Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The researcher has used an integrated approach in the reviewing of literature for the purpose of the study. The reviewed literature has been arranged thematically under ten sub headings in this chapter so as to provide a better and deeper understanding of theories, constructs, categories, and perspectives (USC, 2018) related to this study as well as the research gap which this study proposes to bridge.

2.1. Social Media and the Networks of Social Media

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, social media refers to ‘the forms of electronic communication (as web sites for social networking and microblogging), through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos)’. While the Webopedia describes social media as “a term used to describe a variety of web-based platforms, applications and technologies that enable people to socially interact with one another online. Some examples of social media sites and applications include Facebook, YouTube, Del.icio.us, Twitter, Digg, blogs and other sites that have content based on user participation and user-generated content (UGC), the Oxford online dictionary defines it as websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. So these social media websites act as forums where members share a whole lot of information – personal, professional and more, through the exchange of their ideas, likes and dislikes, interests etc.

All social media platforms are centered on relationships. They are based on shared participation of its consumers and enabled with the help of technology. Since social media transcends the boundaries of mass and personal media, they enable people to connect and communicate with one or a few persons, as well as with hundreds, thousands and even millions of others. Social media is complex due to the sheer number and variety of channels and vehicles being launched in the webspase all the time (Tuten & Solomon, 2016).

The use of these channels are not limited to socialising. Social media is used by individuals to gratify four major utilitarian functions – (1) **socialising** (making friends and building relationships), (2) **expressing** (sharing content and seeking attention), (3) **recreation** (interact,
play games, read and watch content) and (4) **information** (getting news, product, service and promotional information and keeping up with friends on social media) (Krithika G.K. & Sanjeev Kumar K.M., 2018).

Tuten and Soloman in their book on social media marketing have organised social media into four zones based on the purpose that social media serves.

**Zone 1: Social Community** - serves the purpose of sharing, socialising and conversing

**Zone 2: Social Publishing** - provides for editorial commercial and user generated content

**Zone 3: Social Entertainment** – includes media like games, music, art etc.

**Zone 4 Social Commerce** - channels that help in customer relationship management, customer service, retailing, sales, human resources etc.

This zoning helps in understanding and categorising social media better. The authors say that the zones are ‘not cut in stone’ thereby they are permeable. Below is a figure depicting the four zones of social media and examples of platforms or vehicles under each zone. It should be noted that there are social media platforms that can fall into more than one zone (Tuten & Solomon, 2016).

**Chart No. 2.1. Social Media Zones and Exemplar Vehicles**


Social media websites enable their users to create, build and maintain relationships that were not previously possible with a large and extended network of contacts. They can also provide a company with the potential to reach this large network of contacts (Enders et al., 2008). Thereby this so called “social media” is a burgeoning platform of customers and consumer
information for marketers. The marketers can gather a lot of information with respect to viewership and usage habits of the users of these media platforms. So there is a need to rear the channels of social media to make them effective marketing tools for reaching and engaging consumers.

2.2. Marketing Strategy, Integrated Marketing Communications and Social Media Marketing

Marketing strategy is the rationality used by businesses in order to achieve their marketing objectives of creating customer value and building profitable relationships. The company first decides the customers (markets) to serve, satisfying customers in those markets (segments) with the help of a well-designed marketing mix which consists of the 4 Ps of marketing - product, price, place and promotion (Kotler & Armstrong, Principles of Marketing, 2009). Social Media actually enables consumers to voice their opinions about products and services and participate in their creation as well. Marketing objectives of businesses are achieved with the help of the marketing mix. There is a need for the fifth ‘P’ to the marketing mix, namely ‘Participation’. Since social media is driven by user participation and is transforming the way consumers live as well as the way organisations do business today, Tuten & Soloman (2016) rightly term social media as the fifth ‘P’ of Marketing. Moreover, the expanding number of internet users, high speed connections, ease of use, and the swift distribution of social media; more firms are embracing a pertinent marketing strategy (Goi, 2014; Zhou & Wang, 2014).

According to Kotler and Keller, marketing communications are the means by which firms attempt to inform, persuade, and remind consumers, directly or indirectly - about the products and brands they sell. Marketing communications embodies the opinion of the organisation and its brands. A good marketing communications program gives consumers company and product information. It also helps to strengthen customer relationships, create brand image, position the brand in consumers’ minds, increase brand recall, build brand equity, improve sales and build shareholder value (Designing and Managing Integrated Marketing Communications, 2012). A company’s total promotional mix is also known as its marketing communication mix. It includes a mix of advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling and direct marketing tools that are used to communicate customer value and build customer relationships. An organisation can use a blend of both the personal channels and non-personal channels of communication (Kotler & Armstrong, Principles of Marketing, 2009). Social Media Marketing embraces and provides thrust to both the personal and non-
personal channels of brand communications, thus gives impetus to the integrated marketing communication strategy of businesses. It is increasingly becoming an inseparable aspect of organisations’ overall marketing strategy.

Social Media Marketing is using of social networks, online communities, blogs, wikis or any other online collaborative media for marketing, sales, public relations and customer service (Barker et al., 2013:3). Evans and McKee (2010) describe social media marketing as the process of gaining website traffic or attention through social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, and YouTube etc. According to Tuten and Soloman (2016) social media marketing as the utilization of social media technologies, channels, and software to create communicate, deliver and exchange offerings that have value for the organisation’s stakeholders. It includes the Word of Mouth (WOM) marketing that is also known as viral marketing, buzz, and guerrilla marketing and involves deliberate influencing of consumer-to-consumer communication through professional marketing techniques (Kozinets, De Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010). Social media marketing cannot replace traditional marketing but is an additional marketing channel that could be integrated with the traditional channel as a part of the marketing mix (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013).

