

# Community Marketing: an effective Marketing Strategy

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**Abstract:** Marketing communication is playing very vital role in creating and maintaining brand image in the mind of consumers. Community marketing is one of the effective, efficient and low cost marketing communication strategies for various purposes. Community marketing includes creation of group of consumers, suppliers, or intermediaries having common goal, liking or usage of the product. The practice of community marketing is very old. In the present scenario community marketing is practiced through social media. Community marketing is a process that includes creating an engaging brand presence of particular product or services or organisation in order to interact with a community of existing customers as well as prospective consumers. Various online platforms are used for community marketing. It occurs in places like enthusiast groups, Facebook groups, online message boards and Twitter accounts. However, this digital space marketers provide space for the entire community to share views about products or services or organisation. Research also reveals that marketers obtain mileage through community marketing in terms of brand awareness or brand belongingness amongst present brand users. However, recent trends reveals that it has been widely used for feedback from customers, identification of customer's needs, better customer-focused product development, better positioning for damage control, enthusiastic word-of-mouth marketing and transparency. Recent evidences indicate that various advertisement campaigns of the multinational companies in India are also supported through community marketing through various social media to make them more effective and successful. The present study is an attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of community marketing by various community-marketing practices followed by marketers. Influence of community marketing initiatives through various social media platforms for generating commercial advantage is also being examined. Marketers can easily generate word of mouth publicity through such community marketing. The scope of present research includes examine online marketing community practices in the Indian context only. The said research work has followed exploratory research design and it is based on secondary data from various platforms of social media. Various advertisement camping as well as community activities executed by the marketers are evaluated from the view point of the participation of the consumers and reaction by the marketers in this paper.

**Keywords:** Community Marketing, Social Media and Customer Relationship

**JEL Classification:** M3- Marketing and Advertising – M31 - Marketing

## Introduction

In the present age of the digital communication, importance of social media is immense as social media provides platform quick and easy platform for individual communication as well as for the business communication. Marketers in the present situation would like to utilise every platform of communication for creation of brand engagement. 360-degree brand communication by the marketers is need of

the situation. Majority of Indian consumers are young earners having easy access to internet. 75% of India's online audience is under 35 years (Naidu, 2015). Marketers have had adopted digital and on line communication for young generation. There is significant change in the life style of the young generation. Young generation of the country would like to be online and connected with their friends and relatives. For deeper and continuous connectivity with consumer,

marketers have utilised various social media platforms. Higher sale of smart phone and usage of internet from tab and smart phone had been increased. This leads to utilisation of social media platforms.

Social media is an emerging medium that is being rapidly adopted by the demographic dividend of the country in present days. Social media is the most easy and cheapest way of brand communication. Advertisement of Brand communication through social media is

measurable (one of the important advantage for the marketers, which is not available in case of conventions brand communication methods). Attention of consumer on the various social media has been increased to greater extent that leads to shift methods communication of brand. Customised brand communication can help in creation of emotional connection of consumer with brand.

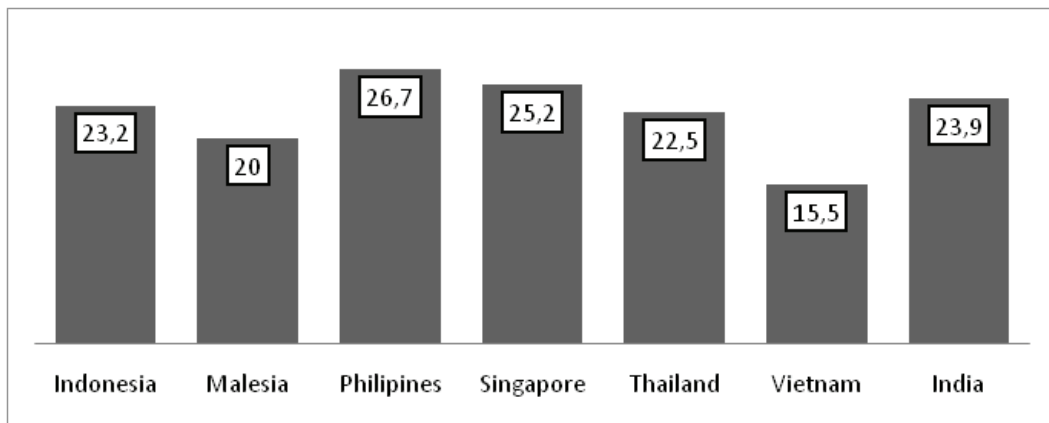
### Importance of Social Media in Marketing Communication

#### Increasing number of Indian users of Internet

Internet users in India are increasing at an electrifying speed. . Easy access to mobile not only on desktop and laptop but also even on mobile is playing very important

role in significant increase in number of internet users. Due to increase in the internet user, internet based communication needs to be developed by the marketer. Easy access in the mobile device, better connectivity and easy sharing of ideas, thoughts and audio video material leads to increase in traffic on internet (Table 1).

