ABSTRACT

Due to emergence of social media in last few years, the traditional buying behaviour of consumers has modified. Peers, that have always been a source of influence on consumers, are currently playing an immense role of influence through their recommendations on Social Media. The notion of Trust, perceived risk and information seeking seem really important while getting influenced via social media. Now consumers have more faith on social media as they can update themselves about new products and brands. Consumers might use Social Media to share their experiences.

The majority of people who use social media to connect with retail brands do so in order to receive promotions from that brand. However, by connecting with a brand through social media they are building a new type of relationship that brands have never been able to form with consumers before. Along with this new type of relationship, a new type of online community is born and embraced by those who share a common interest in the brand.

The retail industry in India has also emerged as one of the fast paced industry. This sector contributes 10 percent of the country’s GDP and approx 8 percent of the employment. In the retail space India comes under world’s fifth largest global destination. According to the report of IBEF 2016, the Indian retail industry is one of the fastest rising industries in the world. This industry is expected to grow to US$ 1.3 trillion by 2020, registering a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 16.7 per cent over 2015-20. India comes among the highest in terms of per capita retail store availability. Indian Retail Industry is experiencing exponential development, the major reason behind it being development taking place not just in major cities of India but also in Tier-II and Tier-III cities. The vigorous economic growth complimented by augmented disposable incomes in the hands of consumers, anecdotal demographic profile, urbanization, varying consumer tastes and preferences driving forces of growth in the organized retail industry in India.

According to India Retail Report 2013, “within the organized retail sector, ‘Apparel’ is the largest segment. ‘Food and Grocery’ and ‘Mobile and telecom’ are the other major contributors to this segment.”
Fashion retail sector is the only sector which is considered to be entirely suited and naturally fit for social media. Social media for fashion retail sector means social networking sites that enable the fashion retailers to connect and communicate directly with the fashion retail consumers through latest social networking technology. To study the trends and anticipate the fashion behaviour of the consumers fashion retail sector is using various social media dais. (Ahmad et al, 2015).

Social media sites seem to be best things that happened to the apparel sector. This network has ability to reach and communicate with the large apparel fashion consumers with just a single click and post. Retailers and consumers now directly interact by the use of any of several existing available platforms. In apparel selling business, “word of mouth” is the main source of spreading information through the active user’s base of these platforms. The revolution of the internet has a great impact on apparel industry through social media. (Aderibigbe, 2010)

Presently, Rajasthan is also considered to be the biggest market for high quality branded fashion apparels and these apparels are also appreciated in the international market. Even Wal-Mart has also planned to open more stores in Rajasthan. It is observed that users of unbranded products are slowly shifting to branded products in the recent years. Thus branding and quality is gaining importance in rural and urban markets of Rajasthan. Rising literacy level, product awareness, media of communication, growing income levels etc., are aiding the growth of purchase of branded and quality products. The after sales support and availability of trained service personal influences the purchase motives of consumers. Consumers have a fair knowledge of cost of the product and utility value of the product. Higher price does not necessarily mean higher utility value. To build brand equity, the manufacturers should aim at improving service quality. (Divisha, 2016)

However online shopping is in early stage in Rajasthan but now apparel retailers are seeing it as an eye-catching and very convenient business opportunity but they have to study the buying behavior of consumers and for getting profit they have to bring changes according to the consumer’s requirements. (Kala and Sharma, 2015) consumers have to be educated about online shopping procedures and they should know the necessary steps required for doing online shopping in Rajasthan. (Upadhyay and Kaur, 2013)