Social media gives marketers a podium to communicate and network with peers, customers and potential consumers. This form of media is comparatively economical and hence it can reduce the cost of marketing campaigns (Kuhikar 2012). Initially social media was considered as a low cost media option only for small, new and experimental businesses. But today this media is being used by the new, existing and established businesses, whatever their nature, products, size and scale of operations. As Tushar Vyas, the managing partner - South Asia, GroupM, says, that social media is an important area for actionable insight in areas of marketing, product, distribution and consumer behaviour etc.

The SEO Marketing Benchmark survey conducted by Marketing Sherpa in February 2013, indicates that 64 percent of marketers felt that using social media was “somewhat effective” in achieving their marketing objectives. Though webinars, webpages, customer reviews and ebooks are considered very effective for creating online content as a part of the marketing strategy of organisations, content created on social media platforms actually have huge potential in being a part of an organisation’s marketing tactics.

Marketers do place very high value on social media as a significant 92 percent of marketers had indicated that social media was important for their business, up from 86 percent in 2013
According to the 2016 Social Media Marketing Industry Report, 90 percent of marketers felt that social media was important to their businesses, 81 percent of marketers agreed that they had integrated their social media and traditional marketing activities and a significant 63 percent of marketers were using social media for 6 hours or more and 39 percent for 11 or more hours weekly for their marketing activities. The same study also indicated that the top five benefits that marketers acquire from the use social media were (1) increase in exposure for their businesses, (2) increasing traffic, (3) developing loyal fans, (4) gain marketing insights and (5) generating leads.

Brand owners having a social media presence have numerous advantages relating to advertisement, product development and market intelligence by observation and analysis of the user generated content (UGC) (Richter, Riemer, & vom Brocke, 2011). Also because social media is unlike traditional media, due to the fact that it is linked with various indicators which are embedded within the advertisements that help evaluate their effectiveness (Natarajan at al. 2013). These indicators include likes, comments, clicks and followers which allow advertisers to evaluate how well their product or brand is being accepted or rated by internet users.

The social media marketing efforts of marketers definitely seems to be well founded. Businesses using social media for at least two years reported that it helped them improve sales, reduce marketing expenses, and improve their search engine rankings. While 63 percent of businesses who had been using social media for at least one year, found it useful for building a loyal fan base (Stelzner, 2016). In a recent study on social media consumers, in the south of India indicated that around 42 percent of people clicked on advertisements posted on social media and 23 percent of them bought something as they saw one of their friends with it on social media. The study also revealed that people in South India did like or follow local (46 percent), national (28 percent) and global (26 percent) businesses on social media networks (Miller, et al., 2016).

Social media has changed how brand-related content is created, distributed and consumed. Marketers or advertisers publish (brand) pages to network with their brand followers (Muk, 2013). Advertising brands through social media is rapidly becoming the new way of marketing. Social Media has given more power to the consumer and the online word of mouth to shape brands (Tsai and Men, 2013). It has become a need for all the businesses because it is popular, encourages two-way communication, reaches all ages and demographics, and promotes e-word of mouth (Divya & Regi, 2014).
In today’s ever updating era of the internet it is imperative for organisations to think outside the traditional marketing and communication techniques and adopt the new media to reach out to the consumer. So it can be seen that the emergence of social media has redefined the digital media landscape and created new online marketing communication platforms for advertisers to deliver advertising messages. Marketers use both paid and non-paid methods to communicate to consumers through social media platforms. They conduct activities like publishing brand (fan) pages to networks with their brand followers on social-networking sites. Although social media has emerged as a new marketing channel for companies to communicate with consumers, there is a lack of understanding in terms of what influences them to become fans of brand pages and how they perceive brand pages on social media (Muk 2013). According to the 2014 Social Media Marketing Industry Report, marketing tactics and engagement are top areas marketers want to master, with at least 89% of marketers wanting to know the most effective social tactics and the best ways to engage their audience with social media.

2.3. ‘The Millennials’ and their Social Media Consumption Habits

Neil Howe and William Strauss, authors of the book Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069, written in 1991 are credited with coining the term - Millennials. The authors consider researching on generational cohorts to be a good practice. They define the millennial cohort as consisting of individuals born between 1982 and 2004. However there are many other proposed dates for millennials (Wigmore, 2015). Like Brosdahl and Carpenter’s (2011) categorization of generations, using the following birth dates for each cohort: the Silent Generation (1925-1945), the Baby Boomers (1946-1960), Generation X (1961-1981) and Generation Y (born after 1981). Till now there has been no common agreement on the start and end points dates of birth for Generation Y or Gen Y. Essentially the earliest proposed birthdate for Millennials is 1976 and the latest 2004. They are the first generation of consumers to have spent their entire lives in the digital environment. The world of information technology intensely affects how they live and work (Bennett et al., 2008; Wesner and Miller, 2008). They are the ones who use, contribute share, participate and consume digital content. Thereby they are rightly termed as ‘digital natives and not digital immigrants (Prensky, 2001). They also form a huge chunk of Social Media users. This is the rationale behind considering the millennial cohorts for the purpose of this study.
Millennials in India are one of the world's strongest sources of untapped economic potential. At 400 million, these 18 to 35 year olds constitute almost a third of the Indian population and are the largest millennial population in the world. They are better educated, better connected to the internet, to information and 'to the world' than their predecessors in prior generations. They sit in cafes, browsing social media accounts on their smartphones while occasionally shopping online. The generation is a part of the growing middle class with better disposable incomes (Morgan Stanley, 2017). Parag Gupta of Morgan Stanley has noted that though most of the generation Y in India, have been using the internet since just a few years, 40 percent of them do online transactions. This indicates the confidence of the generation with respect to use of digital platforms and transacting on them. Another report by Deloitte states that India has the largest population of 440 million young adults in the age group of 18 to 35 years who account for 34 percent of the country’s population. They are better educated, better connected and also chief wage earners for their families, accounting for nearly 71 per cent of household income thereby are driving consumption. 32 percent of their income is spent on entertainment and dining out, 21 percent on clothing, 11 percent on electronics and only 10 percent in savings. This indicates a shift towards consumption economy rather than a savings economy, which was a predominant feature of Gen X (born between mid-1960s and early-1980s) (Deloitte, 2018).

The generation Y consumes social media for a variety of reasons. One of the main reasons as to why the generation Y uses social media is to interact (Palfrey and Gasser, 2008). Social media users aged 18 to 34 years old are more likely than older age groups to prefer social media for interactions with acquaintances, friends and family. They are also more likely to value others’ opinions in social media and to feel important when they provide feedback about the brands or products they use (eMarketer, 2011). Most researches do agree that Millennials spend more time on social media. They contribute and create content and like to stay connected. They just like the other groups of users look for information, leisure or entertainment on social media (Park et al., 2009). They use it for socializing and experiencing a sense of community (Valkenburg et al., 2006), and for the purpose of staying in touch with friends (Lenhart and Madden, 2007). This implies that millennials are involved in the process of creating social capital which is defined as relationships with other individuals that provide support, friendship, and information. Other social capital is related to voluntary organizations, politics and community involvement (Wellman, Haase, Witte, & Hampton; 2001).

Gen Y spends considerable amount of time on social media platforms. Adults who are over 18 years of age spend an average of five hours and thirty minutes on social media alone. That is 22 percent of overall media time. The chart below indicates that in 2017, the time spent on social
media platforms has increased by 36 percent since the third quarter of 2015. Indicating a significant rise in the time spent on social media. These adults are heavy users of social media and are potential brand/media activists who are of interest to marketers. If marketers want to win them over they have to understand where and how to associate with them successfully (Casey, 2017). A report by Deloitte (2018) states the millennials spend about 17 hours of a week on online activities like web browsing, movie streaming, social media and online banking.

Chart No. 2.2. The Percentage of Total Media Time Spent on Social Media

According to the 2016 Nielsen Social Media report, 39 percent of heavy social users believe that finding out about products and services is an important reason for using a social network. 35 percent of them cite special discounts such as access to exclusive offers and coupons as important and 29 percent of heavy users actually find supporting their favourite companies or brands somewhat to very important. This above is indicative of the expectation of millennials from brands on social media platforms.
2.4. Generation Y – Attitudes and Perception towards Social Media and Social Media Marketing and their Purchase Behaviour

Perception is the process by which an individual selects, organises, and interprets stimuli into a meaningful and comprehensible picture of the world. It is the way we understand and rationalise the world around us (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009). Attitude is an individual’s positive or negative feelings and evaluations about performing a particular behaviour (Fishbein, 1975). Consumer attitude describes the psychological tendencies expressed by the positive or negative evaluations of consumers when engaged in certain behaviours (Ajzen, 1991), for example when using social networks or buying products. The better the attitude a person has toward a brand, the more likely he or she is to use the product. On the contrary, the less positive the attitude, the less likely he or she would be to use the product (Chiou et al. 2008). Understanding a person’s attitudes or perceptions is very important as it helps us know their intentions.

The development of recent social computing services such as social networking (e.g., My Space, Facebook), media sharing (e.g., YouTube, Flickr), micro-blog (e.g., Tumblr, Twitter), social mapping (e.g., Dodgeball by Google, Beacon Buddy by Helio), and tagging (e.g., Dgm8, Socialight) enhances the power of personal influence (Haryani & Motwani, 2015); (Lakshmipathy, 2007; Parameswaran & Whinston, 2007). The millennial generation are enamoured by social media that connects them updates them and entertains them. It gives them a semblance of being in control and taking control of world around them. Zaltman et al. (1973) believed that a customer would consider a technology to be innovative if they were knowledgeable about it and perceived it to be new and relevant. Mehrabian and Russell (1974) had postulated that a customer’s knowledge about a product and service would generate either a positive customer attitude or a negative attitude. The perception and attitudes of generation Y towards social media and social media marketing is influenced by the comfort they exhibit on the technological platform and its significance to them. User motivation can be explained by three constructs: ‘perceived ease of use’, ‘perceived usefulness’, and ‘attitude toward using the system’ (Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw; 1989). Social media adoption and to an extent, even identifying with brand communities can be influenced by the systems’ or platforms’ ease of use, its usefulness, intention of use, accessibility and their attitude towards it (Davis, 1993, Venkatesh; 2013), (Nell, Wiid, & Cant, 2014).
Consumer behaviour is defined as the behaviour that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services they expect will satisfy needs. It focuses on how individuals make decisions and use their available resources like time, money and effort on consumption related articles (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009). Belch and Belch (1998) describe it as “the process and activities people engage in when searching for, selecting, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services so as to satisfy their needs and desires”. It also includes the decision processes that precede as well as follow the above mentioned actions (Engel, Blackwell and Miniard, 1995).

Generation Y is a strong determinant of online purchasing behaviour and it contributes to the highest percentage of online purchasing (Dhanapal, Vashu & Subramaniam 2015). When it comes to making purchasing decisions, consumers are influenced by electronic word of mouth (Tseng, Kuo and Chen; 2013). A study by Bennett (2013) found that 46 percent of Millennials depend on social media when buying online, 55 percent of them will share their bad experiences and that 51 percent are influenced by the word of mouth for their product purchases and they trust “strangers” more than their friends. This is unlike what Viswanathan and Jain (2013) report, that Generation Y are heavily influenced by their friends when it comes to making purchasing decisions. What they have is determined by what their friends have. The choice of new brands by generation Y, is also often determined by peer recommendation transmitted directly or through social networking channels (Littman, 2008). Their purchase pattern can be interpreted as a form of self-expression, some use brands to create their personal image or communicate their own values and beliefs (Edelman/StrategyOne, 2010). Advertising on Facebook has a positive influence on the behavioural attitudes (intention-to-purchase and purchase) of Millennials (Duffet, 2014). A report by Deloitte (2018), states that social media and online reviews are a vital aspect of the millennials' shopping journey as they influence their purchases. 40 percent of male millennials and nearly one-third female millennials would opt to make all their purchases online. These cohorts would drive the online retail market to grow at 30 percent per annum till 2021.

2.5. Building Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty on Social Media

One of the main objectives of marketers is to increase trust worthiness of their brands’. Trust is important during the shopping process (Powers, Advincula, Austin, Graiko, & Snyder, 2012) and is a main antecedent or forerunner of patronage (Pentina, Zhang, & Basmanova, 2013; See-To & Ho, 2014). Brand trust is “the willingness of the average consumer to rely on
the ability of the brand to perform its stated function” (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Providing the necessary product and brand information is also one of the ways in which brands’ can make their customer trust them (Chiu, Huang, & Yen, 2010; Gefen, Karahanna, & Straub, 2003). Trust in the salesperson is a necessary antecedent to trust in the company. Just like how trust in the salesperson can have an indirect effect through trust in the company, which, in turn, has a direct effect on buyer loyalty. It should be noted that trust in the company in many cases is the initial source credibility for the salesperson (Chow & Holden, 1997) and in this context applicable to brands communities and fan pages and other forms of social media marketing efforts of brands as well.

Establishing and nurturing brand communities through brand accounts, brand pages or brand handles in social media networks are a part of the social media marketing strategy of organisations. According to the Brand Community Model of (Algesheimer et al.; 2005, Okazaki, Benito & Martínez, 2012) the relationship of the consumer with the brand is established based on the identification with the brand community, which affects the user's commitment to the community. Identification with the brand community can be defined as "the strength of the relationship between the consumer and the brand community ... of which the person is considered a member." Community engagement is “the consumer’s intrinsic motivations to interact and cooperate with community members” (Algesheimer et al., 2005). In a brand community consumers play the role of the brands’ agents or mediators or even ambassadors within the community (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001). Interaction in social media refers to activities such as liking, commenting, sharing stories, photos, videos and other material in the brand’s community page. Community engagement has desirable effects on the members of the brand’s community. So, higher engagement means higher cooperation and interactions, which in turn would result in higher positive effects gained through such interactions. Therefore, highly engaged consumers or brand followers are expected to form stronger relationships with brand elements namely brand, product, company and other consumers (Habibi, Laroche, & Richard, 2014). This indicates that community followership and engagement in brands in social media is due to trust in brand and brand trust influences brand loyalty. Trust also influences loyalty by affecting the consumer's perception of congruence in values with the provider i.e. the marketer (Gwinner, Gremler, and Bitner 1998).

The concept of brand loyalty or customer loyalty is implicit. Heskett et al., (1997) defined customer loyalty, as repeated purchasing and referring a company to other customers. It helps in generating positive long-term financial results for the organisation (Duffy, 2003). Customer loyalty is also indicated by an intention to perform a diverse set of behaviours that indicate a
motivation to maintain a relationship with the organisation, including allocating a higher share of the category wallet to the specific service provider, engaging in positive word of mouth (WOM), and repeat purchasing (Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman, 1996). Brand communities are a part of the social media marketing strategy of brands. Information and experiences presented in online brand communities that have a lot of consumer initiated content are considered trustworthy, which in turn help in establishing persistent loyalty to the relevant brand or branded products (Jang, Olfman, Ko, Koh, & Kim, 2008). A ‘Q3 Index report for 2016’ by Sproutsocial indicates that 57 percent of social media users are likely to buy a brand that they follow on social media (Jackson, 2017). According to Erdogmus & Cicek (2012) “brand loyalty of the customers is positively affected when the brand (1) offers advantageous campaigns, (2) offers relevant content, (3) offers popular content, (4) appears on various platforms and offers applications on social media”. The authors were of the view that measures of brand loyalty included intention to interact more with the brand, intention make repeat purchases from the brand, trust or confidence in the brand, interact with brands through social media, and intention to recommend the brand to friends and family.

