“Trust yourself. Create the kind of self that you will be happy to live with all your life. Make the most of yourself by fanning the tiny, inner sparks of possibility into flames of achievement.”

This quotation by Golda Meir is what exactly I have imbibed and followed in the journey of pursuing my Ph.D thesis. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to those who have contributed to this thesis and supported me in one way or the other during this amazing journey. Pursuing a Ph.D is just like climbing a high peak, step by step, accompanied with hardwork, time management, and consistency backed by encouragement and trust, with the kind help of so many individuals.

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ABSTRACT

This research thesis focuses on studying the contribution of the internet tool - Online communities to the dual organizational processes of Customer Relationship Management and Customer Experience Management. The study commences by studying the dynamics of the online community, followed by a study of the existing literature in the domain. Customer Relationship Management and Customer Experience Management are twin organizational processes which form the backbone of Marketing, by using IT enabled processes for enhancing organizational collaboration, improving customer profitability and lifetime value and increasing the Return on Investment. In this context, business enterprises have increasingly taken advantage of the power of the internet tool-online communities to build relationships with the customers in the electronic marketplace, to build Structural, Financial, Social and Customization Bonds with consumers and to reduce Consumer Defection, increase Consumer Retention by increasing consumer trustworthiness and for taking the consumers ahead on psychological steps across relationship stages between the organization and consumer.

The web appeared to be a useful domain in the light of new age developments and Online Communities appeared to be significant in the context of Operational, Analytical and Collaborative CRM. This thesis traces the usage of online communities for various CRM functionalities like campaign management, consumer segmentation, response management and response modelling, and further demonstrates how consumers interacting with organizations can be segmented on the basis of their Individual Network Values, their Degree of Participation, their Emotional Attachment or even with respect to their profit or relationship potential.

The research thesis focuses on developing four specific models for response modelling/prediction/consumer profiling. These were-

1) Consumer Trustworthiness Regression Model using Netnography (CTR)
2) Co-creation model using INV based on Metcalf Law (C-INV)
3) Consumer Price Sensitivity Model using K-means Cluster Analysis (CPS)
4) Business Online Community Credibility Model (BOCC)