

## **2. A Study of Marketing Benefits of Social Networking Websites**

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### **Introduction:**

The availability of internet has revolutionized the ability of man to stay connected with others. Today, internet had surpassed the traditional media as primary source of getting information. Internet has also changed the way the businesses can contact and persuade the existing and potential customers. It is driving the new ways of doing business, and it is no exaggeration to say that that marketing is undergoing a paradigm shift, in large part, to the internet, social media and social networks. The role of marketing has changed, and the social media is assisting that change. The traditional tools are getting outdated and have also reached the saturation point. (Daniasa et al.,2010).

The new era customers are the same persons whom the firms used to target using traditional media like newspapers, television and billboards (Dan, 2006). The only difference is that their behavior as ‘individuals’ and as ‘customers’ have changed because of their increasing presence on the new ‘virtual market spaces’ like social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc. These are the ‘places’ where they interact resulting in new expectations, new rules, new topics that drives them to be actively present on these platforms.

Marketing to the target customers is not about telling the brand’s features and stories and being a one-sided speaker only; rather the marketer has to sail on the ship of two-sided communication. The social platforms provide them the opportunity to know their customers and accordingly redefining and redesigning their marketing-mix.

The traditional-to-online social media shift has been possible due to technological breakthroughs which have made communication possible ‘anywhere’ and ‘everywhere’ to ‘anyone’ and ‘everyone’ who has a presence online across the globe. The past few years have witnessed a fundamental shift towards the customer-driven and two-way communication enabling technology platforms such as blogs, video-sharing platforms, social media, etc. (Weber,2007).

### **Objectives of the Study:**

It is truly said that “*A study without objectives is like a tree without roots*”. In this study, the prime objective is to identify the opportunities of the marketing through the social networking sites.

### **Significance of the Study:**

An increasing number of people are shifting from traditional media like television, newspaper sect. to new age media. Virtual world is the new ‘place’ where the target customers are present and are spending a lot of time. The experts have identified these new emerging platforms and recommend the same to be used by the organizations to achieve their respective marketing objectives and concomitantly, marketing is also undergoing a paradigm shift in its elements adapting to the new technology and making it a significant element of their marketing communication strategy. This study is primarily focused on finding out the opportunities available to the marketers as well as the challenges facing them while marketing through social networking sites.

### **Sample Design:**

The sample units were the people, with different demographic profiles, who are the members of one or more social networking sites like Facebook, Tweeter, Orkut, LinkedIn, etc. The sample size for this research study was 410 respondents. The sample area was National Capital Region. The respondents were selected on the basis of simple random sampling technique.

### **Analysis of data using different statistical tools**

**Table 1.01: Gadget/machine used for accessing internet.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Mobile Phones	244	59.5
Personal computer	64	15.6
Laptop	321	78.2
Tablet	40	9.7
Others	21	5.1

Source: Primary data

#### **1.01 Gadget/Machine used for Accessing Internet:**

The table depicts various gadgets that the respondents use for accessing the internet. It is clear that the respondents use variety of gadgets for having access to the internet. 244 respondents (about 60 percent) access the internet with the help of mobile phones, 64 respondents (about 16 percent) use personal computer for internet access.

Majority of respondents i.e.321 (about 78 percent) use laptop for the internet access while 40 respondents (about 10 percent) use tablets for internet usage and 21 respondents (about 5 percent) used other gadgets for accessing internet.

This can be interpreted from the table that the respondents prefer those gadgets which are mobile in nature so that they can access internet wherever they are.

**Table 1.02: Place of accessing the internet and social networking sites**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Office	196	47.8
Mobile Phone	244	59.5
Home	189	46.1
Tablet	40	9.8
Cybercafé	21	5.1
Others	0.0	0.0

Source: Primary data

### **1.02 Place of Accessing the Internet and Social Networking Sites:**

The table 1.02 presents the information about different places of accessing the internet and social networking sites. It is clear that majority of the respondents (about 60 percent) access the internet and social networking sites on their mobile phones.

Also 196 respondents (about 48 percent) access the internet and social networking sites in their 'offices' too which indicates that access to social networking sites is available in their offices.

**Table 1.03: Membership of Various Social Networking Sites:**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Facebook	389	94.9
Twitter	181	44.1
YouTube	65	15.9
Myspace	11	2.7
LinkedIn	146	35.6
Ibibio	11	2.7
Orkut	89	21.7
Others	121	29.5

Source: Primary data

**1.03 Membership of Various Social Networking Sites:**

Perusal of table 1.03 shows membership of the respondents of various social networking sites. It is clear that Facebook is the most popular social networking site with 46 percent of their spendings being the member of this site. The literature studied also reflects the same trend. This is followed by Twitter and LinkedIn with 44 percent and 35 percent respondents having the membership of the same respectively.