Generation Y consumers “have a very unique attitude” towards brands. They have grown up in a materialistic world where almost everything is branded so therefore, they are a lot more comfortable with brands than previous generations (Lazarevic, 2012). Some recent studies have indicated that millennials are less brand loyal than preceding generations. A global study by Daymon Worldwide in 2016, showed that only 29% of millennials usually buy the same brand, compared with 35% of Gen Xers. Generation Y are very concerned about what others think of them (Markow, 2005), so they utilise brands as “an extension of themselves” (Lazarevic, 2012). Rohm, Kaltcheva and Milne (2013) state that Generation Y prefer to interact with brands through social media than in a physical setting.

Millennials are mercurial shoppers and pose a great challenge for brands looking at engaging them. They are unpredictable, difficult to understand, constantly keep changing their minds and views, and are not brand loyal, like the previous generation also known as generation X. They even exercise control over the brands since they create and share brand content. They even can build and change products (Roth, 2016). The millennials pose a great challenge to marketers they are resistant to the traditional marketing efforts and it is difficult to seize and retain their loyalty (Bush et al., 2004; Megehee et al., 2003; Wolburg and Pokrywczynski, 2001). They are notoriously known to be disloyal to brands. So it is not easy to secure repeat purchases from them (Sebor, 2006; Wood, 2004). However the results of another study by Balakrishnan, Dahnil & Yi, (2014) indicates that the online marketing communications,
especially electronic word of mouth (eWOM), online communities and online advertisement through company website and social media platforms are effective in promoting brand loyalty and product purchase intention. Saxton (2007) is of the opinion that the key to developing any branding strategy targeting the generation Y, is to first understand how the cohorts approach brands. Roth (2016) suggests something that traditional marketers would consider as unthinkable. He proposes that the marketers should let millennials discover the brands by themselves by letting them inside the organisation and be a part of the brand building process as that will help in enhanced brand engagement and loyalty.

### 2.6. Consumer Lifestyle and Lifestyle Brands

Lifestyle refers to the way of life people. “According to Weber, lifestyle is one of the demarcations of social standing. It is achieved by living your life in a certain way that is not inherited but learned and similar to other people.” (Uth, 1996). The Business Dictionary defines lifestyle as “a way of living of individuals, families (households) and societies, which they manifest in coping with their physical, psychological, social and economic environments on a day to day basis. It is expressed in both work and leisure behaviour patterns and (on an individual basis) in activities, attitudes, interests, opinions, values and allocation of income. It also reflects people’s self-image and self-concept; the way they see themselves and believe they are been by the others.” Factors such as culture, social class, reference groups, family etc. influence the motivations, needs and wants of consumers. So consumer buying follows an overall consumption system or lifestyle; that an aspiration for the good life generates goals, some of which result in demand for specific products that contribute to the desired lifestyle, (O'Shaughnessy, 1987). Products that help persons fulfil their need to lead a preferred lifestyle or make a statement, are lifestyle products.

India is a complex country and so are its consumers. Understanding consumers has always been difficulty for marketers, but if we can identify the broad phenomena that a country is experiencing, marketers would be in a better position to make strategic plans concerning consumers (Sutwala, 2018). India is a growing market, expected to become the third largest consumer market by 2025 with 40 percent urbanites contributing to 60 percent of consumption. Increased industrialisation, growing service sector and employment opportunities have raised the disposable incomes of families, encouraged urbanisation, changed family structures and spending patterns. Indian consumers are now less price-sensitive and want to lead better lifestyles. Households belonging to the elite and affluent household categories are top income classes that are the fastest growing. The consumers are
very aware of product options available in the market and even believe that branded products are more reliable. Brands that support Indian-ness, family / social values are more easily accepted by them. The Indian consumer market is driven by the youth who are more sophisticated and brand conscious. They buy products based on the aspiration lifestyle value it offers than just its utility value. The affluent classes’ penchant for premium branded products will continue. The shifts in consumer behaviour and spending patterns in the evolving Indian society will have implications on how organisations position themselves (ASA & Associates LLP, 2015) (Singhi, Jain, & Singhi, 2017). The growth of digital technologies and applications like social media networks are of immense importance today as organisations are looking at newer vehicles to position, build and grow, brands that reflect consumers’ aspirational lifestyles.

A lifestyle brand is an ideology created by a particular organisation’s brand (Schmitt, 2012). In the book, *Lifestyle Brands: A Guide to Aspirational Marketing* by Saviolo & Marazza (2013), a lifestyle brand is defined as “a company that markets its products or services to embody the interests, attitudes and opinions of a group or a culture. Lifestyle brands seek to inspire, guide, and motivate people, with the goal of their products contributing to the definition of the consumer's way of life,” These brands rely on the activation of an ideology, inorder to attract a relatively high number of people to become a recognised social phenomenon (Saviolo & Marazza, 2013). An organisation achieves a lifestyle brand by focusing on evoking an emotional connection with its consumers (Kim & Brandon, 2010). It can create a desire for a consumer to be affiliated with a particular group or brand (Austin & Matos, 2013). According to Spacey (2017), a lifestyle brand is a brand designed to appeal to a particular way of life and there are fourteen types of lifestyle brands that are based on values, family orientation, safety, community, sense of style, city vs, county lifestyles, profession, life-stage, ambitions, economic circumstances, inclination towards nature/everything natural, individual interests and hobbies, culture and subculture.

