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THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS IS DIGITAL MARKETING: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Digital marketing facilitates the marketers to have frequent and interactive communication with the target customers in a speedy way. The diversity of digital channels like internet, email, social-media, display-advertising and mobile phones provide an opportunity to develop long-term relationships with customers. At present, the world people are getting themselves contacted with digital media. There are more than 3.7 billion internet users in the world. In India, digital media business is growing at a rapid rate. Now, a need of the hour is to understand customers' preferences, tastes, and likings regarding digital media so that marketing campaign may success. The number of internet users, mobile penetration in the country and "Digital India" offer many opportunities for the marketing. Marketers have to understand how to use digital channels effectively for marketing and also must concentrate on trust building among customers.

KEYWORDS

digital marketing, digital channels, strategies, internet-users.

1. INTRODUCTION

There are different types of digital channels like internet, social media, email, mobile phones, mobile apps, and digital technology. These channels have become an integral part in lives of more than 3.7 billion people in the world (*Internetworldstats.com*). Digital channels provide a new platform to develop and maintain a long time relationship with customers. Marketers' interaction with customers help in building strong and long term relationship with customers and thus digital channels propel the business in this context (*Bhattacharya & Belton, 2000*). Marketers also understand the cost differentiation between the use of traditional communication media and digital channels (*Reinartz et.al, 2005*). Comparing to the traditional communication media, digital media provide cost efficiency as well as better and fast interaction with customers. Marketers' prime objective is to make an interaction with the customers of the company and its offerings. It can be easily fulfilled by the use of digital channels for marketing and this will enhance customer loyalty towards the brand as well as towards the company. By doing this customers may feel emotionally valued himself/herself for being interacted and cared (*Jayachandran et. al, 2005*). Digital technologies offer a great opportunity to the marketers and digital marketing will dominate over the marketing practices of next decade (*Kenney way, 2007*).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Digital Marketing: Electronic Marketing started with the use of telegraphs in the 19th century. It is the transfer of goods and services with the help of electronic media. With the inventions of cable-network, electronic media, with the use of television and radio, marketing practices began to change (*Hoge, 1993*). This term was first used in 1990. It refers to online marketing, internet marketing or web marketing. It has been a most common term after 2013. It is a booming industry. It is an umbrella term for the marketing of products or services using digital technologies, mainly on the Internet, but also including marketing through mobile phones, display advertising, and many other digital media (*Barwise & Fairly, 2005; Mishra & Taruna, 2016*). *Urban (2004)* defined the digital marketing saying that digital marketing uses internet and information technology to extend as well as to improve traditional marketing functions. Recently, internet marketing is playing a dominant role for the marketers. This is a specific paradigm which includes both market and medium (*Farhoomand & Lovelock, 2001*). *Coviello, Milley and Marcolin (2001)* defined E-marketing as using internet and other technologies to create and to mediate dialogue between firms and identified customers. Since the 1990s and 2000s, there have been dramatically changes in field of marketing. Digital marketing campaigns are becoming more prevalent as well as efficient, as digital platforms are increasingly incorporated into marketing plans and everyday life. Digital marketing offers new opportunities to attract, to build a strong relationship and also to serve customers (*Rowley, 2005; Simon, 2007*). Nowadays, people use digital devices instead of going to physical shops. Digital marketing such as Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Search Engine Marketing (SEM), Content Marketing, Influencer Marketing, Content Automation, Campaign Marketing, Data-Driven Marketing and E-Commerce Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Social Media Optimization, E-Mail Direct Marketing, Display Advertising, E-Books, Optical Disks and games, are becoming more and more common in our advancing technology. In fact, this extends to non-Internet channels that provide digital media, such as mobile phones (SMS and MMS), callback and on-hold mobile ring tones. E-marketing has also been renamed as interactive marketing (*Brodie et al., 2011*).