**Table 1.04: Time spent per week on social networking sites:**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
0-5Hours	72	17.6
6-10Hours	113	27.6
10-20Hours	145	35.4
20-30Hours	41	10.0
Morethan30Hours	39	9.5
Total	410	100.0

Source: Primary data

**Time spent per week on social networking sites:**

The table 1.04 depicts that the respondents spend a lot of time on social networking sites as 35percent of the respondents spend 10-20 hours weekly on the social networking sites, about 28 percent spend 6-10 hours weekly on social networking sites. It is clear that on an average respondents spend 1-3 hours per day on social networking sites. This is another significant opportunity for the marketers. People spend a lot of time on internet, specifically on various social networking sites. It is must for the marketers to have their strong presence on the social networking sites, so that people can view the brands during the time that they are spending on social networking sites.

**Table 1.05: Personal information uploaded on social networking sites:**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Email Id	114	27.8
Age	87	21.2
Phone Number	122	29.8
Relationship Status	198	48.3
Hometown/ City	288	70.2
Interest areas	163	39.8
Music Choice	99	24.1
Movies	87	21.2

Response	Frequency	Percent
Books	85	20.7
Passion	10	2.4
Sports	67	16.3
Activities	54	13.2
T.V. Shows	76	18.5
Profession	166	40.5
Other	35	8.5

Source: Primary data

### 1.05 Personal Information Uploaded on Social Networking Sites:

The table 1.05 depicts one of the most significant implications and opportunities for the marketers. It is clear that the respondents who are the members of one or more social networking sites have included one or the other personal information on their respective account on the social networking site(s).

The respondents have included their personal information like email id, their interest areas, their choice of books, music, sports; activities; profession etc. All such kind of specific information seem to be highly beneficial for the marketers in order to promote the products as per the interest area/profession etc. of the target customers who are present on various social networking sites. This may also pose a challenge for the marketers that they may have to face certain issues in case the correct information is not available.

**Table 1.06: Reasons for joining social networking sites**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Networking	221	53.9
Socializing	330	80.5
Entertainment	278	67.8
Keeping oneself up to date	133	32.4
Exchange of Information	190	46.3
Others	183	44.6

Source: Primary data

### 1.06 Reasons for Joining Social Networking Sites:

The table 1.06 presents the reasons that the respondents have for joining one or more social networking sites. 54 percent of the respondents communicated that networking is one of the significant reasons for joining a social networking site, 80 percent reported that socializing is the most important reason for the same, 46 percent reported that exchange of information

with the counter members is their motivation behind joining one or more social networking sites, 68 percent responded that entertainment is the reason behind joining social networking sites. Therefore, it can be interpreted that respondents are joining social networking sites for variety of reasons like entertainment, socializing.

It is a challenge for the marketers that people look for entertainment, networking etc. and therefore, the content of the marketer has to be interesting and entertaining enough to grab the attention of the target customers.

**Table 1.07: Banon access to social networking sites in offices**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	46	11.2
No	174	42.4
Not professional	190	46.3
Total	410	100.0

**1.07 Banon Access to Social Networking Sites in Offices:**

The table 1.07 depicts that out of about 54 percent respondents who are professionals, about 43percent responded that there is no ban on access of social networking sites in their offices. Therefore, it can be safely concluded that it is heartening for the marketers to note that the people can access the social networking sites during their workhours too.

**Table 1.08: Notice of offers/advertisements/community/pages on social networking sites**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	131	32.0
No	279	68.0
Total	410	100.0

Source: Primary data

**1.08 Notice of Offers/ Advertisements/ Community/ Pages on Social Networking Sites:**

A perusal of table 1.08 shows whether respondents notice any kind of advertisements/brand pages on their respective account on social networking site(s). About 32 percent reported that they notice one or the other kind of advertisements/brand pages/community pages etc. on the social networking sites.

Therefore, it is an opportunity for the marketers that social networking sites can also serve as a medium to promote the respective brands. However, It is also a challenge for the marketers as to how to make people notice their promotional content.

**Table 1.09: Information received on new product/offers via social networking sites**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	101	24.6
No	309	75.4
Total	410	100.0

Source: Primary data

**1.09 Information Received on New Product/Offers via Social Networking Sites:**

The table 1.09 makes it obvious that about 25 percent of the respondents like to receive some kind of information on new product or offers etc. through advertisements/community pages on social networking sites. It can be deduced that social networking sites can be used as an additional medium for communicating information about the product-features, sales promotion offers, etc.

**Table 1.10: Uploading of photographs of products recently purchased.**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	61	14.9
No	349	85.1
Total	410	100.0

**1.10 Uploading of Photographs of Products Recently Purchased:**

The table 1.10 presents that about 15 percent of the respondents have uploaded the photographs of the product(s) of their recent purchase(s). It seems that such conversations and flaunting recent purchases is a new trend, which is likely to gain momentum in the times to come.