Millennials today have a tough time leading a conventional lifestyle very unlike the previous generation, they make unconventional choices want to live better than their parents did. They are less inclined to save and have the capacity to spend, thus creating opportunities for brands. Their lifestyle choices and purchases are governed by their evolving needs. They lay great emphasis on health care and wellness, convenience, quality, value delivered by the brand, aesthetics and personalisation inorder to differentiate themselves from the troop (Deloitte & Retail Association of India, 2018). This indicates that millennials choice of lifestyle products / brands are driven by these choices.
Social media is an essential communication channel for brands today. In America, 58.6 percent of consumers interact with brands one to three times a day on social media. This includes activities pertaining to liking a brand post, reading an article, or sharing a piece of content about a brand. The preferred online channel for brand interaction for around forty percent of women is the brands’ social media accounts. Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are considered to be the best social media platforms for influence marketing owing to their popularity and mammoth reach (Gordon, 2018). According to Brandi (2018) the top ten social media platforms for business are Facebook, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google Plus and Yelp. In the Indian context, when we consider the contribution of social media platforms towards customer engagement, it was found that Facebook had captured the social media space by grabbing a remarkable 94 percent in retailer marketing activities followed by Twitter (39 percent) and Instagram (28 percent) (Hegde, et al., 2016).

Chart No. 2.3. Contribution of Social Media Platforms towards Customer Engagement

Socialbakers (2011) in its research, identified that the Automobile and Retail industries were highly engaged with their fans on social media, but the Airlines and Telecom industries are the ones that are the most responsive to their fans on Facebook.
Social media platforms are playing a very important role in marketing of various brands. These websites are widely used by various brands in order to reach more and more people. So it is imperative to understand the strategies, practices and activities that brands are undertaking in order to achieve their marketing goals. This section gives an insight into the various strategic leanings and social media practices of lifestyle brands.

If an organisation has to form and grow a business, it is very important that social media fits into the overall business strategy of the organisation. Strategy is ‘the plan’ that is used to achieve the organisation’s goals and a social media strategy must consider how it can be used when it is required for internal and external social communications, to harness value from collaborative relationships and as a device to manage and monitor internal and external brand reputation. (Fox, 2018). A social media strategy defines how an organisation will use social media, its supporting platforms and tools to achieve its communications objectives (Gurd, 2017).

There are numerous reasons as to why marketers use social media. One of the primary reasons as to why marketers are using social media is owing to the fact that social media serves as a “direct one-to-one connection with the consumer”. It is a great platform to study the brands’ consumers, decode their likes/dislikes, understand the deals or bargains that work best and what grows sales. Social Media networks like Twitter can even be leveraged to become effective customer service platforms (Harihar, 2013). Fox (2018) puts forth the following three ‘compelling’ reasons as to why marketers use social media:
a) “Marketing – understanding customers, developing brand awareness and fit to customer acquisition.
b) Employee Engagement – developing company culture, improving internal collaboration and recruiting talent.
c) Collaboration – creating social spaces to collaborate with partners, suppliers and customers”

Organisations can align their social media tactics to achieve various organisation goals like improving the rate of innovation and new product development, knowledge management, investing through crowd sourcing, acquire new customers, saving operational costs, improving quality of talent for recruitment etc. (Fox, 2018). According to The Content Factory (2017), business goals for using social media marketing also include driving targeted traffic, boosting business, relationship building, learning from consumers and industry leaders, building brand image and brand loyalty. Organisations basic motivations behind engaging in social media activities are owing to the increasing popularity of social media accounts, presence of competitors in the medium, headquarters’ strategy and the pressure to reduce costs. The main expected outcomes for companies were interaction with customers, creating /enhancing relationships with customers, increase brand awareness, customer engagement, promoting products, increasing of sales and the more targeted acquisition of new customers (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). The primary goals of Indian single brand retailers is customer acquisition, customer retention and brand awareness. Their strategic plans include creating new product lines, expanding businesses, acquiring or launching new businesses, transforming their business models and streamlining their businesses through vertical integration. 80 percent of marketers studied were keen on promoting brands through social media (Hegde, et al., 2016).

Brands use various creative strategies on offline and online inorder to capture customer attention and build relationships with the consumers. They spend time and money to develop branded internal and external social networks. These efforts provide additional touch-points to boost ongoing interaction between the consumer and the brand story through the day, which can deepen consumer-brand relationships, help marketers uncover common themes in consumer feedback, and persuade consumers to engage with online content (Murdough 2009). A study on top brands creative strategies on social media suggests that the best brands go where consumers are through tools and social channels that consumers most prefer, like Facebook. It also indicated that brands also use multiple appeals as they share content with target audiences in social media and that consumer engagement metrics indicated positive
relationships with the use of experiential, user image and exclusivity appeals; incentives to share; and frequent contacts designed to increase engagement (Ashley & Tuten, 2012). Marketers try to use brand personification strategies on social media like use of images (i.e., graphic content), language (i.e., textual content), persons (celebrities) and animals to depict brands as living people, able to communicate with consumers via interpersonal conversations in order to engage customers (using likes, shares and comments). These kinds of strategies may establish brand impressions in consumer and are likely foster the acquisition and maintenance of consumer–brand relationships. The more brands become personified in social media, consumers may be more willing to converse with the brands at a personal level. (Chen, Lin, Choi, & Hahm, 2015). It must also be noted that high consumer engagement may lead consumers to have plentiful brand experience and generate positive emotional responses, because social interaction per se is pleasant (Wang et al. 2007).

