

DIGITAL MARKETING IN INDIA- **IT'S SCOPE, GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: *In the last decade, a massive change has occurred in marketing and advertising industry of India. Indian market is significantly changing with the massive use of Internet and information technology. Marketing, which is the core business activity of any business, has shifted from traditional platforms to modern digital platforms. Digital marketing is being used in different ways for marketing activities. Therefore, this research has focused on understanding the growth of digital marketing in India and what are the current trends in digital marketing.*

Methodology: *This research has adopted the qualitative research approach and provides a review of existing literature in order to understand the scope, growth and development of digital marketing in India with the current trends that derives industry growth.*

Findings: *Content of this paper include some significant evidences in relation to growth of digital marketing in India, growing industry trends and importance of focusing on understanding the perception of marketing professionals. Findings of the study further indicate that digital marketing will see rapid and continuous growth in India. However, for sustainable growth in future, understanding perception of professionals is significant.*

Conclusion: *This study concludes that digital marketing is very important for businesses as well as for consumers. Digital marketing has provided opportunities for business growth. However, sustainable development is still an issue to be explored from perception of marketing professionals.*

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Internet Marketing, Digital Marketing and India, Digital Marketing Trends and India

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Rationale

Studies have informed that marketing is an important management process or a tool that is used for identifying, understanding and anticipating the ways through which customer satisfaction could be achieved. With the process of globalisation, market has become highly competitive and challenging and business could not survive solely on traditional business methods. According to Garg, Dar and Misra (2016) companies face many challenges in the society, in national and international markets and also in retaining customers [1]. Therefore, businesses are now adopting Digital Marketing techniques for enhancing the reach of their business. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2012: 58) define digital marketing as “*the application of the Internet and similar digital technologies in conjunction with traditional communications to achieve marketing objectives*” [2]. Others have identified that digital marketing is the way of using digital technology platforms as the marketing channels. Ellis-Chadwick and Doherty (2012) have also identified that digital marketing implies the use of digital technologies for fulfilling marketing objectives [3]. Digital marketing have made it possible for the consumers to access wide range of information regarding different products and services, and also allow customers to interact with brands through digital platforms [4]. Therefore, this research specifically focuses on understanding the scope, growth and development of digital marketing in India.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The aim of this research is to conduct a critical review of existing literature, in order to understand the development of digital marketing in India and how the new technological trends are changing the shape of marketing activities in India. Objectives of this research include-

- To provide a detailed understanding digital marketing growth and development in India.
- To provide the overview of new trends in digital marketing.
- To enhance the understanding Indian managers towards significance of digital marketing.

1.3 Research Question

“What are the scope and development trends of digital marketing in India and how changing trends could impact business activities?”

2. METHODOLOGY

Production of knowledge in the field of business and marketing research is growing at the tremendous speed. Developing the knowledge through collective evidences has become necessary for generating new knowledge and understanding. Therefore, literature reviews as the methodology becomes relevant in this area of research. Although, some of the scholars have identified that traditional approach of literature review lacked rigour and thoroughness [5]. However, implementing literature review methodology is highly significant in business and marketing research, as they are particularly necessary for identifying the major evidences, new development in the industry and identifying the new theoretical developments [6]. Therefore, this research conducted a comprehensive review of literature and collected evidences from the literature published within the period of five years (2012-2017). A detailed eligibility criterion for the study selection was implemented (attached in Appendix A).

LITERATURE REVIEW

3. WHAT IS DIGITAL MARKETING?

Digital marketing can be identified as the term that is used interchangeably with Internet marketing. It is also referred as electronic marketing because it encompasses the use of electronic media and internet platforms for the execution and management of marketing activities [7]. The concept of digital marketing had first emerged in India in 1990s, as the Internet use had increased drastically in the country [8]. