Human society holds the reflection of shared values, beliefs, ethics and behaviour among the members for the smooth interaction, growth and development to continuously evolve for better. Such social settlement of people is referred as community which are formed to fulfil specific purpose of the society. It influences the behavioural and social aspects of the individual, affect their consumption pattern, and contribute in defining their identity, defining the competitive boundary for industry/business. It represents the dynamics of relationship, networking and behaviour which is explained in theories of reasoned action, planned behaviour, social networking and social capital. The term community was originated from the old Latin French *communité* which means ‘coming together as a gift’. Earlier these communities were restricted and were defined on the basis of geographical and cultural aspects. With the introduction of internet technology and boundless communication across the globe, such communities are now extended to the online arena and are concentrated towards the purpose of their existence rather than geographical or cultural dimensions. Also due to its contribution in altering the societal behavioural aspects, internet technology is regarded as one of the outstanding outcomes of information technology.

The concept of internet technology has undergone several changes through improvisation and has became an important aspect of daily activities among approximately 2.095 billion (i.e. 30.2% of the world population) people across world (Internet World Stats, 2011). It has shifted activities related to both professional and social networking, information search and provision, business strategy for sustenance and competitiveness, entertainment and fun from physical presence to virtual charisma. Commercialization of such networking technology
took place in early 1990’s and by today it has penetrated in every aspect of modern human lifestyle. It has reshaped the traditional communicative activities through its innovative services of VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) and IPTV (Internet Protocol Television) changing societal and business dynamics of interactions. Services like blogging, web-feeds, instant messaging and social networking has become the tool for expression of thoughts and ideas and building a group based on desired utility of individual. Such virtual spaces provide opportunity to an individual to perform several tasks in few clicks, regardless to their actual physical position.

Growth of internet technology has supported several business models such as online community which has emerged as multi-purpose virtual platform for networking, sharing thoughts and information, entertainment and fun, professional and social opportunities. Approximately more than 200 major active online community websites, formed on the basis of shared values and beliefs, is serving the growing demands of the online members on regular basis. These community websites are categorized on the basis of services they provide such as professional, general, fun and entertainment. Some of the popular websites known and is established among Indian online members are Facebook, MySpace, Orkut, Google+ representing the general purpose websites, while Alibaba (international trade), BizToo (social networking for global entrepreneurs), Cake Financials (Investing), FastPitch networking (business networking), Focus.com (Business to Business), GOBIGnetwork (community of start-up communities), HR.com (social networking for human resource professionals), LinkedIn.com (business and professional networking), Meettheboss (Business and finance community), PartnerUp (for entrepreneurs and small business owners), Present.ly (enterprise social networking and micro-blogging), Ryze (Business), Talkbiznow (Business networking), Work.com (small and medium sized business communities with shared how-to-advice), Yammer (social networking for official colleagues) and many more (Karasik Sharra,
http://www.sharakarasic.com/online-community-list.html#biz) represents the category of community of practices. However, for the success of these community websites, it is required to understand the basic dimensions influencing the existence of such communities.

Conceptualization of such online community is explored more in the theories of social sciences and psychology describing the existence and typology of community in terms of strong and weak ties within the societal construct. Extensive exploratory studies by Granovetter (1973, 1976, 1978, 1983, 2005) on social communities emphasize on the weak ties inducing higher flow of information. Through his research work, Granovetter argued that strong ties holds back the individual to certain group but restrict their source of information while weak ties among individuals motivate to express themselves explicitly and boost the flow of information through active communication from several different sources. Currently, the industry of online community, a service product of the internet technology, is at its developing stage with large number of competitors, low exit barriers and high entry barriers (Iribarri and Leroy, 2009). These competitors compete on the basis of providing new features and services in the form of a product, while maintaining the efficient delivery of existing services, to create an everlasting experience for their online members (Bryson and Taylor, 2010; Fischer et al., 2006; He et al., 2012; Hume, 2011; Passi, 2010). However, it is identified that every individual online member is found to be associated with more than one community website to fulfil their need, demands and desires. Therefore, rather than concentrating on the participatory behaviour of the online member, the focus need to be extended on retaining these online members. Sensing the changing competitive strategy, several community website have started concentrating on delivering a unique value proposition by providing their members a unique single virtual platform to fulfil their all kinds of purposes (need, demand and desire). These online managers are focusing on designing their strategy that attract participants and engage them by creating positive
experience over the virtual space. This requires an in-depth understanding of the factors that affect user’s value derived from their participation within social networking community website.