**Table 1: Average Time (In Hours) Spent Online Per Week**



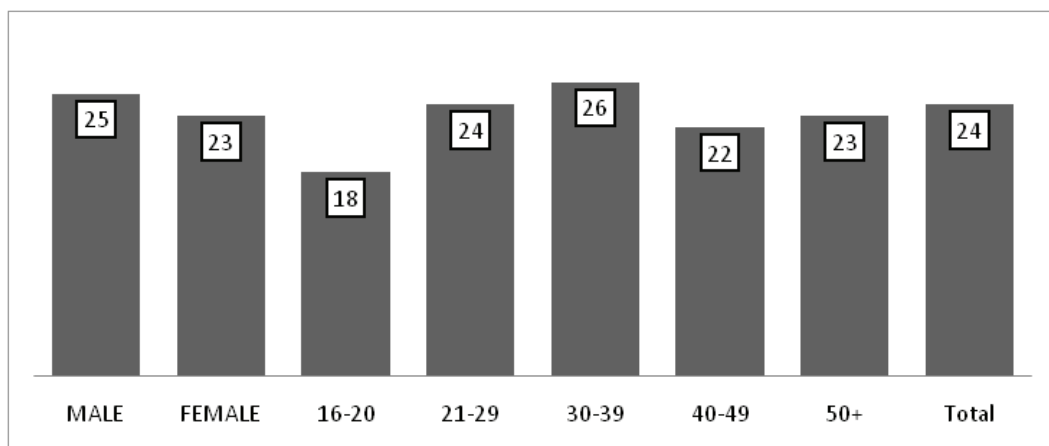
Source: Business World Marketing White Book 2015-16 page no 238.

On an average four hours, usage of internet on daily basis is significant. Thus, internet will be considered to be one of the most preferred platform for communication. Demographic data about usage of internet provides better

picture of internet usage in the country. Highest time spent on internet for personal purpose is in the age group of 30-39 (Table 2). The data shows that marketers need to develop separate plan for the communication with the consumer on

internet. Community marketing is one of the important platforms for such. On line platform for the interaction with the consumers plays very vital role in the consumer buying intentions (Khan and Rehmani 2011).

**Table 2: Average Total Time Spent (in hours) online by Indians on Age group-wise and Gender wise in a Week for Personal Purpose**



Source: Business World Marketing White Book 2015-16 page no 238.

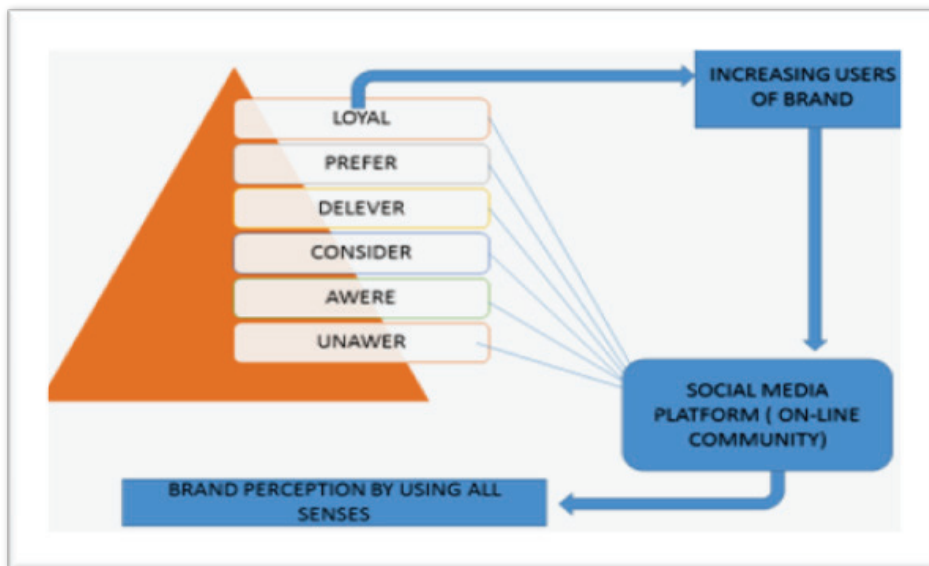
## Community marketing as one of the tool of Social Media