Brands are using a variety on tactics on social media in order to connect and engage with the consumer. Social media brand content is one of the drivers of success of the social media marketing strategy of businesses. Some common attributes of brands’ content marketing on social media are creativity, adhering to the concept of ‘less is more’, content creation based on target audience, emphasis on using videos and using humour for their marketing, doing away with automated posts on multiple network and associating with celebrities (Techshu, 2015). The popular actions of firms are holding prize competitions, announcing new products or services, interacting with fans, providing advice and useful information, and managing customer service related issues (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Research data published by Facebook in late 2014 showed that consumers wanted to see more stories from friends and family (organic posts) from the Facebook brand pages they cared about. The study also reported that though the consumers reported that they desired less promotional content, and has even identified certain content as "too promotional" were actually the organic posts from brands that they had "liked" rather than that of separately placed paid advertisements (Fulgoni, 2015). According to (Gandhi, 2013) the five fashion brands in India that have very good Facebook content are Marks & Spencer, Biba, Vera Moda, Fashion and You and Wills Lifestyle. The brands have been shortlisted based on their creative ideas, engaging and informative content with games and contests.

Creating good content is what most marketers face. In another study, on the Top Shared Posts on Facebook by brands in 2017 conducted by Uttamchandan (2018) on over 100000 posts and 500 leading brand pages indicated that:
Videos posts were more engaging than images and links.

Ensuring that videos, make sense even when muted drive greater engagement since a large percentage of users watch Facebook videos with the sound off.

Using content with vernacular language like Tanishq does, drives higher engagement.

Brands that tell riveting stories through their video content engage better with their customers.

Building awareness around a social issue or taking a stand for a cause ensures increased ‘share’ability of the posts.

Direct selling on ‘in-your-face’ selling does not work on social media. To trigger more shares of posts, the content should focus on informing, educating, entertaining or establishing a connection with the consumers.

The names of top shared lifestyle brand posts according to the same study are that of (1) Oriflame, (4) Oppo India, (7) Tanishq and (11) Micromax India.

Some lifestyle brands that made a mark with their creative social media campaigns in 2016 were Biba (#Change is beautiful), Nivea (#BanBodyOdour), Fastrack (Never Have I Ever…….), Adidas (#FeelLoveUseHate), Nike (#DaDaDing), Reebok (#FittoFight), Lee (#RefreshtheCity), Dove (#RealBeauty), Micromax (#RoarforHelp), Woodland (#BeyondOrdinary), Mia by Tanishq (#BestatWork) and Turtle (#TheBlindSpot). (SocialSamosa, 2017)

A study on top 50 social media campaigns 2017 indicated there had been a lot of experimentation on the digital platform by brands. They posted branded content, long format story-telling and even launched brands for the first time using digital media only. Brands made full use of the online platform to engage with their respective audiences and create a good recall. Some campaigns that are worth a mention are that of Biba, OnePlus 5 Smartphone, Oriflame, Reebok, Nokia, Tanishq Jewellery, Nivea India, Micromax India and Samsung India (Neogy, 2017). It can been that the posts were mostly creative video campaigns that were socially relevant, fun, entertaining and emotionally connecting with the audience.

A handful of Indian brands are making a phenomenal use of the visual medium of Instagram, though they have smaller follower bases as compared to their Facebook followers or Twitter fans. Their Instagram followers are a connected, thriving community with a personal touch. It is a platform where fans of brands like Chumbak which sells quirky souvenirs and lifestyle
products, can flaunt their new buys on Instagram and thereby be engaged with the brand (Vinaya, 2015). Though Instagram is a unique image and video-driven platform, that is very user-friendly for both the businesses and the followers, a lot of brands still find it difficult to get the best out of Instagram. But there are a few brands that have actually used some great tactics on this platform. A Risepro study on ‘40 of the Best Ecommerce Brands on Instagram in 2017’ captures some of the tactics that have worked well for brands on Instagram. These include making use of curated user-generated content, brand ambassadors, wit and humour to engage the target audience, video stories, depicting brand consistency, showing behind the scene shots, creative and high quality images, appealing lifestyle shots, complementing attires, engaging stories, social concern or charity work, good use of captions, text annotations over images, competitions, inspirational quotes and giving away freebies (Thomas, 2017).

2.8. Latest Social Media Marketing Trends in India

An Economic Times article by (Chandra, 2017) considers that the primary four factors that are driving digital marketing revolution are technology (like AI and chatbots, big data and predictive analytics, virtual and augmented reality and digital marketing tools), storytelling (using videos, interactive content marketing, using influencers and bloggers like Axis bank etc.), the ‘first mover’ advantage (making use of the latest trends) and mobile focused digital marketing

Social Samosa with inputs from (Dasgupta, et al., 2018) highlights that the social media marketing trends for 2018 are to do with distribution of good social media content, use of videos, creation of relevant, impactful and compelling share worthy narrative / content (like National Geographic and Nike), using user generated content (UGC) on Instagram and Facebook to build brands, consider influencer marketing to increase brand awareness and return on investment (ROI), using Twitter only for listening to brand conversations and online response management to engage customer, live streaming product launches and events on Facebook and Twitter, using Instagram stories and polls to gain brand popularity and considering use of various tools and methods for measurement of impact of their digital / social media marketing and traditional marketing activities on the business’s value and bottom-line.

