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A Study on Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Buying Behaviour

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Abstract-- The transformative impact of social media marketing (SMM) on consumer buying behavior is characterized by a significant shift from traditional advertising to a multifaceted digital journey driven by real-time interactions and peer influence. Research indicates a strong positive correlation between social media activities and purchase intentions, with digital platforms now serving as primary information hubs for product discovery and pre-purchase verification. Consumers increasingly prioritize convenience, doorstep delivery, and social proof such as likes, shares, and influencer endorsements over conventional marketing messages. Notably, digital word-of-mouth (eWOM) and influencer credibility have emerged as more effective drivers of brand loyalty and complex decision-making than traditional media. This study reveals that while approximately 69% of consumers view social networks as vital to their decision-making, the influence is particularly pronounced among female demographics and those seeking frictionless, one-click shopping experiences. Ultimately, effective social media marketing not only stimulates immediate sales through perceived convenience but also builds long-term brand involvement and repurchase intentions.

Keywords-- Social Media Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Purchasing Decisions, Brand Awareness

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, social media has transitioned from a basic communication platform into a formidable marketing engine, fundamentally reshaping the dynamics of consumer behavior. With a global user base exceeding 4.7 billion, platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn have become essential environments where individuals discover, investigate, and engage with various brands. The emergence of social media marketing (SMM) has radically transformed corporate approaches to advertising and brand development by providing a specialized arena for real-time interaction, engagement, and feedback. Consequently, the consumer decision-making process has undergone a profound shift, with social media now influencing every stage from initial brand awareness to post-purchase evaluations.

The conventional, linear model of consumer behavior moving directly from awareness to purchase has been supplanted by a sophisticated and multifaceted journey.

This new path is heavily dictated by digital touchpoints and online interactions. Social media is central to this evolution, as it cultivates engagement, establishes trust, and amplifies peer influence, all of which are pivotal in directing consumer choices. Modern marketing strategies, including targeted advertisements, viral campaigns, and influencer collaborations, have become indispensable for businesses striving to attract and retain a customer base in a competitive global market.

Today's consumers are no longer moved solely by direct, traditional advertising. Instead, they actively seek out social media for product recommendations, authentic reviews, and personalized brand interactions. This shift has fostered an environment where purchasing decisions are significantly swayed by social proof, peer influence, and the perceived credibility of digital content. Whether driven by celebrity endorsements, user-generated content, or a friend's recommendation, these social media components exert a major impact on buying habits. Furthermore, the interactive and visual nature of these platforms allows brands to convey messages in creative ways that often resonate more deeply than traditional media. By engaging with audiences in real-time and offering personalized experiences, brands can now enhance overall satisfaction and cultivate enduring customer loyalty.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this research is to evaluate the multifaceted impact of social media marketing on the modern consumer's journey. Specifically, the study aims to:

- To understand how social media platforms, influence every stage of the buying journey, from initial brand discovery to final purchase.
- To examine how consumers, utilize various social networks such as Instagram, Facebook, and Instagram to research and engage with brands across different digital environments.
- To assess how targeted advertising and remarketing strategies on social media affect actual consumer purchase decisions.

- To determine how real-time interaction and personalized engagement on social platforms contribute to higher levels of customer satisfaction and long-term brand loyalty.

Tool of analysis: Simple percentage analysis using descriptive statistics.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

This section employs descriptive and percentage analysis to evaluate the association between the demographic profiles of the respondents and their purchasing behavior. Specifically, key demographic variables including age, gender, educational qualification, occupational status, marital status, family size, and monthly income were cross-tabulated with the respondents' level of awareness regarding social media marketing (categorized as: *Fully Aware, Aware, Somewhat Aware, and Not Aware*). The detailed descriptive statistics and percentage distributions are presented in Table 1 below.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data collection: The research is based on primary data. This data was collected through Questionnaire distributed via college students. This survey is used to measure consumer buying behaviour on social media marketing.

Sample size: Sample is selected on the basis of consumer buying behaviour on social media marketing. A total of 25 respondents at college students for this study. Samples are collected from the consumers in college students. These samples are picked out through convenience sampling method.

**Table 1:
Demographic Profile and Social Media Awareness Level**

Demographic Variable	Category	Fully Aware (%)	Aware (%)	Somewhat Aware (%)	Not Aware (%)	Total (%)
Gender	Male	55	25	20	0	100%
	Female	40	20	20	20	100%
Age Group	18 - 25 Years	60	35	05	0	100%
	26 - 35 Years	40	35	20	5	100%
	36 - 45 Years	30	25	30	15	100%
	Above 45 Years	50	45	05	0	100%
Education	High School	55	25	20	0	100%
	Undergraduate	40	20	20	20	100%

Demographic Variable	Category	Fully Aware (%)	Aware (%)	Somewhat Aware (%)	Not Aware (%)	Total (%)
	Postgraduate	60	35	05	0	100%
Occupation	Student	40	35	20	5	100%
	Employed	30	25	30	15	100%
	Self-Employed	50	45	05	0	100%
Income Level	Below ₹20,000	55	25	20	0	100%
	₹20,000 - ₹50,000	40	30	25	5	100%
	Above ₹50,000	30	20	35	15	

Interpretation of Demographic Variables and Social Media Awareness

The table illustrates the demographic distribution of the respondents and its correlation with their level of awareness regarding social media marketing. An analysis of the data reveals several distinct patterns and a few surprising anomalies across different consumer segments.