This uploading straightaway means that the customers have started generating contents related to brands. It can also be interpreted that the customers are able to generate the electronic word of mouth on social networking sites.

**Table 1.11: Liking a brand page because of counter-members' likes.**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	119	29.0
No	291	71.0
Total	410	100.0

Source: Primary data

### **1.11 Liking a Brand Page because of Counter-Members 'likes:**

When the table 1.11 is per used, it becomes clear that 29 percent of the respondents have liked/joined a brand page because their friends (counter-members) on those social networking sites have also liked/joined that particular page. This phenomenon indicates the viral impact that happens on social networking sites have a high 'viral' impact. The viral impact is even more influential from a marketers' view point as the previous studies have in disputably said that the people tend to believe more on what is said by others rather than the information pushed by the marketers.

**Table 1.12: Information sharing on recent purchases**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	188	45.9
No	222	54.1
Total	410	100.0

Source: Primary data

### **1.12 Information Sharing on Recent Purchases:**

The table 1.12 informs that about 46 percent of the respondents have shared information about their recent purchases on social networking sites. This can be interpreted that the people create the information, pass the information to others, which may also influence the decision-making process of others. It would be in fitness of the things to mention here that if individual uploads information of recently acquired products others too in all probability would get motivated to flaunt their purchases. This 'viral impact' has significant implication for the marketers.

**Table 1.13: Opinion sharing on social networking sites**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	156	38.0
No	254	62.0
Total	410	100.0

Source: Primary data

### **1.13 Opinion Sharing on Social Networking Sites:**

The table 1.13 gives a clear picture of respondents' views on sharing their opinions on social networking sites. It is seen that 156 respondents (about 38 percent) have asked for others' opinions on social networking sites, before taking a purchase-decision.

Therefore, it is assigned if can't implication for the marketers that social networking sites are a significant platform for information -sharing and electronic word of mouth generation among the customers.

**Table 1.14: Future-purchase affected by number of likes on social networking sites.**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	58	14.1
No	352	85.9
Total	410	100.0

Source: Primary data

#### **1.14 Future-Purchase Affected by Number of Likes on Social Networking Sites:**

The table 1.14 reveals that about 14 percent of the respondents communicated that their future-purchases stands affected by the number of likes on a particular product/ brand on the social networking sites. This is clear that individuals have the ability to influence each other's decisions and generate electronic word of mouth.

**Table 1.15: Information sought on social networking sites.**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	156	38.0
No	254	62.0
Total	410	100.0

Source: Primary data

#### **1.16 Information Sought on Social Networking Sites:**

The table 1.16 depicts that about 38 percent of the respondents have reported that they sought different types of information on social networking sites before taking a purchase-decision. It may be interpreted that social networking sites can also serve as a platform/source for searching information regarding a product. Therefore, the marketers need to have a strong presence on social networking sites, with the availability of the adequate requisite information.

**Table 1.17: Kind of information-sought on social networking sites**

Response	Frequency	Percent*
Price	36	23.0
Reviews	77	49.3

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent*</b>
Features	108	69.2
Performance	23	14.7
Competing Brands' information	61	39.1
Others	35	22.4
*N=156		

Source: Primary data

### **1.17 Kind of Information-Sought on Social Networking Sites:**

The table 1.17 depicts the kind of information sought by the respondents on social networking sites related to a product. It is indicated by the table 1.16 that only 156 out of 410 respondents seek one or the other kind of information about a product on social networking sites. This question has been asked to only those respondents who have indicated that they seek information on social networking sites regarding a product.

The respondents have given multiple answers in response to this question. It is evident from this table that as high as about 69 percent look for features of the product, 49 percent look for reviews about the specific products and about 39percent seek information about the competitive brands information. It is surprising to see that only 23 percent respondents look for the price of the product. It seems that the Indian respondents who seek information on products on social networking sites are far more quality conscious and quite less price conscious.

**Table 1.17: Customers'engagementthroughcontests/quiz/games/activities/puzzles**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	135	32.9
No	275	67.1
Total	410	100

Source: Primary data

### **1.17 Customers' Engagement through Contests/Quiz/Games/Activities/Puzzles:**

In order to start the process of customer-engagement, marketers have to take some initiatives which catch the people off-the-cuff. The table informs about customers' engagement through different tools like contests, quizzes, games, activities, puzzles, general knowledge tests, etc. About 33 percent of the respondents communicated that they have participated in such contests/ quizzes etc. that were promoted by some brand/organization on any social networking sites. It can be interpreted that the customers can be engaged indirectly through the use of elements like contests, games, puzzles, etc.