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER

With passage of time, Marketing has gone through diverse improvements and changes. At present, modern marketing practices are prevailing and marketers' focus is on Internet Marketing, Web Marketing, Online Marketing, Telemarketing and Mobile Marketing and so on. Digitalization of marketing practices is the future of marketing. This paper has the following objectives:

1. To highlight the potentials and scope of digital marketing in India as well as abroad.
2. To highlight the different paradigms of digital marketing.

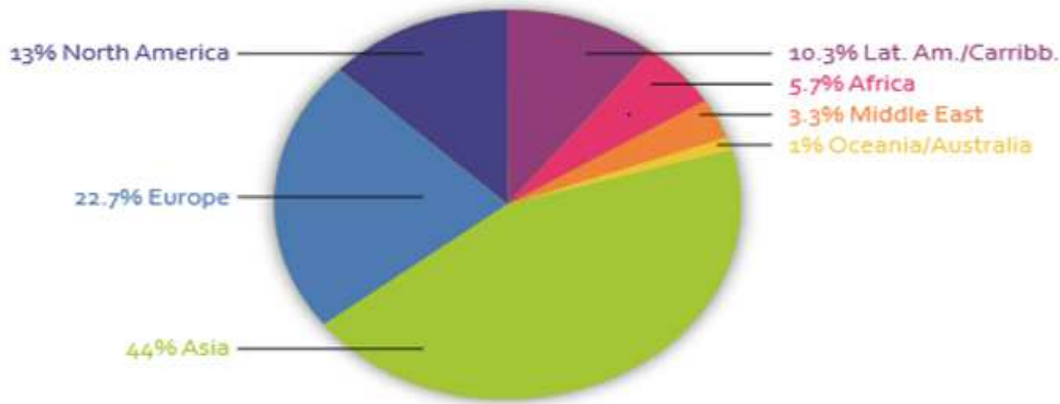
4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper is review based.

RESEARCH DESIGN: For this research paper descriptive research design has been used.

5. ANALYSIS

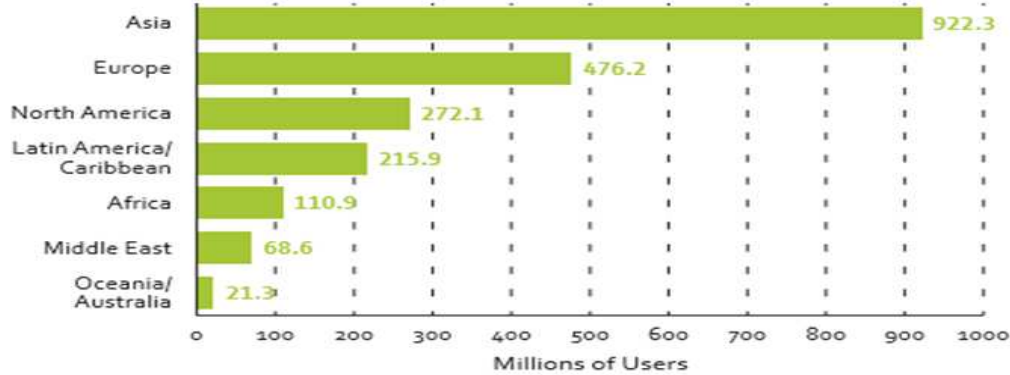
FIG. 1: DISTRIBUTION OF GLOBAL INTERNET USERS, 2011



Source: Internet World Stats - www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm

The figure number 1 shows the distribution level of global internet users in 2011. In Asia there is the maximum number of internet users. Asia has 44%, Europe has 22.7% and North America has 13% of the world internet users.

FIG. 2: TOTAL ESTIMATED NUMBER OF INTERNET USERS, 2011



Source: Internet World Stats - www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm

The figure number 2 shows the distribution level of global internet users by 2011. In Asia there is the maximum number of internet users. Figure number 1.1 elaborates this. Asia has 992 million, Europe has 476.2 million and North America has 272 million of the world internet users.

