



media players are always on the look-out for superior growth rate and in the circumstances, they should identify the steps they should take to grow their business.

### 1.3 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- ✓ The share of WhatsApp users in rural India has doubled over the past year thanks to declining data costs and rising internet usage, according to a survey (Sanjay & Pranav, 2018). The recent incidents of mob violence and lynching reported across the country have thrown the spotlight on WhatsApp. Some allege that the messaging platform is used to spread rumours against the victims. But how widespread is the use of WhatsApp in the country or how far can the messages circulating on WhatsApp be trusted are difficult questions to answer. Data collected over successive rounds of the Lokniti-CSDS Mood of the Nation (MOTN) survey reveals that the reach of WhatsApp has risen rapidly over the past couple of years. While a majority seems to distrust the information received over WhatsApp, a sizeable section of users seems to have faith in what they encounter on the messaging app.
- ✓ Digital content businesses in India are contemplating video content in native languages as the real disruptor (Nandita, 2018). Online consumption of videos is surging as internet users move away from their TV sets. About 80 per cent of global internet consumption will be video content by 2019, according to a KPMG-Google report on local languages. Further, video viewership in India is expected to be dominated by regional language users. It is expected to touch USD 536 million users by 2021. The Indian consumer today spends about 50-60 per cent of the average time on Hindi videos, followed closely by 35-43 per cent on regional content videos; only 5-7 per cent is accounted for by English. According to media and entertainment company Hotstar, the growth in smaller cities, with less than a million population, outpaced the growth of the metro cities.
- ✓ Instagram beats Facebook among the post millennials, or Generation Z, reflecting an increasing urge for self-promotion, reveals a 'YouGov-Mint' survey (Nikita, 2018). India's urban youth spends more time on social media compared with their older counterparts, with Instagram emerging as the favourite among the youngest lot. The survey was conducted by market research firm *YouGov* in collaboration with *Mint*. While *Facebook* remains the most popular social media platform among the millennials, *Instagram* beats *Facebook* among *Generation Z*. This is in line with the trend witnessed in the US, where teenagers now use *Instagram* more than *Facebook*, according to Pew survey data.

### 1.4 RESEARCH GAP

The reviewed literature makes an interesting read. But the Indian scenario is different. Since social media has come to stay in the country one has to ascertain the factors that has rendered social media relevant to the country. One should also identify the steps needed to consolidate its growth in the country. The present study proposes to bridge this gap.

### 1.5 SCOPE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The study confines itself to customers from in and around Bangalore urban district who patronise social media marketers. The study covers 30 social media marketers and 30 consumers.

### 1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are to:

- 1 Ascertain the factors that establish the relevance of social media to the Indian market
- 2 Specify the steps the social media players should initiate to grow their business

### 1.7 HYPOTHESIS PROPOSED TO BE TESTED

The study proposes to test the following hypothesis:

"Social media players need to focus on social content entertainment in the local language to grow their business"

## 1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN

### 1.8.1 Research methodology

The study is descriptive in nature and has used the 'fact-finding' survey method

### 1.8.2 Sources of data

Primary data has been collected from the respondents, viz., social media marketers (30) and customers (30).

Secondary data has been collected from reputed journals, magazines, newspapers, annual reports and house journals of manufacturers, trade / industry bodies in hard version and electronic form.

### 1.8.3 Sampling plan

*Social media marketers:* Simple random sampling under the probability sampling method was employed to select the marketers since it gave each of them an equal and independent chance of being selected. Accordingly, Interview Schedules were administered to 60 marketers based in Bangalore urban district. Duly completed Interview Schedules received from the first 30 respondents were selected for the study.

*Customers:* Simple random sampling under the probability sampling method was deployed to select the customers. It ensured that each element got an equal and independent chance of being selected. Accordingly, Interview Schedules were administered to 60 customers. Duly completed Interview Schedules received from the first 30 respondents were selected for the study.

### 1.8.4 Data collection instruments

Interview schedules, specially designed for the purpose, were administered to the respondents for collection of primary data.

### 1.8.5 Data processing and analysis plan

Non-parametric statistical units were used to test the association between some qualitative characters and conclusions were drawn on the basis of formation of  $H_0$  and  $H_1$ .

### 1.8.6 Limitations of the study

Primary data has also been deduced through constant topic-oriented discussions with the respondents. It is possible that a certain degree of subjectivity, even if negligible, has influenced their views. But the researcher is confident that the level of subjectivity will be too insignificant to affect the accuracy of the findings of the study.

## 1.9 Social media marketers

In the following paragraphs, the primary data collected from the 30 social media marketer respondents is analysed.

