social media [3-6]. However the influence of social media on consumer buying behavior has not been touched, which is one of the major drawback. The

authors dealt with the real time communication with buyer and seller only. The main purpose of this study is to analyze the Social Media influence on the consumer throughout their purchase decision making process, their attitudes towards the Social Media, so that companies able to decide whether social media marketing strategies are good for their business, or whether to continue with mass media marketing

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In any study, literature review provides the most important aspects of the Research as well as the basis for further improvements and various dimensions of the improvements required in the studies done so far. In the domain of Social Media, many researchers have explored Social Media Marketing and its impact on consumer behavior. Some significant and accessible researches have been studied for the purpose of literature review.

George E. Belch *et al.*, (2003) [7] in their study described some circumstances during the buying decision process, shoppers stop looking out and evaluating data before going to the next stage. This is the decision stage in which customer has to decide whether to purchase the product or not. The buying decision of a product & service depends on review & recommendations of other shoppers.

W. Glynn Mangolda *et al.*, (2009) [8], stated that the social media is a newly discovered component of promotion mix. Firstly, with the help of social media companies and the customers able to communicate or interact with each other, which is not possible earlier. Second, customers are also able to communicate with each other. Now the organizations have no control over the content, duration, frequency and the discussion between consumers on social media. In traditional marketing, customer's conversation was fully controlled by the organization.

Constantinides, *et al.*, (2008) [9], in their research study "Social Media: A New Frontier for Retailers?" discussed the importance of Social media platform, as an important tool for strategic marketing. Researchers have come up with the use of new marketing tool "Social Media" for retailers that not only help in survival of their business but also provide them a competitive edge for future business growth.

C.M. Sashi (2012) [10], in her study observed that social media played an important role in the buying decision of a customer, which has become the fast spreading electronic word of mouth. Other customers are also impacted by positive customer reviews, which lead to purchase decision and generate revenue for the company.

Xia Wang *et al.*, (2012) [11], in their study "Social Media Peer Communication and Impacts on Purchase Intentions: A Consumer Socialization Framework" confirmed that peer communication through social media affect the purchase decision of consumer. Authors also stated that the purchase intention of customer about a product is mostly depends on the level of their engagement. Purchase intention play a major role since it is what encourage consumer buying decisions and which leads to sales and profit to a company.

strategies and the various social Media sites having high visibility for apparel business. Various aspects including need recognition, information search, evaluation of searches, buying decision, post purchase behavior, which form the basis of consumer buying behavior has been explored through this study. This aspect has not been done in the earlier researches, by considering the influence of social media.

Wei Jia Tan (2013) [12], in his research the author attempted to analyze the customer attitude regarding interactive advertising and its effect on their purchase intention. The result found that there is a correlation between attitude towards advertisement & purchase intention to effectiveness of interactive advertising. Traditional advertisement might be used by the marketers, but interactive advertising should be an option.

Barger *et al.*, (2016)[ 13], proposed that like, comment, sharing with other users, posting product review, leads to interaction with customer and are a part of customer engagement on social media. Customer engagement could create purchase intention which leads to buying decision of product in future, which generates profit for the company. In online product review, due to the proper explanations, rating about the products from the other users, viewers motivate towards future purchase.

Smith, Peregrina (2016) [14], in "Social Network Marketing: A Segmentation Approach to Understanding Purchase Intention" stated that buying behavior is a response towards pre-purchasing inspiration and this inspiration is what gives the customer a sensation of buying a product or service. The inspirations before purchasing are therefore observed as the intention of buying a product and thus called the purchase intention. The author further defines purchase intention as "A consumer's subjective judgment in the decision-making process after a general evaluation has identified a willingness to act towards a product or brand".

Duangruthai *et al.*, (2018) [15], analyzed the impact of social media on consumers' buying decision process for complex purchases and at up to what extent decisions are modified by the usage of social media. Finding revealed that social media influence the most in first and second stage of buying behaviour process (information search & search for alternative) but didn't much helpful in boosting up in purchase decision stage, nor in the post purchase evaluation. Social media users liked & enjoyed the decision process as compared to others who opted any other information source. Social media user feels satisfied & confident during their decision process & information overload didn't have any negative impact on consumer satisfaction. Traditional ways of shopping still exist and in this digital era, people still love to shop through physical stores.