**Table 1.18: Category of products’ information sought**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Home Décor	12	2.9
Electronic Items	56	13.7
Home Appliances	31	7.6
Apparels	8	2
Mobile Phones	135	32.9
Fashion Products	9	2.2
Reading Material	18	4.4
Financial Products	8	2
Educational Institutions	23	5.6
Hospitals	13	3.2
Others FMCGs	16	3.9
Others	12	2.9

Source: Primary data

### 1.18 Category of Products’ Information Sought:

The table depicts the different categories of product information that people seek on social networking sites. It is very clear that ‘mobile phones’ are the most popular product-category that people look for on social networking sites as 32.9 percent respondents have reported so. 13.7 percent seek information regarding ‘electronic items. People also look for other items like ‘home appliances and services like ‘educational institutions’, ‘hospitals’ and ‘financial products. Therefore, the marketers especially those dealing in the product categories like mobile phones, electronic items, etc. Must have a presence on social networking sites.

**Table 1.19: Liking a page for lucky draw/procurement of free samples.**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	54	13.2
No	356	86.8
Total	410	100.0

Source: Primary data

### 1.19 Liking a Page for Lucky Draw/Procurement of Free Samples:

The table 1.19 suggests that 13.2 percent of the respondents have liked/joined brand pages on one or the other social networking site for the reason of procuring free samples. Free samples always have been many takers and as such it is a surprise that such a small

percentage of respondents have liked a page for free samples. It can be explained that either the respondents do not have the information on this aspect, or they suspect it as some kind of joke or trap. Considering these possibilities, marketers would have to think outside the box solutions to tempt people towards lucky draws and free samples.

**Table 1.20: Sharing of dissatisfaction on social networking sites.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	74	18.0
No	336	82.0
Total	410	100.0

Source: Primary data

### **1.20 Sharing of Dissatisfaction on Social Networking Sites:**

The table explains one of the most significant implications for the marketers. It reveals that 18percent of the respondents have shared their dissatisfaction from a product on social networking sites. It can be interpreted that people tend to share their satisfaction and of course dissatisfaction with others through different ways. Social networking sites have provided them the forum and platform for doing the same in a very loud and clear way. This is a well-researched fact that dissatisfied customers talk about it to a lot more people than the satisfied ones do. The power of dissatisfied customers to give a vent to their feelings multiplies many folds on social networking sites. Earlier the dissatisfied customers did not know how to complain, to who to complain, where to complain as well as whether their complaint would be listened to and addressed. The social networking sites have empowered the customers in this respect. Moreover, due to the fear of negative word of mouth through social networking sites, the marketers would put the best of their efforts in supplying best quality products and providing no chances of dissatisfaction to the customers.

**Table 1.21: Way of providing feedback.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	292	71.2
No	118	28.8
Total	410	100.0

Source: Primary data

### **1.21 Way of Providing Feedback:**

The table depicts the opinion of the respondents if they feel that social networking sites are a good platform for providing feedback to the marketers. A majority of respondents i.e. 293 (71percent) feel that social networking sites are a good way for the customers to provide

feedback to the customers. The interpretation of this table corroborates and extends the ‘customer empowerment’ which has been pointed out in the analysis of earlier table also. Customers do not want to go through the rigmarole of cumbersome procedures marketers have created for registering complaints; rather they want where they may express their opinions at their own sweet will in an open and free environment.

**Table 1.22: Privacy violation after information-sharing on social networking site**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	18	4.4
No	392	95.6
Total	410	100.0

Source: Primary data

### 1.22 Privacy Violation after Information-Sharing on Social Networking Site:

The table 1.22 depicts whether the respondents feel that their privacy was violated after sharing their personal information on the brand page/community on some social networking sites. 96percent respondents feel that they did not face any such issues of privacy violation after sharing their personal information on a brand page/community. It is an important implication for the marketer that they are readily available with the personal information of the target customers and people have no issues in sharing the same with the marketers.

**Table 1.23: Notice of the promotional elements on social networking sites**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Advertisement(s)that appear at Login/Logout	298	72.7
Advertisement(s)that appear at right side of site page	72	17.6
Information on number of Likes on a particular Brand	24	5.9
Information through Product Page/Community	16	3.9
Total	410	100.0

Source: Primary data

### 1.23 Notice of the Promotional Elements on Social Networking Sites:

The table 1.23 depicts the placement of promotional element on social networking sites which are most noticeable to the respondents. It is clear that an overwhelming majority of the respondents i.e., about 73 percent notice the advertisements that appear at the time of login/logout, followed by 17 percent respondents who notice the advertisements that appear on the right side of the social networking sites. It can be interpreted that marketers can advertise their product/brand using the login/logout points as they are the most noticeable to the target customers.