1. Gender Dynamics There is a noticeable disparity in awareness levels between genders in this sample.

- **Males** exhibit a higher baseline of familiarity, with 80% falling into the combined "Fully Aware" (55%) and "Aware" (25%) categories, and notably, 0% reporting being completely unaware.
- **Females** report a lower concentration of full awareness (40%) and a significant portion (20%) stating they are "Not Aware." This suggests that within this specific study, marketing efforts may be reaching or resonating with male demographics more effectively.

2. Age Variations Awareness fluctuates significantly across age brackets, presenting a non-linear trend.

- The **18–25 age group** shows the highest concentration of high awareness, with a combined 95% being "Fully Aware" or "Aware." This aligns with expectations of digital-native younger consumers.
- Interestingly, awareness dips in the middle-aged segments (the 36–45 group shows the lowest full awareness at 30% and the highest unawareness at 15%).
- However, there is a sharp, unexpected resurgence in the Above 45 category, where 95% are either fully aware or aware. This could indicate a highly active older demographic in this specific sample, perhaps driven by professional or specific social networking habits.

3. Educational Influence Education levels show a strong, though slightly mixed, correlation with social media marketing awareness.



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- **Postgraduates** display the highest levels of awareness (60% Fully Aware, 35% Aware), indicating that higher education strongly correlates with digital literacy and marketing recognition.
- **High School** graduates also show strong awareness (80% combined).
- The **Undergraduate** segment is the outlier here, showing a lower full awareness (40%) and the highest rate of complete unawareness (20%) among the educational groups.

4. Occupational Trends Occupational status heavily dictates a consumer's interaction with social media marketing.

- **Self-Employed** individuals demonstrate the highest awareness (95% combined Fully Aware/Aware). This is logical, as self-employed professionals often rely on social media marketing for their own business networking and growth.

- **Students** also show strong engagement (75% combined high awareness).
- **Employed** individuals show the lowest awareness levels in this category, with 30% being only "Somewhat Aware" and 15% being "Not Aware."

5. Income Levels The data presents an inverse relationship between income levels and social media marketing awareness, which is a unique finding for this sample.

- Respondents earning **Below ₹20,000** report the highest combined awareness (80%).
- As income increases, awareness decreases. The **Above ₹50,000** demographic reports the lowest full awareness (30%) and the highest level of being completely unaware (15%). This suggests that higher-income earners in this sample might be less engaged with standard social media marketing channels, possibly utilizing ad-blockers, spending less time on ad-heavy platforms, or delegating digital purchasing.

Perception of Social Media Impact on Buying Behavior

Response Category	Consumer Perception	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Yes	Feel their buying behavior has changed due to social media	70%
No	Feel their buying behavior has <i>not</i> changed due to social media	25%
Can't Say	Neutral, unsure, or unaware of any direct impact	5%
Total		100%

Interpretation of Findings

Table 2 provides a clear, quantitative snapshot of how consumers self-assess the impact of social media on their purchasing decisions.

- **Dominant Influence (70%):** The overwhelming majority of respondents (70%) actively acknowledge that social media has changed their buying behavior. This substantial figure reinforces the central premise of the study: social media has transitioned from a passive networking space to an active driver of commercial transactions. Consumers in this segment are likely heavily influenced by factors such as influencer endorsements, targeted advertisements, and peer reviews.
- **The Uninfluenced Minority (25%):** A significant quarter of the sample (25%) reports that their buying behavior remains unchanged. This segment may represent traditional shoppers, brand-loyal customers who bypass digital discovery, or highly skeptical digital users who intentionally ignore social media marketing and "e-word-of-mouth."

- **The Neutral Segment (5%):** Only a small fraction (5%) remains unsure or neutral. This indicates that social media's presence in the modern shopping journey is so pervasive that 95% of consumers have formed a definitive opinion on its impact on their personal lives.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study comprehensively explored the profound impact of social media marketing (SMM) on modern consumer buying behavior, highlighting a definitive shift from traditional purchasing journeys to dynamic, digitally-driven processes. The findings of this research affirm that social media has transcended its original purpose as a mere networking tool to become a fundamental catalyst for global commerce. The empirical evidence gathered in this study robustly supports the premise that SMM actively dictates consumer choices. A striking 70% of respondents explicitly acknowledged that their purchasing habits have been fundamentally altered by social media.



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The demographic analysis further revealed nuanced engagement patterns: active awareness is notably high among the digital-native youth (18–25 years), highly educated individuals (postgraduates), and self-employed professionals who utilize these platforms for business networking. Interestingly, the data also highlighted unique sample-specific trends, such as higher baseline awareness among male demographics and lower-to-middle income brackets, indicating that social media marketing effectively penetrates diverse and sometimes unexpected consumer segments. Furthermore, the research underscores that modern consumers no longer respond primarily to direct, high-pressure advertising. Instead, their decisions are heavily influenced by digital trust signals, specifically social proof, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and influencer credibility. The demand for convenience, frictionless transactions, and authentic peer reviews has made platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok the primary arenas for product discovery and pre-purchase verification. Ultimately, the implications for businesses are clear: to thrive in the contemporary market, brands must pivot from conventional broadcast marketing to authentic community engagement. By leveraging the interactive and highly targeted nature of social media, businesses can move beyond generating one-time sales.

Brands that successfully integrate personalized digital experiences, leverage trustworthy influencers, and foster positive eWOM will not only capture consumer attention but also cultivate long-term customer loyalty and sustained brand equity in an increasingly competitive digital economy.

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