Community is group of present consumers or potential consumers wither created automatically or created by marketers who interacts with each other and marketers both. Online community means and include group of consumers and prospective consumer who use specific platform of contact to interact with other and communicate with the marketer of the brand also. Customer-firm engagements are enhanced due to community participation (Algesheimer al 2010). Social media has not been accepted by many firms for business or

brand communication. The crucial elements of Consumer, Content and Context promise to deliver better marketing communication. Reaching to the consumers is one the important challenge for the marketers for marketing communication. After reaching to the consumers Brand needs to establish communication and engage consumer with the brand. This entire process can be done very easily and in personalised manner in case of communicating members though on-line community platform. One the important issue in case of communication and engagement of consumer is constant. Through spontaneous interaction with the target consumer

in online community, consumer engagement is easy and can be converted in brand loyal one. Response to the interactive consumer to resolve consumer problem creates confidence in brand. Advertisement campaign though social media can easily connect right consumers. Indian film views are influenced by the social media communication (Bhattacharya and Dasgupta 2014).Size of Following is a Better Predictor of Engagement and Social engagement is driven by multiple factors (Social Media Benchmarks 2015 Report). Community marketing involve consumer in the brand (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Community Marketing-Consumer influence process



## Community Marketing

Community marketing is a strategy that involves forming an engaging brand presence in order to interact with a community of existing customers. This type of marketing occurs in places like enthusiast groups, Facebook groups, online message boards and Twitter accounts. These communities give members a place to make their needs known and give companies the opportunity to respond and make them feel important – which they are. While other areas of marketing, like advertising and public relations, generally focus on adding new customers, community

marketing emphasizes the relationship with the customers that a brand already has.

People are “communal” by nature as they can be engaged around their functions, disciplines, information needs and professions, to name a few. When we build relationships with people, whether it’s in a direct way (for instance, on a social network such as LinkedIn) or indirectly (for instance, the readers of our blogs), communities are built. These communities already exist and need to grow. An online community is a gathering of people interacting and collaborating toward a common goal. These days, companies are investing in building

communities on open social networks like Facebook and Twitter, while also building their own community properties.

By using social media, corporate blogs and dedicated community platforms marketers can identify them, provide them with home bases to interact and nurture them on social and the web. The result is an online community. With the advent of social technologies, the number of possibilities to facilitate, nurture and engage online communities has exploded. Online and social community marketing is about using the power of online communities to; build personal relationships and networks of trust,

bring together people with common interests or profiles, engage these specific groups of people.

Depending on the goals marketers want to serve and the target groups, marketers want to engage, there are different types of online communities like social networks, grassroots communities and customer communities are popular online communities. The outcomes we strive for when engaging a community aim to fulfil several marketing and business objectives. Depending on these objectives, online communities will require more or less resources, dedication and value.

Out of all above communities, Indian marketers have created customer communities and influence of customer communities have significant influence on the consumer behaviour and intentions. Influence of social networks in standalone capacity is insignificant. Indian marketers are creators of the customer communities for their services or products. There are two types of online community created by the marketers. One community is supported by the social media platform and other community is created by the marketers themselves on their own platform. The ownership of both communities is in the hands of marketer by its usage and effectiveness is different. There are fundamental differences between a social network like Facebook or Twitter and an owned online community destination like the Apple Support Communities.

Community is a natural phenomenon, a mind-set and a way of engagement. It is also the essence of social business. Communities of people have always existed and online communities existed long before we even used blogs. An online community is no different from any other community except for the fact it is online. It is a group of people with something in common, which could include shared interests, experiences, ideals, goals (typically in non-profit, for instance) or profiles (e.g. loyal customers or fans of a brand). Communities are often based on proximity. Every blog, business, blogger, organization and individual that is active on the Web

has an online community and often even different ones.

These communities can partially overlap with offline communities. Marketers' community of Twitter followers, for instance, can include friends, family members, colleagues and customers. A big part of some communities is invisible. Take the community of blog readers, for instance. There is always a core community of loyal readers, fans of a specific blogger and people who are very interested in one topic and therefore keep coming back. But most will never comment so Marketers can't identify them. This is where forms, polls and mechanisms to capture data, for instance by offering an eBook, come in. Identification of community members, fans, etc. is essential in conversion.

Social media based online community enhance access to data and more options for control. A well-formed social media strategy likely will include social networks such as Facebook in addition to owned online properties. At the time of development of network strategy suitability of the respective social media platform with such strategy is required to be examined. The user experience and available data are based on what the platform is willing to provide and that will probably have little to do with a company's own objectives and needs. Depending on a company's needs, owned online communities present multiple opportunities for enhanced business value. Based on a company's objectives, they can create an experience to help them to achieve their goals, whether that is reaching new customers or increasing internal efficiencies. Online communities are used for various functions of marketing management.