**Table 1.24: Skipping of advertisement son YouTube.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	102	30.2
No	150	44.4
Don't know how to skip	86	25.4
Total	338	100.0

Source: Primary data

### **1.24 Skipping of Advertisements on YouTube:**

This question has been asked from those 338 respondents who watch videos on YouTube. The table 1.24 informs that about 30 percent respondents skip the advertisements that appear before the primary video on the site 'YouTube'. About 44 percent reported that they do not skip the advertisement and watch the advertisement video. Out of these, 21 percent watch the advertisements because they do not know how to skip the same.

**Table 1.25: Brand recommendation to counter-members**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	115	28.0
No	295	72.0
Total	410	100.0

Source: Primary data

### **1.25 Brand Recommendation to Counter-Members:**

The table makes it clear that 28 percent of the respondents have recommended one or more brands to their friends/counter-members on social networking sites. This is an opportunity for the marketers that people tend to share their opinions with others and social networking sites are emerging as a novel and innovative platform for them where they can share their opinions, provide suggestions to others regarding different brands. This is the way electronic word of mouth may get generated and spread through the social networking sites.

**Table 1.26: Marketing activities on social networking sites**

V1	Promotional activities (advertisements etc.) through social networking site(s) are an intrusion on my privacy
V2	It is frustrating that too many advertisements/ information about various brands come up frequently on social networking sites
V3	I feel comfortable in receiving advertisements/information on a

	product(s)related to my interest areas
V4	I notice advertisements if they state benefits that I am likely to receive
V5	In this busy lifestyle, the information received through social networking site(s)would help keep me updated
V6	The advertisements through joining a product community page can help me in choosing a product
V7	Advertisements through social networking site(s)are an effective way of communication of information to the potential customers
V8	More number of ‘likes’ for a particular product/brand can affect my purchase-decision
V9	Advertisements/information on social networking site(s)can in fluence your purchase decision
V10	Information available on social networking site(s)area good way of getting information, even if the product is not intended to be purchased
V11	Pictures of products displayed on social networking site(s)can influence my purchase decision
V12	Social networking site(s)area good way for the marketers to maintain a healthy Relationship and continuous touch with the existing and potential customers
V13	Product/brand information provided on social networking site(s)is reliable
V14	Many countries have banned social networking site(s)is a correct decision
V15	Social networking site(s)have been banned in many offices in India. I think it is a great challenge for marketers to connect to their customers, especially when internet-access is relatively less in India
V16	Social networking site(s)could be a good platform for making comparisons between various competitive brands
V17	Social networking site(s)can be used to recommend information on various products and brands, to the friends/counter-members
V18	Distribution of free samples /contests by asking customers to like a page and win prizes,etc. ,on social networking site(s)is an effective way of promotion
V19	Short age of electricity supply is a problem
V20	Internet accessibility is not a problem
V21	Facility of placing orders and making payments should be available on social networking sites
V22	Online payments are safe and secure
V23	It is unethical to post advertisements on social networking sites

Source: Primary Data

**Demo graphic variables and Product Category:**

The table 1.27, table 1.28 and table 1.29 and table 1.40 depict the frequency and percentage values of different demographic variables i.e., gender, age and occupation with respect to the product categories whose information they look for on social networking sites.

**Table 1.27: Gender and product categories**

	<b>Males</b>		<b>Females</b>	
	N=92		N=64	
Product Categories	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Home Décor	6	6.5	6	9.4
Electronic Items	34	37.0	22	34.4
Home Appliances	17	18.5	14	21.9
Apparels	3	3.3	5	7.8
Fashion Products	3	3.3	6	9.4
Reading Material	14	15.2	4	6.3
Financial Products	6	6.5	2	3.1
Educational Institutions	15	16.3	8	12.5
Hospitals	8	8.7	5	7.8
Other FMCGs	9	9.8	7	10.9
Others	16	17.4	6	9.4

Source: Primary data

**1.27 Gender and Product Categories:**

The table 1.27 depicts the individual scores and percentage values of the two genders with respect to the product categories that people look for on social networking sites.

It can be interpreted that out of the 156 respondents who look for information pertaining to certain product categories, both the males and females look for information about the ‘mobile phones’ most. 50percent of the males look for ‘mobile phones’ and 36 percent of the females look for information pertaining to ‘mobile phones’.

It can be interpreted from this table that male and female respondents are more inclined towards product categories like ‘mobile phones’, ‘electronic items’, ‘home appliances’ and ‘reading material’ and the responses across gender groups are almost uniform.