FIG. 3: WORLD INTERNET USERS, 2017

World Regions	Population (2017 Est.)	Population % of World	Internet Users 31 Mar 2017	Penetration Rate (% Pop.)	Growth 2000-2017	Users % Table
Africa	1,246,504,865	16.6 %	345,676,501	27.7 %	7,557.2%	9.3 %
Asia	4,148,177,672	55.2 %	1,873,856,654	45.2 %	1,539.4%	50.2 %
Europe	822,710,362	10.9 %	636,971,824	77.4 %	506.1%	17.1 %
Latin America / Caribbean	647,604,645	8.6 %	385,919,382	59.6 %	2,035.8%	10.3 %
Middle East	250,327,574	3.3 %	141,931,765	56.7 %	4,220.9%	3.8 %
North America	363,224,006	4.8 %	320,068,243	88.1 %	196.1%	8.6 %
Oceania / Australia	40,479,846	0.5 %	27,549,054	68.1 %	261.5%	0.7 %
WORLD TOTAL	7,519,028,970	100.0 %	3,731,973,423	49.6 %	933.8%	100.0 %

Source: Internetworldstats.com

The figure number 3 shows the world internet users by March, 2017. In Asia there is the maximum number of internet users. Asia has 1.8 billion, Europe has 636 million, Africa has 345 million and North America has 320 million of the world internet users. Thus, it can be concluded after analysing the internet users of 2011 and 2017 that number of internet users has been increasing worldwide.

FIG. 4: DIGITAL MARKETING IN INDIA- SOME LUCRATIVE FACTS



The above figure shows the potentials for digital marketing with different aspects. Growth of digital media business is expected to reach INR 200 billion by 2020 in which 23-28% contribution would be of digital advertisements. The digital marketing not only allows to the marketers to market their products but also allows the online consumers for customer supported services through 24/7 to make customer feel supported and valued. Consumers’ preferences, tastes and likings in digital era are very important to understand so that success can be obtained. Consumers prefer to shortform content; with the average length of video viewed in India being less than 20 minutes. Moreover, 62% of the content which is consumed on YouTube is short-form content. This trend has led content producers like Eros International & Star to focus on exclusive and snackable content. It has created a huge opportunity for storytelling to be optimized from a story point of view, and not from its length point. The same can be seen in the content created by digital media companies like AIB, TVF, Ping, Culture Machine and many others. Now in India, 4G-internet service is also available (ey.com/publication). By March, 2017 there were more than 462 million internet users that is the second largest after the china which has about 731 million and about 157 million Facebook subscribers in India the second largest after the Unites States which has 201 million (internetworldstats.com). In the whole world Indian mobile sector has established a sustained momentum. The development of this sector goes to higher subscriber volume, lower-terrifs and falling handset prices. Mobile penetration rose from 72% in 2011 to 81% in 2016 and it is also expected that market will reach with mobile penetration over 90% in 2021(Budde.com.au).

6. DIGITAL INDIA

This programme was started by Indian government in 2015. The aim is to connect Indian economy with rapid changing and growing world economy and also to make Indian people available different services, benefits, newest information, and technologic- innovations digitally. The project has three main aspects:

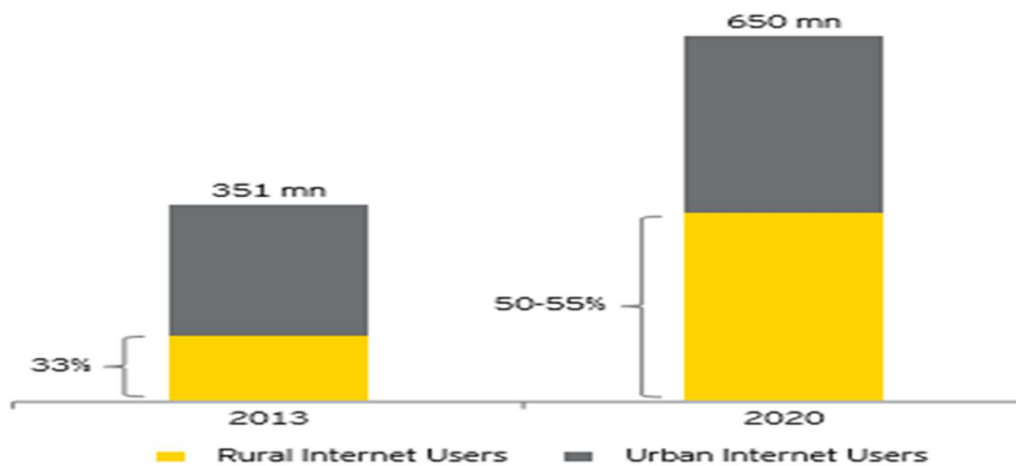
- (1). Digital infrastructure
- (2). Digitalization of services and resources
- (3). Digital education