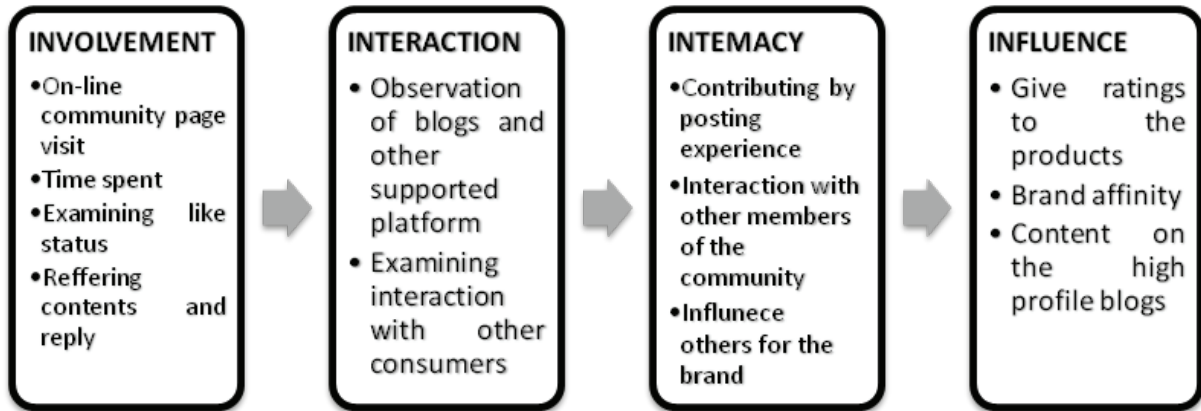
### **Online Community Influence Present & Prospective Consumer Faster**

Online communities are using electronic word of mouth publicity and influence other consumers or members of the community and prospective buyer of the brand. Chain of involvement of the every member on the basis of their category had

been generated and ultimately an attempt had been made to spread the community larger. Depending upon the goals set by the organisation community development can be done. Particularly in India brands such online communities are utilised in different manner by different brands. Online communities are considered as multipurpose communication platform. First of brand advocates are utilised for the electronic word of mouth publicity with the help of brand loyal consumers. The present actual users are used or involved in the endorsement of the brand at the third level to attract prospective consumer. In the case of online communities (specifically in case of Facebook based) no of visitors of page is higher but actual users or prospects are fewer. Reference groups of the users are being referred through networking of the members of the online community. At this fourth layer of the communication the size of the community or likability of the brand has been increased to great extent. On the emotional level, loyalty is related to trust, perceived value, feeling of status, satisfaction, degree of personal attention, sense of exclusivity and credibility, to name just a few. These same emotional dimensions play a key role in word-of-mouth and in community marketing.

Different marketing functions can be discharged with the help of community marketing. Online community is considered to be very effective and low cost strategic tool of involving consumer in the brand. Behaviour of the prospective buyer for the particular brand is mentioned in the Figure 2. First of all the buying intention of the prospect is reflected in the form of time spent on the respective on-line community's cyber space. It provides first-hand information about the proposed brand of product and services. On the basis of such involvement interaction will take place. It may be in the form of query or inquiry. The level of affection towards the brand is reflected in the form of posting opinion on respective online platform. At this stage strong brand affection is created amongst such consumers.

Figure 2: Behaviour of prospective buyer for particular brand



Source: <http://marketing-made-simple.com/articles/purchase-funnel.htm>

### Benefits of Online Communities

Online communities can be beneficial to members and customers in many ways. Communities exist but to “capture” them and let them grow, Marketers need to know what the members of Marketers (future) community want.

Setting clear and actionable goals is vital to the launch and development of any successful online community. Goals and objectives will differ depending on marketer’s target group (market, job function, topics of interest, etc.) and marketer’s strategy. They can range from providing great value for existing customers or developing a community to ‘claim’ a specific topic to developing resources and helpful content that go beyond the brand and can even take the form of so-called ‘powered by’ community platforms whereby Marketers are just an initiator. The most important thing, however, is to know what – future – members want, or in other words: what benefits and value can Marketers offer so people join marketers’ online community.