### 1.9.1 Factors that establish the relevance of social media to the Indian market

With many stakeholders asserting that social media is relevant to the Indian market, the researcher sought to know from the respondents the factors that establish the relevance of social media to the Indian market. Their replies to the query appear in the following Table.

**Table-1**  
**Factors that establish the relevance of social media to the Indian market**

Factors	Number of respondents
Rising popularity of apps like Whatsapp have catalysed the growth of social media	27
Data costs have been falling	27
More and more Indians are exploiting the mobile internet	26
Social media penetration has been rising	24

27 respondents aver that the rising popularity of apps like Whatsapp have catalysed the growth of social media. Data costs have been falling, remind 27 respondents. More and more Indians are exploiting the mobile internet, point out 26 respondents. Social media penetration has been rising, remind 24 respondents.

### 1.9.2 Steps the social media players should initiate to grow their business

With the relevance of social media to the Indian market having been established, the researcher sought to know from the respondents the steps the social media players should initiate to grow their business with social media. Their replies to the query appear in the following Table.

**Table-2**  
**Steps the social media players should initiate to grow their business**

Steps	Number of respondents
Focus on social content entertainment in the local language	26
Support users' self-promotion efforts	26
Win over the local prospects by using the local language media	25
Introduce news platform in the local language	25

Focus on social content entertainment in the local language is the suggestion of 26 respondents. Another 26 respondents suggest that users' self-promotion efforts should be supported. 25 suggest that the local prospects be won over by using the local language media. 25 suggest introduction of news platform in the local language media.

### 1.10 Customers

In the following paragraphs, the primary data collected from the 30 customer respondents is analysed.

#### 1.10.1 Factors that establish the relevance of social media to the Indian market

With many stakeholders asserting that social media is relevant to the Indian market, the researcher sought to know from the respondents the factors that establish the relevance of social media to the Indian market. Their replies to the query appear in the following Table.

**Table-3**  
**Factors that establish the relevance of social media to the Indian market**

Factors	Number of respondents
Rising popularity of apps like Whatsapp have catalysed the growth of social media even in rural India	27
Data costs have been falling	27
Social media caters to the needs of individuals who seek to project their own image	26
More and more rural Indians are exploiting the mobile internet	25
Social media caters to the needs of the narcissistic segments of society	25
Social media penetration has been rising in rural India too	24

27 respondents aver that the rising popularity of apps like Whatsapp have catalysed the growth of social media even in rural India. Data costs have been falling, remind 27 respondents. Social media caters to the needs of individuals who seek to project their own image, maintain 26 respondents. More and more rural Indians are exploiting the mobile internet, point out 25 respondents. Social media caters to the needs of individuals who seek to project their own image, cite 25 respondents. Social media penetration has been rising in rural India too, cite 24 respondents.

#### 1.10.2 Steps the social media players should initiate to grow their business

With the relevance of social media to the Indian market having been established, the researcher sought to know from the respondents the steps the social media players should initiate to grow their business with social media. Their replies to the query appear in the following Table.

**Table-4**  
**Steps the social media players should initiate to grow their business**

Steps	Number of respondents
Focus on social content entertainment in the local language	27
Win over the local prospects by using the local language media	26
Introduce news platform in the local language	26
Move from content-centric format to what the next generation online users demand	25
Deliver personalized content and notifications in real-time	25
Support users' self-promotion efforts	24
Cater to the narcissistic tendencies of the users to a certain extent	23

Focus on social content entertainment in the local language is the suggestion of 27 respondents. Win over the local prospects by using the local language media, suggest 26 respondents. Another 26 suggest introduction of news platform in the local language media. Move from content-centric format to what the next generation online users demand, suggest 25 respondents. Deliver personalized content and notifications in real-time, suggest 25 respondents. Support users' self-promotion efforts suggest 24

respondents. Cater to the narcissistic tendencies of the users to a certain extent, suggest 23 respondents.

### 1.11 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In the following paragraphs, a summarised version of the findings arrived at in respect of the two categories of respondents is furnished.

#### 1.11.1 Social media marketers

- ✓ 27 respondents aver that the rising popularity of apps like Whatsapp have catalysed the growth of social media. Data costs have been falling, remind 27 respondents. More and more Indians are exploiting the mobile internet, point out 26 respondents. Social media penetration has been rising, remind 24 respondents.
- ✓ Focus on social content entertainment in the local language is the suggestion of 26 respondents. Another 26 respondents suggest that users' self-promotion efforts should be supported. 25 suggest that the local prospects be won over by using the local language media. 25 suggest introduction of news platform in the local language media.