Digital India will provide high speed internet access, e-services, Digital inclusion, Digital- locker, e-sign, and many more (digitalindiainsight.com). Thus, we can say that in such circumstances marketers will have more opportunities to market their product not only to the urban Indian but also to the remote rural Indian in an easy and speedy way.

6.1 CHANGING FACE OF RURAL INDIA

Rural India is getting transformations in case of literacy level, infrastructure, income, consumption, and usage of internet. As we know mobile wallet is increasing popular in urban as well as in rural India. In 2013, as per an estimation-there were 351 million internet users in the country and out of which 33% were from rural India. This percentage is expected to grow up to 50-55% by 2020.

FIG. 5: PERCENTAGE INTERNET USER IN RURAL-URBAN INDIA



Source: (ey.com/publication).

7. LATEST DEVELOPMENTS AND STRATEGIES

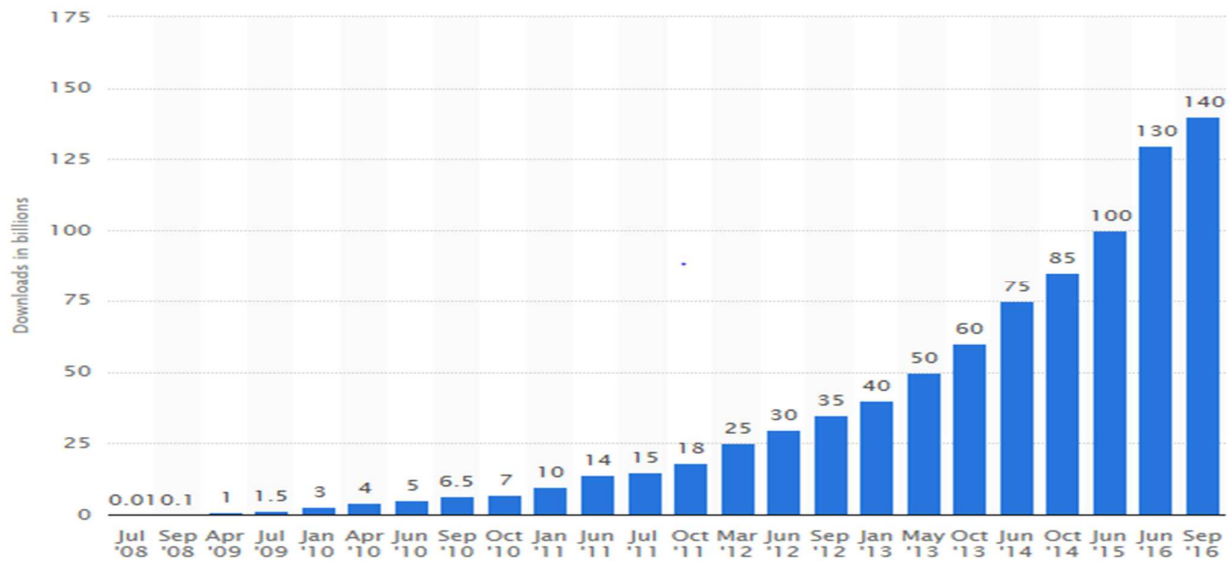
The “emergence of digital marketing is the greatest change in the traditional marketing and this leads to reinvention in the traditional marketing” ([Patrutiu & Loredana, 2015](#)). Digital marketing is dependent on technology which is ever-evolving and fast-changing. More focus has been placed on segmentation within digital marketing, in order to target specific markets in both business-to-business and business-to-consumer sectors. **Viral campaigns:** As per the opinions of the opinion leaders, viral campaigns will be more effective and powerful in the online communities. For the very purpose, there is need to create viral campaigns meticulously ([Yang et. al, 2012](#)). Factors like humour and sexuality are the main factors in ads which attract and propel the consumers to viral ads because when users are entertained by ads, they tend to pass on ads to their interacted group ([Golan and Zaidner, 2008](#)). **Proper use of social media:** This can help the marketers to establish a strong positioning among the online community. Except this, perception and responses of customers should be studied. Issues like study of customer