Aderibigbe (2010) [16], observed that Social media sites are the best things which have emerged for the apparel sector. The social network has ability to reach and effectively communicate with the apparel fashion consumers which is available at just a single click of button and post. Social media have given the system where retailers and consumers are interacting directly via different the existing available platforms. In apparel selling business social media is playing key role for spreading "word of mouth" through the active user's

base of these platforms. The revolution of the social media has a great impact on apparel industry. Sarina Asif, *et al.*, (2017) [17] in their research paper “A study of consumer buying behaviour for branded apparels in Gurgaon city” analyzed the factors affecting customer purchase decision. Customers become brand conscious due to increasing awareness and entrance of new comers in the market. Branded apparels are preferred more than non-branded apparels. Customers prefer to visit malls rather than showrooms & branded shops for shopping. Family, social media, peer review, celebrity endorsement are the most important or influencing factor in making purchase of branded

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### A. Objective of the study

— To study the commonly social media used by the marketers.

— To study the influence of social media on consumer buying decision making process.

#### B Sample Size and Area

A secondary study has been done to understand social media and its importance. Data was collected and analysed from various research papers, articles, reviewed books, and social media reports. Primary information was collected through a survey of 208

apparels. Customers of all age groups preferred discount rather than any other promotional scheme.

In their study an analytical view of the Moderating effect of Gender on Online Purchase Behavior.

observed that the females indulged in impulsive buying on the basis of influence of social media which led to increase in the sale of companies.

Analysed the various factor influencing consumer choice of celebrity endorsement and their consequent effect on purchase decision. The authors have also proposed five factor model, which include Attractiveness, familiarity reliability, credibility and purchase behaviour

respondents carried out in the NCR area, on various aspects of influence of consumer buying behaviour, through a structured questionnaire.

The following hypothesis were developed on the basis of pilot survey.

H1: The advertising on Facebook and other social media affect the consumers buying behavior positively.

H2: The promotion through social media is helpful in increasing the sales of the products

As per Statista Report 2018 there are about 260 million internet users in India who use social network site via any device at least once per day and expected to grow 371 million in 2022.

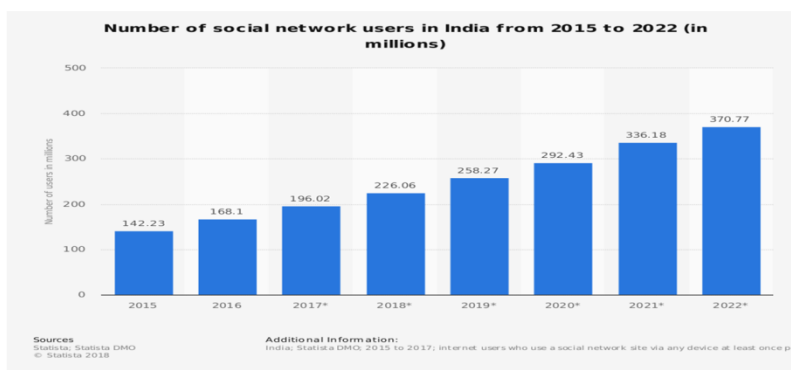


Fig. 1. Social Network users in India, Source- Statista 2018.

### IV. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

In this digital world, there are number of social networking sites like Facebook, You Tube, Pinterest, LinkedIn & twitter are available for the individuals and these social networking sites adopted worldwide for business purpose also.

#### A. Facebook

Facebook was founded by Mark Zuckerberg on February 2004, as per reported by Statista facebook has 2.27 billion users, out of which 294 millions are from India and this which makes it most popular social networking site worldwide. Marketers/ Companies can make their personalized profile or page on this popular website for their customer through which they can comment, post any query or information required regarding the product. Marketers can upload pictures & videos on their facebook page, which helps to advertise their product worldwide.

