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## THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN INDIAN CONTEXT

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### ABSTRACT

*Today social media is playing such a big role in our daily lives that we can't even imagine a single day without it. Technology has become so handy that every possible thing in the world is at our fingertips. In the present study, an attempt is made to find out as to how individuals more particularly the consumers are affected by the social platforms and how is it shaping their behavior in general life, what motivates them and what kind of activities do they engage in and what challenges does it pose for marketers. Social media is now a key component of organization's marketing strategies & human life.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Social Media, Consumer Behaviour, Social education, decision making, Online Employment,*

### INTRODUCTION

There are always a wide range of opinions about social media and how useful (or harmful) it can be. With some networks, the consumer can communicate with thousands of people at the click of a button, easily spreading a message about the company. Also, they should try to make their brand more and more visible to customers by trying to post frequently and consistently. The marketers should also try to create strong emotional bond with their audiences thereby strengthening relationship with them.

They should try to respond quickly and appropriately as every customer issue is unique and therefore, needs to be handled accordingly. Customers these days are using heavily on social media networks for customer support & service, so companies should make themselves visible in the digital media for rendering this support. This would enable them to maintain their brand reputation in eyes of public. The marketers should also try to develop a thorough and

achievable set of goals which they should be able to measure and figure out how far they have been successful in their brand building. This paper attempts to analyze and study how the impact of social media has taken over other marketing platforms and how has it changed the behavior of the consumers.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To explore the impact of social media on people's relationship especially the family and gender
- To describe the way of social media has been used within institutions such as education commerce & religion
- To find out the way of social media has been used for provide great employment opportunities online.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This paper is an attempt to discover the impact of rising social media on behavior of the customers in Indian context and how the marketers are responding to such changes in consumer behavior. Also an attempt is made to discover what activities consumers engage in social media and what motivates them to participate

- Facebook
- You Tube
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Twitter

After Facebook and Twitter, Pinterest is 3rd most popular social network in India. The site generates more than 400% revenue per click as Twitter and 22% more than Facebook. The other platforms in descending order were Instagram (45%), Pinterest (35%), Snapchat (29%), LinkedIn (27%), Twitter (28%) and WhatsApp (25%). Instagram usage grew from 28% to 35% over the two-year period. Consumer's online behavior is developing at a fast rate. Consumers are taking part in a variety of roles ranging from consumer content, participating in discussions and sharing knowledge with other consumers to contributing to other consumer activities. Social networking sites gives the permitted of a great deal of information about a company goods . This information isn't limited to the company alone who puts out there, because many sites within a social media network are devoted to consumer-collected information.

Before making a purchase, the consumer can log on to a social media network and see what other people think about your products and how you handle customer service.

### While using social media as a tool for purchasing, consumers generally look for:

- **Product related learning:** By following a brand on social media, a user wishes to know more about what he will get if they decide to follow the company. It is also determined by the information of products that he can use if he decides to purchase one from company.
- **Information quality:** When a user decides to start following a company or brand on
  - Increasing Brand Awareness
  - Building a Community
  - Engaging the Customers

It would not at all be wrong to mention here that social media has played such a tremendous effect that

in social media activities and what challenges are emerging for marketers in Indian context

## DATA FOR RESEARCH STUDY

This paper is based on secondary data. The data was collected from the various published sources like reports, magazines, journals, newspapers etc. Indian markets. Social media marketing is a process of gaining traffic and attention through social media sites. The most popular social platforms are:

- Pinterest
- Google
- LinkedIn
- Amazon
- Whatsapp

- social media platform, the key aspect that consumers looks towards is quality of information that the page provides him.
- **Economic benefits:** Consumer is also interested in knowing if he /she can get a chance of some economic or other gains from making the deal with particular brand or offer.
- **Interaction & Collaboration:** Social media platforms serve as a linking pin between consumers and the firm whereby the consumers can easily access the information they seek and clear their doubts and misconceptions if any.
- **Social presence:** This digital age lets the users to influence others to certain extent; wherein on various company and product pages, they can establish themselves as opinion leaders and experts on usage of concerned products.

Studies have also shown that to understand level of brand engagement through profile and page visits and to understand the same, the users should be divided into high and low level of engagement. This gives an idea of how much time the average user spends on profile/page visits. An active user would visit may be once or multiple times a day while a user with low level of engagement will visit may be once a month or would only read the updates while not taking an active part in it.

Apart from consumers, the companies and marketers also are very keen on social media for:

- Reputation Management
- Customer Service
- Research of consumer

today it has knitted itself so cleanly in the fabric of Indian culture & society. As a result of which our

society, consumers in particular have undergone a drastic change, from being gullible and naive they have turned out to be more matured and responsible ones.