behaviour in online network, development of exchange relationship within peer to peer networks and e-communities and issues related to advertising, viral campaigns and media should be minutely designed and implemented (Cummins et. al, 2014). **Social Responsibility:** When a company fulfils its social responsibility, has a more impact on customers' evaluation of company and on their purchase intention (Mohr & Webb, 2005). **Trust:** The trust is very important in digital marketing and it significantly and positively influences the customers' credibility in case of product services through online- channel. Digital marketing is a multi-channel platform, full of complexities and it requires better understanding of consumers', beliefs, attitudes and way of interactions to market product online (Badrinarayan, et. al, 2012). In the online marketing, it is important to understand how the WOM affects and customers behavioural tendencies in developing strategy to maintain strong customer relationship (Kim & Song, 2010). Customers' involvement in purchase decision directly depends on a high level of trust in shopping sites (Lee et. al, 2008). Trust helps to build a strong customer relationship with all service, quality and satisfaction in online-marketing and this will propel the customers to decide and purchase more through online-network (Lee & Lin, 2005). **Novel and Emotive Content:** Customers are watching video online and advertisers are availing video-sharing sites like YouTube to promote their video advertisements. Some advertisements go viral and reach to millions of consumers. After analysing such observation, managers are urged to focus on promoting highly emotive and novel content when promoting brand content on YouTube (Leonhardt, 2015). **Integrated Digital marketing Approach:** Webber (2013) stressed on developing a framework to create digital strategies. The approach of integrated marketing including social channels like Blogs, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Linked in, Community, YouTube and so on and traditional channels such as Broadcast, websites, Events, Direct mail, outdoor ads PR and sales have been suggested to gain competitive advantages.