Online community represents the finest example of both strong and weak ties where users stay for longer due to strong ties and flow of information is maintained through weak ties. Such business model mainly influences the future intentions of their users to participate actively within the community website and ensure the success factors. To take an advantage of this growing opportunity, several online business models have emerged to explore the utility of this innovative virtual platform. These business models are focused on specific area of purpose or generalized in terms of its value creation, depending upon the category of online consumers they intent to serve. Such value creates a barrier for the customer to shift to other online community website thereby engage and retain them with the organization for longer period.

Day (1990) defined customer value as a difference between the perceived benefit and the concrete benefit obtained by the customer during and after interaction with the product/services, affecting the existing worth of the organization. The current emerging economic situations and growing competition has favoured the growth in conceptualization of the concept focusing local, global and glocal aspects. Dimensions like employee behaviour, availability, demand supply gap, ambience, price versus quality, customer complaints/grievance are identified as influential factors affecting overall customer value derived (Albert Wenben Lai, 1995; Clawson and Vinson, 1978; Kahle, 1977; Peter and Olson, 1990; Sheth et al., 1991; Vinson al., 1977; Wilkie 1990). However, the criteria of creating value for online users focus upon technical and social aspects. The technical aspects consists of accessibility, network availability, user friendly design, website appearance while
social aspects indicates the presence of social group, their response and interaction frequency 
with other users, moderators responsive behaviour, other user’s behaviour and their active 
participation. Few studies also indicate the importance of individual user’s emotional status 
influencing their derived benefits from the website. These derived benefits can be in the form 
of networking and recognition gain on the virtual platform among social group. Online 
models by Chanal and Carol-Fasan (2010), Chan et al. (2010), Xiao-Ling et al. (2010), Posey 
et al. (2010), Sheng-Wuu Joe and Chieh-Peng Lin (2008), and Preece (2000, 2001), suggests 
factors like user participatory behaviour, user need, user experience, user engagement and 
user retention play effective role in creating user value. Similarly, online user trust along with 
individual’s self-efficacy/technological skill are the factors need to be further explored to 
understand their dynamics on the virtual platform of community website affecting user 
benefits or value.

Extensive literature on online community have identified and measure the variables of 
stickiness, trust, engagement, member recommendation (WOM) and member retention 
individually or with combination, affecting one’s online activity and preference for a 
particular website depending on the value derived (Chen et al., 2010; Jy-Jehng and Tsang, 
2007; Lin, 2007; Polites et al., 2012). Also, according to customer relationship management 
theory, it is necessary to deliver value at each and every process of service provision to the 
online member to create a unique value proposition (Beverland, 2004; Ryals, 2005, 2008; 
Venkatesen et al., 2007). Therefore, extending the existing framework of online community, 
this study proposes an integrated approach of behavioural, social and emotional dimensions 
affecting online users. The model identifies online member participation as the foremost step 
towards the online community which is guided by member’s online behaviour, need and their 
attraction towards the website social network. Later, with the gradual exposure and level of 
comfort in navigating the website, members build a habit of being active on the community
website frequently for considerable period of time and results in opportunistic networking advantage along with the other desired criteria like recognition. However, individual’s comfort level with the handling of the website and their level of trust on the community website and other members determine the level of experience with the community website and accordingly motivate to revisit.

The chapter of literature review focuses on the conceptualization of online community followed with user value, participation, experience, stickiness, trust and technological skills. It discusses the major research work performed to comprehend existing dynamics of online community industry. The detailed explanation of identified variables linked theoretically to provide a conceptual framework that proposes user participation as an initiator of value creation process. It is described as user need, user behaviour and their attraction towards the existing social network associated with the social networking community website. Concept of attraction, need and behaviour is widely discussed in sociological theory but is less explored in context of online consumer/user behaviour. Few studies have focused on these dimensions and reported their considerable effect on individual’s level of involvement with the community website. To explore further these three dimensions are taken as representatives of user participation acting as a trigger for individual to participate within the community website. This construct explains both psychological and social aspect of the individual which later affects their overall experience with the website.

User experience is derived on the basis of influencing dimensions of human psychology that refers both social and emotional aspects. The social dimension is influenced on the basis of individual’s requirement for social support and reputation among them. This requires a continuous active involvement and interaction of other members within the social group. Similarly emotions indicate individual’s mental state which affects their feelings of being playful, enjoyment and stimulate them to participate repeatedly. However, to cater the need
of online environment, Preece (2000, 2001) suggested and emphasized on the importance of technical dimension, which later supported by other scholars. This dimension referred to the importance of website design, accessibility ease, speed and quantity of content flow among the users of general purpose social networking websites. Therefore, the research model defines user experience as a representative of social, technological and emotional aspect that motivates individuals to engage and retain with the website for longer duration of time frame. Study supports the construct of experience through extensive literature review on previous studies that focuses on several dimensions of experience.