#### Customer support

Customers often visit online business communities for the purpose of gaining customer support. Sometimes this support comes in the form of an employee providing guidance and feedback while other times the feedback may come from other customers. For technical products, customer communities

become a great place for customers to share their experiences and problems, both positive and negative. Although some businesses may be wary of airing product issues in a public forum, most find it to be a good experience. In fact, a customer community represents an effective public relations venue, offering the company an opportunity to demonstrate its interest in the customer by staying active within the community and to provide answers to any questions or issues—or at least let the community know it is working on one. The communities themselves can become powerful sources of word-of-mouth marketing, as customers share their first-hand experiences with each other. With customers working together, learning from each other, and sharing best practices, companies can often do more with less and effectively use a customer community as their 1st level of product support. Of course, company employee interaction is required, but a customer community can allow companies to provide many-to-many answers, instead of one-to-one answers, which is an efficient and cost effective way of providing customer support.

#### Self-esteem need of consumer

People experience accomplishment when they contribute useful information to the online community. If an individual helps a fellow customer with a problem, that person usually gets a feeling of satisfaction from the experience. Humans need to feel important in

some way or form. By helping others, members can gain a feeling of being needed and appreciated by others. When a customer community is used to share useful product information, assist customers in product use, promote product interest, or answer customer questions, customers feel that their voices matter. A community with these attributes increases customer loyalty, which in turn grows business through word-of-mouth marketing.

#### Better products and better performance

Customer communities provide a great forum for interaction between a company and its customers. With real-time feedback, companies can stop developing in isolation. They can see exactly how customers are using their products. For example, a product manager can share new ideas for product features with a customer community. He can quickly learn that many customers are excited about the new feature ideas, or the opposite that the features do not resonate at all. With this kind of knowledge, companies can build products that better suit customer expectations. In addition, when customers feel like they are part of the process, they share that with peers through word-of-mouth marketing.

#### Emotional attachment is useful to create loyal consumers

People join communities because it offers them a benefit and most of

the time, if not always, it's an emotional benefit (even if we rationalize it). Understanding these emotional benefits is a powerful way to tap into them. Some of them, such as reputation, are good arguments for participating in communities of others as well.

### ***Strong relationship with active interaction***

The concept and value of a brand is often difficult to measure, so some companies do not give branding the attention it deserves. By contrast, organizations that nurture and grow brands know how truly invaluable they are to a company's product and business growth, since positive brand experiences fuel word-of-mouth marketing. Customer communities are a great fit with brand management because they have the ability to personalize a brand and establish a stronger relationship between company and customer by taking typical customer interaction beyond the use of a product or website interaction, to first-hand interaction with company staff.

### ***Brand Loyalty and Brand Reputation***

When a customer community is used to share useful product information, assist customers in product use, promote product interest, or answer customer questions, customers feel that their voices matter. A community with these attributes increases customer loyalty, which in turn grows business through word-of-mouth marketing. Some people post helpful information on a regular basis to online business communities. When someone becomes regularly involved in contributing useful information in company discussions, the person can gain a good reputation in that community. The most valuable communities often are built for existing or loyal customers. Simple benefits don't suffice for the 'best' customers. They will join when we offer them the unexpected, the sense of exclusivity, the right answers to make them succeed and high perceived value. If this can be achieved for other target groups, these communities will

turn into powerful brand reputation and sales instruments.

### **Limitations of Community Marketing**

#### ***Mix up of users and non-users:***

Online community which is prepared on facebook, twitter or any other platform have interaction from present buyer and prospective buyers and non-buyers also. It is extremely difficult to know who actual buyer is. Online community always have threat of opinion posting and its impact on other community members by non-user of the product. Marketers needs to be active and vigilant to eliminate posting from such non users or prospectus.

#### ***Require experts:***

Management of online community requires sound technical knowledge. From the various cases which we have examined in the research paper we have observe that there is shortage of such technocrats. Marketers needs to understand that such platforms can't be kept idle after enthusiastic start.

#### ***Lack of online reputation management:***

Online reputation management is most important area of concern for online community marketers. One negative comment on the brand or the firm create negative impact in the mind of other community members (Meri Maggie Facebook page). Quick response for every negative comment is necessary to restrict such negative impact. Negative word of mouth publicity spread faster than positive word of mouth publicity.

#### ***Not useful for uneducated consumer:***

In a country like India, community marketing is useful but cannot connect with all the product users. The level of education among consumers of India / population is low hence, reach of online community is significantly lower as to the tool number of actual user of the brand. It can attract only educated and young user of the brand.

### ***Problem of connectivity if net (costly net connectivity):***

One of the problem faced by India is net connectivity. Though number of users of social media has been increased but net connectivity could not connect every brand user. Net connectivity is costly affair to many Indians even today. Communication through online community is restricted to only affordable consumers.

### ***Reliability of likes and opinion may be question mark:***

Reliability is major concern for online communities. Word of mouth publicity - opinion and likes can be purchased or outsourced or managed for creating hype for the brand. To what extent expression given by the community member is reliable is questionable.