8. DIFFERENT CHANNELS OF DIGITAL MARKETING

1. **Influencer marketing:** This is becoming an important concept in digital marketing. It is possible to reach Influencers via paid advertising, such as Facebook Advertising or Google Ad words campaigns, or through SCRM (social customer relationship management) software, such as SAP C4C, Microsoft Dynamics, Sage CRM and Salesforce CRM (Nielsen, 2015).
2. **Online behavioural advertising:** Digital media provide opportunities to youth to post their personal information and photos online on regular basis. The study shows that in Brazil 46% of children follow this (Safenet, 2009). Young users maintain strong and positive attitudes towards online video, blogs, and ads formats comparing to aged users (Cox, 2011). It is important for the marketers to investigate the factors which affect consumers' attitudes and motives. Consumers are taking part in different activities like consuming content, participating in group dialogues, and sharing knowledge with other consumers, to contributing to other consumers' activities (Heinonen, 2011). The study strived to disclose the different important aspects of social media sites that influence consumers' attitude and concluded that group members on Facebook have positive attitude towards social media site advertising. Thus, we can also conclude that social media is a powerful platform for online ads (Chu, 2011). Online advertising may be divided into push advertising such as e-mail ads, pop-up advertisements, newsletters, banner advertising which seems like offline advertising; and on-demand advertising such as search engine marketing, smart/keyword activated banners which allows for a more non-interruptive form of advertising.
3. **Data-driven marketing-**It is a process of generating insights and trends by analysing market data or company generated data and then translating these insights and trends into actionable strategies to cater changing trends and demands of customers (ngdata.com)
4. **Remarketing-**It is a business strategy to maintain contacts with the potential customers. It reminds the customers about the products/services they purchased or used in past. With advent of internet, its role has increased in an effective way (marketing-school.org).
5. **Game advertising-**It uses different game apps.
6. **Content marketing-** Briefly, it can be described as "delivering the content that your audience is searching for". The main objectives for content marketing can be brand awareness, lead conversion, customer conversion and customer up sell (Rose and Pullizzi, 2011). Content should be with some uniqueness, somewhat remarkable (Halligan and Shah, 2010) or it should support the objectives with satisfying customers' needs (Davis, 2012).
7. **Mobile marketing:** Mobile marketing is marketing on or with a mobile device, such as a smart phone. Mobile marketing can provide customers with time and location sensitive, personalized information that promotes goods, services and ideas (Karjaluoto & Leppäniemi, 2005). Andreas Kaplan defines mobile marketing as "any marketing activity conducted through a ubiquitous network to which consumers are constantly connected using a personal mobile device" (Andreas, Kaplan, 2012). There are three things; a marketer should consider when he wants to take business through mobile or internet marketing. (A) Mobile apps (B) Payment Option (C) Adaption (gadzoog.com). India has 70% access web via mobile phones (ciim.in).
8. **Social Media Marketing –** Social networking sites provide huge opportunities to interact with world and people to maintain and develop friendship and relationship (Clarke, 2009). India has more than 82 million monthly active Facebook users, the third in world after the USA and Canada (ciim.in). 'Digital Marketing' has a number of marketing channels used in and among these, comes the Social Media. When we use social media channels like Facebook, Google+, Pinterest, Twitter, etc. to market a product or service, the strategy is called Social Media Marketing. It is a procedure where in strategies are made and executed to draw in traffic for a website or to gain attention of buyers over the web using different Social media (digitaldoughnut.com). Skaar (2009) argues that websites like Habbo and Pizzo have become very important for the children and offers important social space and experiences.
9. **Display Advertisement-** Website is the most important tool of communication on internet (Lopez & Ruiz, 2011) and fulfils different functions (Hwang et al. 2003; Karson & Fisher, 2005). It involves graphical advertisement and placing them next to content on the websites via Emails, using other digital formats. Advertisement can be images, audio/video clips, animation or other interactive contents (digitaldoughnut.com). It provides a platform for public relation. Online marketing facilitates this through different ways.
- a) **Video advertising:** Such type of advertising means the advertisements that are played on online videos e.g. YouTube videos. Such type of marketing has seen an increase in popularity over time. Online Video Advertising usually consists of three types.
 - (i) Pre-Roll advertisements which play before the video is watched
 - (ii) Mid-Roll advertisements which play during the video
 - (iii) Post-Roll advertisements which play after the video is watched.
- b) **Affiliate Marketing:** It is also called performance based marketing. It involves business owner and one or more websites/affiliates. Affiliate owners place advertisement on their websites to market the products or services in exchange for percentage of profits. The affiliates can make money in three ways (A) pay per click (B) pay per sale (C) pay per lead. In this marketing- owner's advertisement is free of cost (digitaldoughnut.com).
10. **APP Based Marketing:** With the increasingly widespread use of smart phones, app usage has also greatly increased. Therefore, mobile marketers have increasingly taken advantage of Smartphone apps as a marketing resource. This allows for direct engagement, payment, and targeted advertising (statista.com).

FIG. 6: TOTAL NUMBER OF APPS DOWNLOADED FROM THE APPLE APP STORE FROM JULY 2008 TO SEPTEMBER 2016 (in billions)



Source- (statista.com)

9. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. There are more than 3.7 billion internet users in the world. In Asia, there is maximum number of internet users (1.8 billion) followed by Europe (636 million), Africa (345 million) and North America (320 million) by March, 2017.
2. India has the more than 462 million internet users by March, 2017 of which 150 million Facebook- subscribers. India has more than 82 million monthly active Facebook users, the third in world after the USA and Canada.
3. Digital media business is expected to reach INR 200 billion by 2020 in which 23-28% contribution will be of digital-advertisements. Marketing with Mobile- Apps and social media is like emerging trends.
4. 62% of the content consumed by consumers on you Tube is short term content.
5. In India, Mobile penetration rose from 72% in 2011 to 81% in 2016 and is expected to reach over 90% in 2021.
6. By the end of 2020, there will around 650 million internet users in India and of which 50-55% will be from rural India.
7. Marketers should not ignore the power of Viral Campaigns to gain competitive advantages.
8. In digital marketing, Trust-Building is must.