#### 1.11.2 Customers

- ✓ 27 respondents aver that the rising popularity of apps like Whatsapp have catalysed the growth of social media even in rural India. Data costs have been falling, remind 27 respondents. Social media caters to the needs of individuals who seek to project their own image, maintain 26 respondents. More and more rural Indians are exploiting the mobile internet, point out 25 respondents. Social media caters to the needs of individuals who seek to project their own image, cite 25 respondents. Social media penetration has been rising in rural India too, cite 24 respondents.
- ✓ Focus on social content entertainment in the local language is the suggestion of 27 respondents. Win over the local prospects by using the local language media, suggest 26 respondents. Another 26 suggest introduction of news platform in the local language media. Move from content-centric format to what the next generation online users demand, suggest 25 respondents. Deliver personalized content and notifications in real-time, suggest 25 respondents. Support users' self-promotion efforts suggest 24 respondents. Cater to the narcissistic tendencies of the users to a certain extent, suggest 23 respondents.

### 1.12 Conclusions

Conclusions relate to the hypotheses. They are answers to the research questions.

#### 1.12.1 Hypothesis testing

As explained, the following is the first hypothesis proposed to be tested:

"Social media players need to focus on social content entertainment in the local language to grow their business"

Hence  $H_0$  and  $H_1$  are as follows:

$H_0$ : Social media players need not focus on social content entertainment in the local language to grow their business

$H_1$ : Social media players need to focus on social content entertainment in the local language to grow their business

On the basis of the primary data collected from the respondents, vide Tables: 2 and 4, a chi-square test was applied to ascertain the association, if any, between the two variables. The following Table reveals the computation made using MS-Excel:



		Observed Values		
		Yes	No	Total
	Social media marketer	26	4	30
	Customer	27	3	30
	Total	53	7	60
		Expected Values		
		Yes	No	Total
	Social media marketer	26.5	3.5	30
	Consumer	26.5	3.5	30
	Total	53	7	60
		Yes	No	
2	o-e	-0.5000	0.5000	
		0.5000	-0.5000	
	(o-e)^2	0.2500	0.2500	
		0.2500	0.2500	
	[(o-e)^2]/e	0.0094	0.0714	
		0.0094	0.0714	
	CV	0.0189	0.1429	0.1617
	TV			3.8415
	p			0.9969

The calculated value of  $\chi^2$  is 0.1617, lower than the table value of 3.8415 for an alpha of 0.05 at one degree of freedom. Hence the null hypothesis is not rejected, and the research hypothesis is rejected.

### 1.13 RESEARCHER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Apps like Whatsapp have definitely catalysed the growth of social media in the country. In the circumstances, social media's growth is bound to rise faster and faster. The question is how quickly it will grow and not whether it will grow. In this backdrop, marketers will do well to bet on social media to accelerate their growth.
2. Thanks to the pace of technological advancement, data costs are bound to fall further and render more value to the users for the same cost. This should encourage the marketers to invest in social media marketing without demur.
3. Mobile internet is no longer the prerogative of the country's urbanites. Our country cousins have also taken a fancy to it, aided and abetted by falling data costs and falling hardware costs.
4. With social media facilitating exchange of information in the vernacular, social media penetration has been rising. It is music to the marketers' ears. Having said that, one must add that it is a double-edged sword for the marketers. If they do not deliver value for money, they will be mercilessly ejected from the market. Unfavourable news always has a knack of spreading faster than favourable news. In a way this possibility should be welcome from the perspective of customers since the market, courtesy social media, is a merciless taskmaster and brooks no violation of its diktat.
5. The masses look for social content entertainment in the vernacular, now that they are equipped with mobile internet. With the penetration of mobile internet on the rise, marketers should pounce on the opportunity and use the social content entertainment route to promote their products and services.
6. Users have a weakness for self-promotion. This weakness can be exploited by the marketers. The latter can convince the users that they can promote or publicise themselves or their activities especially in a forceful way.
7. News in the vernacular is gaining popularity in the country. News conveyed through social media travels in real time although it may prove counter-productive if the news is fake. Warts and all, news

programmes always enjoy a certain level of popularity, and this should be exploited to the hilt by the marketers. They should introduce news platforms in the local language / vernacular.

8. Marketers can add value to their services by delivering personalised content and notifications in real-time.

9. Not to be forgotten is the younger generation users who have narcissistic tendencies . None can satisfy this segment better than the social media since it represents a cheaper but effective way of catering to their narcissistic needs.

10. This also implies that marketers should move from content-centric format to what the next generation online users demand. Marketers cannot afford to side-line this segment of users.

#### 1.14 REFERENCES

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