### **Literature Review**

**Ang (2011)** critically evaluated practices of the marketers though social media by creating online communities. The researcher is of the opinion that the marketers' practice of managing consumers through such social media needs to be called electronic customer relationship as it does not support all basic elements of customer relationship management. It is further opined that consumers, as well as prospective buyers, like to interact though social media. Firms are required to obtain advantage by utilising opinion of the brand users, reaction towards advertisement of the marketers and idea for the development of new product and for building long term relationship with customers in the form of Brand Loyalty.

**Assaad and Gomez (2011)** believed that establishing communities for the offerings has been a proven way of building brand loyalty without communication barriers and promoting viral marketing with the help of endorsement of customer testimonials. Consumer involvement in community marketing is considered to be one of the greatest achievements. Researchers are of the opinion that this communication platform helps in determining needs of the consumers on

a personal level through encouraging consumers to participate enthusiastically.

**Bajpai, Pandey and Shriwas (2012)** evaluated the impact of social media on consumer attention. Social media plays significant role in influencing buyer behaviour. Involvement of Consumer in the brand though on line community interaction on the social media platform is difficult task. Creating and maintaining social media based community motivates consumers for using the brand as well as marketers can know the precise need of the consumer for developing new product. Researchers have suggested use of sales promotion tool for the on line community for making effective and intensive buying.

**Brown, Broderick, and Lee (2007)** investigated the influence of word of mouth communication within online communities. The study reveals that online consumers are more active and discerning, are more accessible to one-on-one processes, and can provide a wealth of valuable cultural and marketing related information that enables consumers to have a major hand in both the design of products. WOM has a greater impact on product judgments, attitude formation, and decision making than formal marketing communications. The study had concluded that marketers created strong online ties with consumers through various social world platforms. Word of mouth publicity through social platform has significant influence on the consumers and through such online communities consumer develops an emotional relation with other members also.

**Dholakia and Algesheimer (2009)** advocate creation of brand community which leads to synergetic effect by providing motivation to the existing consumer and creates interest amongst the prospective buyer. Brand community provides empowerment to the consumers. Researchers are of the opinion that there are many avenues for the marketers to generate positive feeling about brand though brand communities.

**Dholakia, Bagozzi and Pearo (2004)** developed a model for social

influence of consumer participation in network and small group virtual communities. Researchers examined the platform or venue for the social influence of the consumer on virtual communities. Researchers revealed that features of the application of the platform like interaction with the consumers had significant influence on the community. Interactive platform provides an opportunity to small group based community with frequent interactions, which plays an important role in building interpersonal relations amongst members. Social influence model developed by research indicates that consumer decision making is direct function of the social influence.

**Miller and Lammas (2010)** through their research, said that social media is potentially powerful media for tracing key consumers and generating brand advocacy for attracting new consumers. Researchers have suggested that the trust worthiness of online social media based word of mouth publicity is lower compare to the conventional word of mouth publicity. Marketers needs to develop an environment which consumer can connect with the firm and other users of the brand and share relevant information amongst other consumers. Marketers need to listen to consumers and react accordingly as per expectation of the consumers. Special programmes for the rewarding existing consumers needs to be developed and influenced the potential consumers.

**Oestreicher and Zalmanson (2013)** examined the changes in the content industry and revealed that there is sea change in the industry. Marketers now prefer more interactive platforms for digital communication on net. The study indicates that inter-active webs sites of the marketers are more effective and influential to the consumer. Interactive platform of the marketers can easily draw an attention of present and prospective consumers. At the interactive platforms marketers. New users or prospective users of the brand strongly follow the opinion given by existing users of the brand. The researcher had recommended aligning digital

marketing strategy with the communicating strategy so consumer can participate in interaction with the firm.

**Thurau, Gwiner, Walsh and Gremler (2004)** have examined various platforms of e-word of mouth publicity and concluded that marketers or platform providers should identify contributors on the platform on the basis of motives behind their interaction on the platform. Segmentation on the basis of motives of the consumers who have given their opinion or interact on the site will be more useful for developing customer oriented interaction though different platform and such segmentation can also enhance familiarity of individual consumers amongst the same platform members.

## Rationale of Study

Online brand community on the social media platform provides cost effective and faster communication opportunities to the marketer. Online communities are the easiest platforms for performing various task of marketing management. In the present age of "Digital India" and "Free Basics" by Facebook, commercial use of the social media is proven to be effective. An attempt has been made to know the use of the social media employed by marketers of the country by creating online communities.