According to Rhea (2018), the top ten social media marketing trends of FMCG companies are the (1) use of personalised messaging strategies, (2) having two-way conversations with customers to create meaningful relationships with them to encourage brand loyalty leading to
brand mentions, (3) reaching out to customers using chatboxes, (4) engaging customers through Instagram stories, (5) collaborating with powerful brand influencers to build brand credibility, widen customer base and drive sales like Himalaya, (7) using regional content and language to build brand trust especially in tier 2 and 3 cities and rural areas, (8) making products easily available through social media networks to drive sales like Baidyanath, (9) use of videos to communicate messages more effectively and (10) taking a stand on current social issues to build brand personality and emotionally connect with the customer especially millennials.

2.9. Conceptual Models - Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) by Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) and Ajzen & Fishbein (1980) postulates that behaviour is a function of personal intentions, personal attitudes towards the behaviour and the opinions of peers. So, behavioural intention (BI) is a measure of the strength of one's intention to perform a specified behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). It is determined by attitudes towards the behaviour (A), and subjective norms (SN) i.e. BI = A + SN. The theory assumes that people make use of available information, and consider the consequences of their actions before engaging in the behaviour as they are rational. The theory was "designed to explain virtually any human behaviour" (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980).

Source: Ajzen and Fishbein (1980)

Ajzen (1985) put forth another concept known as the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) which is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). According to the theory there are three determinants of behaviour, they are attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norm or the perceived social influences that influence performance of behaviour and the perceived
ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour or ‘perceived behavioural control’ (Beck & Ajzen, 1991).

Davis (1986) introduced the Technology Acceptance Model based on the theory of reason action (TRA) for modelling the user acceptance of information technology or computer usage behaviour. TAM is considered to be less general than TRA, and tries to provide a basis for tracing the impact of external factors on the internal beliefs, attitudes, and intentions of users. TAM highlights that individual’s beliefs with respect to the ‘perceived usefulness’ (U) or relevance of the system in increasing job performance and ‘perceived ease of use’ (EOU) related to the users perspective that the system is free from effort are associated with attitude towards and usage of the computer systems.

Like TRA, TAM suggests that computer usage or acceptance of information systems is determined by behavioural intention (BI), but differs from TRA as it postulates that behavioural intention is a function of a person's attitude toward using the system (A) and the perceived usefulness (U) of the system and unlike TRA it does not include “subjective norm” (SN) as a determinant of behavioural intention. (Davis, et al., 1989). The technology acceptance model proposes that the adoption of information technology is determined by two technology related attitudinal dimensions namely (1) perceived usefulness (PU) and (2) perceived ease of use (PEOU) of the technology systems being used. The adopters’ perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use towards technology both influence their attitude towards it and in turn lead them towards acceptance or adoption of that technology (Davis et al., 1989; Muk 2013). However, research by Hua and Haughton (2009) suggests that the two key aspects that influence people’s adoption and acceptance of virtual worlds or networks are perceived usefulness and social factors.

Chart No. 2.6. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Source: Davis et.al (1989)
Though the technology acceptance model was developed to understand the behaviour related to the acceptance and adoption of computer information systems, it was later extended to study behaviour related to acceptance of new technology and application like social media platforms (Tripathi, 2014; Wirtz & Göttel, 2016), research in the areas of online and mobile marketing (Gefen et al, 2003; Zhang and Mao, 2008).

In this study we relate the theoretical concepts of TRA to understand the influence of perception of social media on nature of social media involvement and TAM to better understand the receptivity towards or acceptance of marketing by lifestyle brands on online social media platforms by millennial customers. The model is also used to help us predict the behavioural intentions of millennials in terms of their brand following, purchase behaviour or intentions, brand trust and loyalty towards lifestyle products and brands being marketed on social media platforms.

India is fast catching up with the technologically advanced world and here too there are many social media websites that Indians are accessing. With increased access and exposure, comes expectation. Understanding the Indian consumer is not easy at all considering the fact that there is great religious cultural complexity involved in our society. If marketers want to be fruitful in achieving success in engaging and building a relationship with the customer in turn achieve a business feat, they need to look for alternative modes to connect with the customer. Hopping on the social media bandwagon is a step ahead, but triumph they will, only if they are able to know their customers, their consumption motivations, intentions and habits well. There is a need to understand how Indian consumers are using the social media platforms, which is what this research is trying to do. This research may also help us to answer the questions as to - how marketers are influencing consumers, how receptive consumers are to the marketing efforts of retailers, if they are receptive – then what are their motivations and expectations from the brand and how & why social media marketing influences their buying decisions. In doing so apparel retailers can better their accuracy of developing and implementing more defined social media marketing tactics.

2.10. Research Gap

The literature reviewed indicated that millennials are clearly enamoured by social media, are heavy users of these networks and to an extent are influenced by social media marketing. However most of the research that has been carried out is pertaining to the more economically developed western world. Though there is surging adoption of these social media platforms
by Indian millennials as well as the brand marketers in India, social media usage is still in
the nascent stage in India and there is hardly any research concerning the social media
consumption habits of Indian millennials, their attitude, perception and nature of
involvement on social media networks. Furthermore, research on millennial receptivity
towards the marketing efforts of brands on social media, their attitudes, perceptions,
motivations & expectations from social media and lifestyle brands in this media is scarce.
Also the influence of social media marketing on brand following, purchase intention,
purchase behaviour process, brand trust and loyalty towards lifestyle brands has not been
explored. This study bridges this gap.