Importance of engagement and retention have gain considerable attention among academicians and strategy builders. Both the concepts refer to the importance spending time with active and repetitive participation. Engagement refers to engaging the user with the community website activities for longer duration while retention refers to user’s preference and their repeat visits as compared to other available online community website. Therefore both the construct explain user’s preference and their repeat active participation. Similarly, recent studies on sustenance and growth of virtual platform have explained the importance of user stickiness. The construct is mainly explained with respect to time spent over the community website. However, this research framework defines user stickiness in terms of time, performance and preference. Therefore user engagement and retention are considered as the dimension of user stickiness. The research model suggests that repetitive and increased active participation among the users within the community website promotes networking and recognition among the existing social group over the community website.

Granovetter’s research work supported that networking and recognition supports healthy relationship among people within the society, and so has been identified as the important dimension of sociology. Both the concepts are explored extensively by the scholars across diverse categories. Networking explains the extent of relationship while recognition defines
individual’s popularity and image within the society. Haferkamp and Kramer (2011) and Ei Chew et al. (2011) suggested the importance of networking as one of the motivator as well as benefit individual seeks. Similarly, Youngok and Ingrid (2010) supported the need of recognition and its significance on the virtual platform of the community website. Therefore, based upon the importance and the role of dimensions as well as the existing literature review, the research model suggest networking and recognition as the construct explaining user value within the social networking community website.

Previous research suggests that user behaviour, retention and their engagement is influenced significantly due to individual’s trust and technological skills. Trust is defined as “the willingness of the person or group to relate to another in the belief that the other’s action will be beneficial rather than detrimental, even though this cannot be guaranteed” (Child, 2001). It is thus, identified as a foundation pillar for every relationship and motivate individual to participate further. Similarly, self efficacy indicates individual’s technical know-how, skills and their efficiency in dealing with tech-mediated models. It empowers the individual to use technology as a medium of communication and thereby improves the overall productivity of the task performed. Beard and Harper (2002) argued that low technological skills affects individual’s participatory and their overall experience in the community website. Therefore, both trust and technological skill affects user’s participatory behaviour and their future intention to remain with the community website. This influence their benefits gained from their active participation on the community website as networking and recognition.

The research work examines the interaction of these variables among the young user base of social networking community website. This young generation (20-28 years) of online community constitutes almost half of the active online population. According to the statistical details obtained from the social networking websites, such user base are mainly the college goers, interested mainly in entertainment and social networking, uploading pictures,
discussing on the latest ongoing trends and are in 30 (female):70 (male) ratio. Apart from this, the second largest Indian user base is of professionals (approx. 25%) and the rest includes children, teenagers, middle age and old age categories. Looking towards such distribution of the Indian online user base, the study targets the young and the most active online population to study the effect of interaction among the proposed variables. The data was collected with the help of the designed questionnaire introduced through personal interview methodology and is further introduced for analysis.

The proposed model is measured with the help of statistical tools like factor analysis and structural equation modelling. Set of factors explaining the dimensions of the proposed variables in the model are identified from the previous studies and are sorted on the basis of expert opinion. These factors are further explored with the help of exploratory factor analysis, and confirmatory factor analysis to identify the major factors suggesting the acceptable model fitness as well as maintaining the conceptual importance of the variable. Cronbach’s alpha is used to compute the overall reliability of the scale while correlation, normality and linearity of the data is analysed using descriptive statistics to confirm the usability of the dataset. Later structural equation modelling is employed to analyse the proposed path among the latent variables categorized as exogenous, endogenous, moderators and mediators.

The results indicate that user participatory behaviour plays the most significant role in affecting the user activity at every stage of experience and stickiness. It also affects individual’s overall value in terms of networking and recognition. Also the mediation effect of experience and stickiness, measured as indirect effect was weak as compared to the direct effect of participatory variables. Trust and technological skill as a moderator shows minimal change in the overall relationship in-spite of their importance in the previous literature. However, there exists significant difference while explaining the interactive effect among the variables across the categories based upon gender, education type and level. Across all the
mentioned categories, sample set from post graduates exhibit significantly strong effects explaining the proposed model of online value creation. Such results explain that although the identified variables are studied earlier explained considerable variance, however, when studied altogether reflected low explanation of the model. This signify that the proposed model of online value creation with respect to recognition and networking is more complex as compared to that of the one proposed here in this study.

The study therefore contributes to the existing literature of online community providing a primitive framework to understand the dynamics of value creation among the online user base as well as the website managers. Result indicates that managers when promote the participatory activity among the online users, their rate of active retention and engagement with the website increases building sticky user base. Higher population on the community website attracts several business offers which ultimately influence the overall revenue generation of the website.