**Table 1.28: Age and product categories**

	16-24Years		25-32Years		33-40Years		41-48Years	
	N=78		N=56		N=20		N=2	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Home Décor	7	9.0	3	5.4	2	10.0	0	0.0
Electronic Items	27	34.6	19	33.9	9	45.0	1	50.0
Home Appliances	22	28.2	5	8.9	4	20.0	0	0.0
Apparels	3	3.8	4	7.1	1	5.0	0	0.0
Mobile Phones	66	84.6	49	87.5	18	90.0	2	100.0
Fashion Products	4	5.1	5	8.9	2	10.0	0	0.0
Reading Material	11	14.1	5	8.9	1	5.0	0	0.0
Fin. Products	5	6.4	2	3.6	1	5.0	0	0.0
Edu. Institutions	21	26.9	1	1.8	4	20.0	0	0.0
Hospitals	3	3.8	5	8.9	1	5.0	1	50.0
Other FMCGs	6	7.7	8	14.3	1	5.0	1	50.0
Others	6	7.7	4	7.1	0	0.0	1	50.0

Source: Primary data

### 1.28 Age and Product Categories:

The table presents the individual scores and percentage values of the different age groups-16-24years; 25-32 years; 33-40 years and 41-48 years with respect to the product categories that they look for on social networking sites. It can be interpreted that out of the 156 respondents who look for information pertaining to certain product categories, the people within the age group of 16-24years look most for the ‘mobile phones’ (42 percent), followed by the age group 25-32 years (31percent). The information pertaining to the ‘educational institutes’ is also seek most by the category of 16-24 years (13 percent). The information relating to the ‘home appliances’ is also looked upon by the age group of 16-24 years (17 percent), followed by the age group 25-32 years(12percent).

**Table 1.29: Educational qualifications and product categories**

	Matriculation		Intermediate		Graduation		Postgraduation	
	N=20		N=23		N=53		N=60	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Home Décor	1	5.0	1	4.3	7	13.2	4	6.7
Electronic Items	4	20.0	12	52.2	19	35.8	22	36.7
Home Appliances	6	30.0	4	17.4	14	26.4	8	13.3
Apparels	1	5.0	0	0.0	4	7.5	4	6.7
Mobile Phones	17	85.0	19	82.6	50	94.3	50	83.3
Fashion Products	1	5.0	1	4.3	4	7.5	4	6.7
Reading Material	5	25.0	2	8.7	6	11.3	6	10.0
Financial Products	2	10.0	2	8.7	3	5.6	2	3.3

	Matriculation		Intermediate		Graduation		Postgraduation	
	N=20		N=23		N=53		N=60	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Edu. Institutions	6	30.0	5	21.7	7	13.2	6	10.0
Hospitals	1	5.0	4	17.4	4	7.5	5	8.3
Other FMCGs	2	10.0	4	17.4	5	9.4	6	10.0
Others	2	10.0	2	8.7	5	9.4	4	6.7

Source: Primary data

### 1.29 Educational Qualifications and Product Categories:

A look at the table 1.29 indicates that majority of the respondents from all educational qualifications categories look most for the information related to ‘mobile phones. Graduates have the highest percentage (94.3 percent) who look for ‘mobile phones. The information related to ‘reading material’ and ‘educational institutes’ are mostly sought by the matriculates.

	Unemployed		Students		Entrepreneurs		Professional	
	N=20		N=43		N=8		N=85	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Home Décor	1	5.0	5	11.6	0	0.0	7	8.2
Electronic Items	6	30.0	18	41.9	4	50.0	29	34.1
Home Appliances	6	30.0	13	30.2	1	12.5	12	14.1
Apparels	1	5.0	1	2.3	0	0.0	7	8.2
Mobile Phones	17	85.0	36	83.7	7	87.5	76	89.4
Fashion Products	1	5.0	3	7.0	0	0.0	6	7.1
Reading Material	4	20.0	6	14.0	0	0.0	9	10.6
Financial Products	1	5.0	4	9.3	1	12.5	3	3.5
Edu. Institutions	3	15.0	18	41.9	1	12.5	2	2.4
Hospitals	2	10.0	1	2.3	2	25.0	9	10.6
Other FMCGs	2	10.0	2	4.7	2	25.0	11	12.9
Others	2	10.0	3	7.0	1	12.5	7	8.2

Source: Primary data

### 1.30 Occupation and Product Categories:

The table reveals the individual scores and percentage values of the different occupational groups- professionals, entrepreneurs, students and unemployed, with respect to the product categories that people look for on social networking sites. It can be interpreted that out of the 156 respondents who look for information pertaining to certain product categories, the people indifferent professions look for information on different product categories. It is clear that the ‘working professionals’ look most for the ‘mobile phones’ on social networking sites (48 percent), followed by the ‘students’ with 23 percent respondents.

For the information pertaining to the ‘educational Institutions’, it is the ‘students’ who look most for the same on social networking sites (11 percent). ‘Professionals’ also look maximum for the ‘home appliances’ (18 percent). ‘Professionals’ also look most for ‘other FMCGs’ on social networking sites (7 percent). ‘Entrepreneurs’ and ‘unemployed’ least look for the product information on social networking sites.

The analysis of data shows that social networking sites are the emerging as a marketing tool. People are gradually moving towards these sites for the procurement of information related to products and brands. It seems that social networking sites cannot replace the traditional media but if integrated with the traditional media, under the communication-mix of an organization, it may prove highly beneficial to the marketers. There are certain aspects that have to be kept in mind by the marketers which are notice able to the customers present on such sites.