Online communities are basically created for the creation of brand influence amongst new consumers and later on attempt has been made to convert it into brand loyalty. Various online communities are created for different brands, which have been examined here. Communication through this platform is faster and more interactive. An attempt had been made to know the current practices of the marketers by creating brand community communication. Facebook is one of the most prominent platforms for the creation and maintaining online community with active interaction between consumers and marketers. Facebook pages of the several marketers have been critically evaluated in the study.

Presently marketers are using this platform parallel with mass communication tool for marketing communication. However, social media can connect only few consumers in the present situation in India, consumer engagement through online community platform need to be examined. Present study can guide market communicators for developing specific new strategy for communicating with consumers through online community. Community marketing provides multi-faceted opportunities to the marketer. Thus, it is need of an hour to know the current practices of the marketers Present study is based on the secondary data. As only Facebook can provide interactive communication facility to the consumers and marketers both, we have considered only Facebook based online marketing practices of the selected marketers.

## Research Methodology

This paper follows Exploratory – Secondary data- research design. The primary objective of exploratory research is to provide insights into and an understanding of, the problem confronting the researcher (Malhotra & Dash, 2009). Secondary databases used for the study are internet, published reports, magazines, newspapers and journal publications, which fall under the category of the computerized database and published secondary data.

## Indian Experience of Community Marketing

### Brand Image Damage control-Maggie

Online community on Facebook under the name Meri Maggie had been created by Nestle. Nestle is very active on this social media page. Brand Maggie had been promoted very aggressively through facebook page community. Nestle had made celebration of 25 years of Maggie brand with the help of television advertisement and online community on Facebook under the name Meri Maggie. Company has used it for obtaining customer

experience with the brand in video form. This is considered as very effective mouth publicity for brand Maggie. User's positive experience with the brand has created positive image.

Nestle tasted bitter fruit of online community marketing practices in the last year when central government banned Maggie. The company received more than 4.43 lakhs query (pitchonnet.com) related to its quality from users and non-users alike, seeking assurance. Nestle took a long time to respond to these queries. Even after lifting off of ban from sale of Maggie more than 19,000 query relating to same subject. This has led to some problems related to its image. Company managed such big blow on reputation to certain extent by using the same platform. However, there is significant reduction in the market share of the Maggie in India even after image damage control exercise. After the ban was revoked, Nestle made a full clarification about its quality and answered other queries related to the controversy on their Facebook Page. Nestle adopted this low cost communication platform for various advertisement, especially for re-launching. In the initial stage of re-launching consumers faced problems like non-availability of the product, this was addressed through Facebook based online community. They also attempted back to basic positioning strategy, 2 Minutes Noddle' through online advertisement on their Facebook community page.

### Increase Market share and Communicating Discharge of Social Responsibility-Dettol

Dettol is the flagship-brand of Reckitt and Beckinser India with the strong brand association. Compared to Maggie, Dettol is older brand and not so active on online community. Dettol has made an attempt at endorsing government initiatives of Swatch Bharat Abhiyan. Dettol has made an attempt on promotion of Dettol antiseptic liquid as well as its other low accepted brands. (Dettol wet wipes and Dettol Sanitizer). Reckitt and Beckinser India has celebrated several events

as a part of corporate social responsibility on Reckitt and Beckinser India. For communicating such events online community has been utilized. Swatchta Abhiyan at various rural places were promoted to users and prospects through online communities. Even a 30 seconds advertisement on television a costly affair, the company utilized online community platforms for promoting brand through long advertisement. Corporate social responsibility of the organisation was promoted through online community platforms on social media. This informal way of communication builds a strong positive image about both, the brand and the organisation.

Dettol has also utilised Twitter for creation of online communities. Objective of utilizing this platform is to create basic awareness about hand wash amongst society. The indirect agenda of communication on this online community is to increase use of the product. Frequency of communication is lesser on tweeter platform as to Facebook platform.

### Brand Extension and Customer Relationship by -Harpic

Fast moving consumer goods require word of mouth publicity and continuous brand communication at the time of launching new product or brand extension. Reckitt and Beckinser India has utilized community marketing through Facebook during the launch of Harpic Red- Bathroom cleaner. The attempt was to create confidence in new product of bathroom cleaner. At the time of launching Harpic Red (Brand Extension) consumers had queries about its usage which has been very well responded through online community created on Facebook. Company has also made an attempt on communicating sales promotion schemes amongst present users or prospective users. Harpic utilised this platform for the selective event only.