#### B. Twitter

Twitter is the most followed social networking website after facebook, developed by Jack Dorsey on 21<sup>st</sup> March

2016. As per Statista this social media sites has more than 326 million active users. Users can communicate or interact through message called “tweets” and restricted their message to 140 characters to pass the information. With the help of this social media platform companies conducting e-commerce, they send their product information to the customer, sell goods & services and generate revenue.

#### C. Youtube

YouTube was founded on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2005, by three former PayPal employees, Steve Chen, Chad Hurley, Jawed Karim and was later acquired by Google in November 2006. This is number one video based social media website over 1.8 billion users per month. It allows all users to upload videos and rate, share, comment related to videos. With the option of reviews and comments about the video, businesses are able react or reply instantly to the customer’s comments and satisfy their customer which leads to customer loyalty.

#### D. Instagram

In 2010 Instagram was developed by Kevin Systrom, it is a visual social media site. It has more than 700 million

active users out of them 71 million are from India as per statistic report Oct 2018 and is owned by Facebook. It is a social network platform that provides a great marketing platform to reach potential customer from every corner of the world. The platform uses different unique filters with video and photo editing features. The average users post engagement rate of Instagram is 3.31%, while Twitter has an average of 0.07% only.

#### E. Pinterest

The site was founded by Ben Silbermann, Paul Sciarra and Evan sharp, having 250 million active users as of October 2018. This rapid growth has drawn business, especially retailers, to expand their presence on the site. Pinterest also allows businesses to create pages aimed at promoting their companies online. In one case study of a fashion website, users visiting from pinterest spent \$180mn compared to \$85 mn spent from users coming from facebook.

#### F. Blogs

A blog is a discussion or informal website. Customer produced mode of advertisement such as sponsored posts are becoming popular as well as controversial in online marketing. Turban 2011, companies can involve blogs in their promotional mix and placed their advertising on individuals blogs via online advertisement services or directly include blogs on their web pages.

#### G. Google +

Google+ is an internet based social network that is owned and operated by Google.



Fig. 2. Benefits of Social Media, Source: Social Media Marketing Industry Report (2016).

To compete with other social networks Google introduced Google plus. Google+ has become a key player in online marketing system with more than 111 million users worldwide. Individuals can add their brands on Google plus circle, share with their network and communicate with the content posted by retailers. It

allows marketers to create page and communicate with the content posted by retailers. It allows marketers to create pages and communicate with their prospective audiences directly on multiple levels.

According to social media marketing industry report "A significant 89% of all marketers indicated that their social media efforts have generated more exposure for their businesses. Increasing traffic was the major benefit, with 75% reporting positive results".

The e-commerce has transformed the way business is done in India. The Indian E-commerce market is expected to grow to US\$ 200 billion by 2026 from US\$ 38.5 billion as of 2017. Much growth of the industry has been triggered by increasing internet and smart phone penetration. India e-commerce revenue is expected to jump from US\$ 39 billion in 2017 to US\$ 120 billion in 2020, growing at an annual rate of 51%, the highest in the world. During 2018, electronic is currently the biggest contributor to online retail sales in India with a share of 48%, followed closely by apparel at 29%.

Customers have the ever increasing choice of products at the lowest rates. E-commerce is probably creating the biggest revolution in the retail industry, and this trend would continue in the years to come.

**Analysis and Interpretation:** The data was analyzed using various statistical tools. The consumer buying behaviour was analyzed with five parameters as independent variables consisting of various stages including need recognition, information search, evaluation of searches and buying decision and later post purchase behaviour. The mean and standard deviation calculated for dependable variables of social media i.e Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, instagram, Google+, You Tube and Blogs. The results depict that most of the respondents using facebook, instagram and you tube are positively considering the three parameters need recognition, information search and evaluation of searches for finalising their choices. However it was found that very few respondents (9%) admitted that it translated into fourth stage purchase. Another significant finding was that most of the respondents showed that they were satisfied with the product, which was purchased on the basis of their search on the social media. Most of respondents ((86%) opined that very few information was being used for any of the consumer buying stages, being a closed group media. Also Blogs were rarely referred for making the buying decisions. Google+ was found to be used very rarely by the majority of the respondents. Table 1 and 2 are given below.

Table 1: Influence of Social media.