It has transformed itself into a very convenient tool for marketers to promote their brands by building various communities for interactions and spreading awareness about their services. Any organization be it large scale, medium scale or small scale has its online presence on various social media platforms. This has made them visible to their customers 24\*7 that too with their convenience of place and time. Besides this, it also helps the marketing firms to observe and analyze the behavior of customers on regular basis.

#### **POSITIVE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

- Social media makes the development of the society and also helps many organisations .
- It provides tools like social media marketing that can reach a millions of potential clients..
- Social media is a great tool for creating awareness about any social cause.
- Owners can reach easily for searching job seekers.
- It can also help you meet like-minded people.

#### **NEGATIVE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

- Many psychiatrists believe that social media is a single most factor causing depression and anxiety in people.
- It is also a cause of poor mental growth in children.
- There are many other negative effects like cyber bullying, body image issues etc. as well.
- There is an increased 'Fear of Missing out' (FOMO) at an all-time high in youth because of social media.

#### **IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOUTH**

These days consumer taking interest on social networking sites. If you do not have a digital presence than for some people you do not exist. The ever rising pressure of being on social networking sites and have an impressive profile is effecting the youth in big way. According to statistics average number of hours a teenager spends online is 72 hours per week. This is very high considering that they have to give time to study, physical activities and other beneficial activities like reading etc. It leaves very less time for other things and hence there are serious issues that arise out of this like lack of attention span, minimum focus, anxiety and complex issues. We now have more virtual friends than real ones and we are losing human to human connection day by day. There are other dangers as well like leaking of personal information to complete

strangers, sex offenders etc. There are some positive effects.

#### **POSITIVE IMPACTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOUTH**

- It is a good tool for education.
- It can create awareness for many social issues.
- There is a fast transfer of information online and hence the users can stay well informed.
- It can also be used as a news medium.
- There are few social benefits as well like communication with long distance friends and relatives.
- It can provide great employment opportunities online.
- We agree that there are positive impacts of social network but like everything else it also has cons.

#### **NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOUTH**

- Enables cheating in exams
- Dropping of grades and performance of students
- Lack of privacy
- Users are vulnerable to cyber-crimes like hacking, identity theft, phishing crimes etc.

#### **IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO THE CONSUMERS**

- **Increased support:** Since we have the use of social media at our disposal at any hour of the day, teachers can provide off hours support and solve queries of students even after class timings. This practice also helps the teacher to understand development of their students more closely.
- **Easy work:** Many educators feel that the use of social media makes the work easier for both them and students.
- **More disciplined:** The classes conducted on social media platforms are more disciplined and structured as we know that everyone is watching.
- **Teaching aids:** Social media can help the students to grow their knowledge with a lot of teaching aids available online. Students can watch videos, see images, check out reviews and instantly clear their doubt while watching the live processes happening. Not only students, even teacher can make their lectures more interesting by using these tools and teaching aids.
- **Teaching Blogs and write ups:** Students can enhance their knowledge by reading blogs, articles and write ups by renowned teachers, professors and thinkers. This way good content can reach wide audience.

## RECOMMENDATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO THE CONSUMER

- It would be wise not to underestimate the costs associated with marketing on social media. Though the potential to reach a wide audience is both immediate and as simple as opening a Facebook account it should not be undertaken lightly.
- A very minimum interaction that Hotels should consider is to treat Trip Advisor and holidayiq.com as an influential means of reputation management. At present reviews whether they are bad or good, are left unanswered.

## SUGGESTIONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO THE CONSUMERS

- The social networking strategy should sufficiently flexible to allow it to adapt to new developments and to determine what works and what does not work.
- A dedicated social media co-ordinator is recommended to monitor the impact of any changes implemented. A dedicated co-ordinator would also allow for consistency in communication.
- The promotional offers during season on should be displayed on the SNS on regular basis, so that large number of customers is captured.

## CONCLUSION

- Social media has become an integral part of the algorithms that decide where a particular website is placed in the search rankings. The higher the ranking the more visible it is to the consumer. One of the core questions behind this research was to find out what impact social networking sites is having on the hotel sector. The feedback shared on the review social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, holidayiq.com & Trip Advisor is an opportunity to improve the service offering.
- Measuring the affects that reviews, Wall-posting, Blog, Photo Video, Pop-up, tweets and posts can directly have on bookings could be quite difficult. Social Networking Sites creates a real Connection between companies and customers; that connection creates a trend for purchase intensity. Social Networking Sites provide ample of opportunities for interacting with Hotel industries partners. Networking Sites provides a platform to innovative advertising to be effectively used for business growth of Hotel.

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