### Attracting Youth in a Moment -Prem Ratan Dhan Payo

Bollywood is active user of online community for various movies and other events. 'Prem Ratan



Dhan Payo', last blockbuster of Salman Khan, utilized this platform even after the launch of the movie. They targeted Salman Khan Fans by posting promos and filmmaker's opinion on the community page and generated discussions as part of promotion. The movie's page garnered more than 14 lakh likes within the first week of its screening. The film was also promoted by showing the first day collection figures. This was then followed by the first three days collection figures and so on. Opinion about the movie posted by various people has made the movie more viral. Even after grand success of the movie, awards won by the movie under different categories have been endorsed through online communities. Various links of movie clips, as well as songs are being posted for increased popularity. Audio songs are also posted and provide platform for non-watchers of the movie. This is excellent attempt of involvement of consumers with the brand. At present, the effect of the movie on box office is shorter as number of cinema halls are higher. Thus encashment of the efforts of movie promotion requires speed, which is appropriately utilized through online community marketing.

Bollywood is using online community communication more sophisticatedly and effectively. Salman Khan has utilized this online community platform even for launching his new venture 'khan-marketonline.com' on his birthday. Three online communities, Prem Ratan Dhan Payo, Salman Khan's and Salman Khan's fan (all Facebook pages), were integrated for effective communication and wide spread reach which resulted in the star and movie both becoming successful.

Online community communication transgresses geographical boundaries. Online community on Facebook for Prem Ratan Dhan Payo is best example of communicating movie and movie star across the world (not restricted to India). Movie's box office success in screens abroad has also been attributed to online community marketing. In spite of having used Tweeter for the same purpose, the results were

not so high, due to the lesser number of followers on twitter than on Facebook.

### **Attempt of getting advantage of first mover: Airtel**

Airtel has utilized online community for multiple purposes. Airtel has utilized this platform for providing technical support to the consumers who are facing difficulties in utilizing various services. They also use this platform for promoting its premium internet service of 4G (leverage in first mover advantage in the premium services). Airtel has utilized this platform simultaneously for brand promotion with television. Superiority of the service has been explained to the 3G users through various advertisements as well as by giving answers to prospective and present consumer. An attempt has been made to influence non-users through opinion of users. Many consumers have given their opinion about poor services for data plan as well as for mobile services. Firm had not responded appropriately and timely to resolve such query.

Airtel has launched various ancillary services at regular interval of time (music download, fund transfer etc.) at the time of launching of each services this platform has been utilized. Airtel has utilized this platform for customer relationship to great extent. Airtel has utilized this low cost communication tool for its enterprise services also. Unique sales promotion plan of 50% cash back for 4G user has been promoted successfully. Company had not given quick response for complaint in direct to home services. Consumer can file complaints about services through company's online community page. Overall response rate and response way is not up to the mark.

### **Royal Experience endorsement: Royal Enfield Bullet:**

Enfield Bullet has very deep route in Indian market and the brand has utilized online and offline community together more effectively and successfully. Royal Enfield Bullet had two types of

online communities. One is marketer owned and generated community created on Facebook platform as well as community generated by the actual users of the brand. The active usage of this platform has successfully attracted new young consumers and can create heavy demand of product across India. Basically, experience of the bike riding has been endorsed by the product users in more convincing way. As firms targeted very niche market, only new product display creates inquisitiveness amongst prospects. Marketer's interaction with the community member is significantly less.

### **Findings & Conclusion**

From the study, it can be concluded that marketers have started creating online communities for their products and services. Brand engagement through such community has been attempted. Community marketing communication has several facets of marketing communication. The recent evaluation of communication on the various platforms indicates that this platform is utilized for different purpose by different marketers. Aggressive users of online community marketing practices need to create separate strategy for consumer engagement. This platform is easy to utilize and is cost effective. Marketers have utilised this platform of communication for communicating social responsibility discharges, launching of new product, complaint resolution and for social customer relationship management function. Online community creation is not challenging task but consumer engage on such platform needs serious and continuous efforts from the marketer's side. Marketers are not serious about the platform of the communication as it taps out only certain percent of the total consumers of the product. Marketers are not open enough to discuss prospective or proposed new product for the need of existing or prospective consumers.

Inconsistency in activeness of marketers may adversely affect the brand loyalty of the consumers. Only situation need based

utilisation of the platform for the communication to the consumers may not influence consumers for long time. Firms' need to be more serious about this platform of communication by developing specific goal based communication. Online community, marketing targets very niche consumers even then it is fast and effective communication tool for the marketers. As number of users of the internet services and social media users increases to greater extent in last year, in the coming days the usage of online community based marketing communication may become inevitable. Separate policy for communicating, engaging and converting users in to loyal consumer is need of hour. The present study has critically evaluated present practice in the area of communication. Examining impact of the communication on the brand reputation is matter of future research.

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