10. SUGGESTIONS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

(1). Digital integrated marketing approach should be used by marketers. (2). For the success of digital marketing, marketers' focus should be on short term content as consumers prefer short-term digital-content and length of video viewed in India being less than 20 minutes. (3). In India, mobile penetration is high, so APP-based marketing will be the perfect weapon. (4). Business should focus on their social responsibilities and trust building among their customers and this will create customer loyalty among customers. (5). Marketers should effectively utilise viral campaign and social media. *Mazzarol et al., (2007) and Ferguson, (2008)* proposed that positive word of mouth plays a significant role in marketing and viral campaigns propelling customers to purchase. In this study, the researchers said that Digital Content should be valuable, useful, as per time, relevant and compelling (*Holliman and Rowley, 2014*). Work-framed communication will generate a more effective influence than fun-framed communication (*Mckey and Yoon, 2015*). A current study concluded that users' generated e-WOM directly influences the brand attitude and customers' purchase intention (*kudeshia and Kumar, 2017*). The study of (*Yang et. al, 2017*) stated that entertainment, informativeness, irritation and credibility influence the purchasing attitudes of online customers. All these suggestions will help the marketers to understand and avail the digital environmental opportunities in India as well as in abroad and all this will enhance their morale in field of marketing.

11. CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

Online connected customers offer huge opportunities to be availed by the marketers. Online network is a bazaar, a place to interact with ongoing world and to learn many new things (*Levine, et al., 2001*). Digital Marketing especially social marketing is driving changes in customers' behaviour and also in society at global level (*Kaplan and Heinlein, 2010*). For digital marketing "shared consciousness and a sense of moral responsibility and affinity from companies will enhance the trust level of customers" and will make consumers more confident for acting on information gained from online communities (*Bart et al., 2005*). The appearance of the online community Web site will facilitate the trust-building among customers and success of online marketing campaign (*Schlosser et al., 2006*). Effective use of digital marketing can result in relatively lower costs in relation to traditional means of marketing such as lowered external service cost, advertising cost, promotion cost, processing cost, interface cost and control cost (*Van, 2007*). Advertising in online social networks will soon become a key marketing strategy as visits to the online social networks are continue to increase and will definitely impact traffics to commercial websites. Digital marketing is an effective tool in the hands of marketers in this competitive era and for this marketing manager should focus on digital contents (*Rowely, 2010*). E-mail has also become integral part of people' everyday lives in workplaces and home (*Danaher and Rossiter, 2011*). Thus, marketers has started thinking with development of digital media that immediate future is full of opportunities for broadening the focus for making marketing a success (*Bell et. al, 2012*). Young Customers show strong attributes for online advertising formats with blogs, video, brand channel and brand page than the matured and aged customers (*Brackett & Carr, 2001*).

Digital marketing is a very important feature in the success of a business. Now there is need to modify the marketing devices as per the changing scenario. The growth is expected to be fuelled by availability of low- cost smart phones, low rates of data plans and development of smart cities in rural areas. Marketing practices like internet marketing, mobile marketing and email marketing will help to achieve a competitive edge in the market for long run profits. A good marketer should know how to avail the power of social media and other devices of digital marketing to market the brand image of company. Digital marketers should focus on products with unique selling propositions, better quality, zero defects and cost effectiveness. Simultaneously, there is need to understand the online social network users' attitude before drafting marketing campaign as attitude of online users differ across different age group.

12. SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This research paper is a review based effort. If extensive literature review is done or primary data is collected, findings may be different. So, the researchers have an opportunity to do a similar study with extensive literature survey and with primary data to highlight the hidden paradigms of digital marketing.

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