### **Overall Conclusion:**

The overall conclusion of the study are based on literature studied and analysis of data. The chapter-V presented question-wise/statement-wise analysis. This section enshrines an overview of the entire research work undertaken by the researcher.

Table 1.41 presents a summary of results pertaining to analysis of all the 23 statements, data on which was obtained on five-point Likert scale, has been presented. The means on each statement signifies level of agreement of respondents in respect of each individual statement; higher theme an, higher is the level of agreement. Coefficient of variation has also been used to see how much variation is found among respondents; higher the value of coefficient of variation, higher is the variation in responses. For the sake of effectiveness of presentation of results, the researcher has identified five statements with highest and lowest means and five statements with highest and lowest coefficient of variation.

It is amply clear from the table 1.41 that the statements V14, V15, V19, V17 and V21 have the highest mean score i.e., for these statements the level of agreement is highest. It is heartening to see that coefficient of variation for all these five statements is lowest which indicates that the responses of one dispersed.

**Table 1.41: Coefficient of Variation**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>CV</b>
V1	2.34	1.34	0.57
V2	2.76	1.46	0.53
V3	2.42	1.59	<b>0.66</b>
V4	2.52	1.64	<b>0.65</b>
V5	3.03	1.56	0.51
V6	3.24	1.38	0.43
V7	3.58	1.65	0.46
V8	2.59	1.36	0.52

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>CV</b>
V9	2.02	1.24	<b>0.61</b>
V10	3.48	1.57	0.45
V11	2.63	1.36	0.52
V12	3.40	1.57	0.46
V13	3.51	1.57	0.45
V14	4.19	1.09	<b>0.26</b>
V15	3.96	1.33	<b>0.34</b>
V16	2.50	1.37	0.55
V17	3.81	1.41	<b>0.37</b>
V18	3.24	1.54	0.48
V19	3.85	1.36	<b>0.35</b>
V20	2.60	1.53	<b>0.59</b>
V21	3.69	1.32	<b>0.36</b>
V22	3.50	1.56	0.45
V23	2.47	1.55	<b>0.63</b>

Source: Primary data

Lowest mean scores are found in case of statements V1, V3, V4, V9 and V23 i.e. the respondents have least degree of agreement with these statements. It is worth mentioning here that out of these five statements, V3, V4, V9 and V23 have highest value of coefficient of variance i.e., the responses exhibit a great variation.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this table is that in respect of statements with highest mean and lowest coefficient of variation, the opinions of respondents express a stronger level of agreement as well as uniformity. The marketers must keep it in mind that customers as a whole feel strongly about these variables.

Another statement that has been strongly agreed by the respondents is that “shortage of electricity is a problem”. We all know that India is electricity-deficient and in many are as electricity makes a sporadic presence. This is a challenge indeed for marketers that has to be dealt with strategically. Laptops and smart-phone marketers will also realize that because of shortage of electricity problem, they will have to provide longer battery life to their customers so that they can have uninterrupted access to the internet and social networking sites for longer periods of time. This analysis hints that commercial interests of social networking sites, smart-phones and laptop manufacturers and marketers of products and services who want to be strategically present on social networking site sent wined.

The respondents strongly and uniformly agree that “social networking sites can be used to recommend brand information to the counter member” is a welcome news for social networking sites as this suggests that if marketers want their brands to be ‘talked about’ and ‘recommended ’to others, they will have to register a strong presence on social networking

sites. This shows the viral impact of social networking sites. Their marketing messages must be so catchy that the people pay attention to them and recommend others to see the same. It can be safely argued that if more and more marketers join social networking sites for promotion of their brands on social networking sites, it simply means more advertising revenue for social networking sites.

The facility of placing orders and making payment should be available on social networking sites' has also garnered patronage of respondents and the researcher feels that such a response must sound music to the ears of marketers of products and services as well as social networking sites. It shows that today's net-savvy and social networking sites members want not just want 'content' on different brands, but also want to enjoy the convenience of ordering and paying for the same then and there. This phenomenon may lead to lots of impulse purchases. The social networking sites must start mulling over how these facilities can be provided to their users.

The following statements have elicited lowest level of agreement that is reflected in their low mean score as well as high level of dispersion. This can be interpreted that on an average, the level of agreement of respondents regarding these statements is low, but at the same time high coefficient of variation reflects that consumers opinions are scattered.

It is interesting to note that all these five statements pertain to promotional activities of marketers of social networking sites. The respondents have eloquently indicated that they do not want marketing promotions and they just to enjoy themselves on social networking sites. This implies that marketers must reach their target audience surreptitiously, which entail that guerilla.