Consumer Buying Behaviour	Face Book		Twitter		Whatsapp		Instagram		Google +		You tube		Blogs	
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D
Need Recognition	4.24	0.78	4.15	0.72	3.72	0.91	3.08	1.23	3.23	1.18	2.72	1.29	2.57	1.38
Information Search	4.29	0.78	3.90	0.70	4.17	0.72	4.28	0.71	4.1	0.97	3.68	0.89	3.71	0.81
Evaluation of Searches	4.2	0.51	4.10	0.69	3.93	0.86	4.14	0.65	4.28	0.69	3.81	0.75	3.74	0.72
Buying Decision/ Purchase	3.65	1.08	2.48	1.29	2.48	1.31	3.78	0.87	3.72	0.96	3.72	0.89	3.82	0.92
Post Purchase	3.01	1.10	2.33	1.46	2.18	1.40	3.50	1.07	3.89	0.92	4.26	0.59	4	0.88

**Table 2: ANOVA Tests for Influence of Social Media.**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Face Book	195	3.74	0.38	49.35	.000
Twitter	65	3.16	0.50		
Whatsapp	208	3.09	0.46		
Instagram	104	3.74	0.29		
Google+	42	3.81	0.33		
You Tube	167	3.46	0.35		
Blogs	32	3.49	0.38		

The Hypothesis I was accepted for social media Facebook, You Tube and Instagram. However on four other social media it was rejected.

The Hypothesis II was accepted for social media Facebook.

It was found that the over the years social media is playing a significant role towards the promotion of the products, which is getting translated into the purchase. The purchases are also being done online and exponential growth in the online purchase can be attributed to the social media.

The findings of this study are in consonance with the research of C.M Sashi (2012) [10], in which it was observed that social media played an important role in the buying decision of a customer, which has become the fast spreading electronic word of mouth.

The findings that the social media impacts consumers' buying decision process for complex purchases and at up to what extent decisions are modified by the usage of social media are in line with the conclusions drawn by Duangruthai *et al.*, (2018) [15] as also Sarina Asif, *et al.*, (2017) [17], who inferred that purchase of brand ed and non branded apparel was influenced by social media for making buying decision.

**V. CONCLUSION**

Social Media provide easy access of information about the products, customer reviews and two-way communication, and also provide the customers with a number of networks to evaluate and compare alternatives. The time spent on the social media is also used by the respondents to further evaluate the details of various products and services which they intend to buy in the near future. Feedback mechanisms adopted by the organizations are also playing significant role to make the respondents their buying decision. Customers have become more attentive towards relevancy and authenticity of the advertising content and customer recommendations are more considered comparatively than company generated product recommendations. When the consumers evaluate information related to the product, before purchasing the product, he/she depends on trust on recommendation from friends or relatives more than interacting with brand online.

Entertainment and detailed information are the most accepted component of advertising on social networking sites and the customers enjoy engagement related activities rather than just reading or listening. Due to the emergence of social media marketing, marketers are able to communicate and serve their customer in more personalized manner as compare to mass media marketing. It has become a bridge between the customers and the companies through perpetual engagement trust and serve the right customer in real

time. But on the other hand through social media companies directly dealing with the customers and if the customer finds product, posts or social networking activities of the brand irrelevant than there is high possibility of losing the customer. If the users post comments on companies social media page in hurry it may cause the negative impact to the brand image. So it can be easily concluded on the basis of this study that there is influence of the social media on consumer buying process including the post purchase behavior, which the marketers has to take care of while marketing their products. This was even evident during the pandemic of COVID 19, when social media was used as an effective tool towards influencing buying decision, during the period of lockdown.

**VI. FUTURE SCOPE**

Social media has become the buzzword for marketing of the different products and services. The Govt. is also now promoting different services through the social media, including educational services. A number of policies have been formulated for regulating the social media and promotion of products through it. Changes are taking place for use of technology, the spurt in digital marketing initiatives have further pushed the people towards effective use of social media, which could be further explored, across different sectors, to understand the implications of consumer buying behaviour in a much broader way.

**Conflict of Interest.** There is no conflict of interest.

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