Marketing communication has to be resorted to. The respondents do not want to receive advertisements, do not feel that advertisements influence their decisions, they treat promotional messages as intrusion on their privacy etc. all these criticisms are not new, and in spite of and despite of them the marketers keep bombarding the customers with advertising and the effective advertisements are noticed by and acted upon by the customers.

The real challenge lies in making the advertisements worth-noticing and trustworthy, useful to the consumers and probably without letting them know that they are advertised to. The marketers may initiate brand conversation indirectly and let the users of social networking sites jump on the bandwagon of such conversations and thereby generating huge content. It is probably going to be an interface of guerilla marketing and viral marketing, if the marketers have to gain mile age out of their presence on social networking sites.

An almost similar trend is visible when age-wise results are perused as in only one out of 23cases, null hypothesis has been rejected. The null hypothesis has been rejected in respect of V14, the statement that 'Many countries have banned social networking sites is a correct decision'. The high mean score reflects that in general the respondents have reported a strong level of agreement, but variations occur across different age-groups. The respondents from 41-48 years age-group who can be deemed as middle aged and mature people have indicated that they feel that banning social networking sites is not as much a correct decision as is felt by their other counterparts.

The mean scores for age-groups indicate that there is an inversely proportional relationship between age and opinion on banning social networking sites as correct decision. In the hindsight, the researcher feels that it does not stand to common sense, and the statement might have been mis understood. The opinion of respondents across different age-groups is visibly quite uniform across different age-groups as only one out of 23 null hypo thesis in this context stands rejected.

## **6.02 Suggestions:**

On the basis of findings of the Study, the research attempts to give the following suggestions to the marketers, for the use of social networking sites as the element of marketing strategy:

The first and the foremost recommendation is that the social networking sites should not be assumed as a medium to replace the traditional media channels. Rather it must be an integral part of the 'marketing communication-mix', which when integrated with the traditional media, could bring fruitful results in achieving the marketing objectives.

In the era of internet revolution, when increasing number people are becoming the members of different social networking sites, the marketers must take the advantage of this golden opportunity. The brands must have a strong and active presence on different social networking sites.

The marketer needs to research various social networking sites available and after reviewing the features of all, the appropriate site(s) must be selected. The action plan has to be developed according to the explored relative features of the available social networking sites. The marketer should choose the social networking site(s) that would enable them to achieve the desired results. The plan should be developed as per the factors like objectives, target audience, nature of the product, etc.

The marketers must remember that the social networking sites are not a straight gateway to increase their respective 'sales'. The marketers must remember that the people are present on social networking sites for the sake of entertainment, networking, etc. So, the marketers should implement the innovative strategies that could enhance the 'customers' engagement'. The elements like contests, general knowledge tests, games, puzzles, etc. could be of great help in getting the customers' engaged in an active manner.

One of the most significant opportunities available before the marketers is the availability of the personal information of the target customers on different social networking sites. As indicated in the findings of the study also, the customers include a variety of their personal information on such sites, which could be of great utility to the marketers. Therefore, the marketers should take the best use of the customer-specific and area-specific information. If feasible, the marketers may customize their respective 'marketing-mix' as per the customer-specific and area-specific information available on such sites. The marketers may identify and fulfill the one-to-one micro needs of the target customers accordingly. The marketers must be actively involved in generating certain events or information that could induce a positive electronic word of mouth among the target audience present on social networking sites.

In case of some negative electronic word of mouth or expression of dissatisfaction from the marketers' product(s) occur on some social networking sites, the marketers should indulge into quick and positive interaction with the customer(s) and resolve the issue by accepting the faults and taking corrective actions. The feedback from the customers should be readily accepted and there should be quick response to the same otherwise the electronic word of mouth may be harmful to the marketers.

The marketers must adopt the advertising patterns which are most likely to be noticed by the target customers on social networking sites. For instance, advertisements that appear at

login/logout is the most noticeable one, as suggested in findings of the study also. The indirect engagement through 'contests', 'tips sharing', 'quiz', etc.. May be helpful to the marketers.

Another aspect to be understood by the marketers is to post the contents so as to make the same personal for the target audience. The posted information must be of 'interest' to the users. The content should include information, text, pictures, videos, graphics, etc., that would best appeal the audience and that help in attaining the maximum reach to the audience. The content should match the interests of the target audience and should be attractive, appealing and thoughtful, that would be capable enough to motivate the users to look at it and use it to procure the requisite information, and also inspire others to forward and share the contents to their peers too, ultimately realizing the objective of increasing brand retention in the minds of the targets. The posted contents should be interesting and engaging.

The marketers may appoint in-house social media managers or outsource the task of observing and tracing the most popular social networking sites, keeping in mind the nature of Products offered under the umbrella of the marketers and the attributes of the target segments i.e., their demo graphics like gender, age, income, occupation, interest are as, etc.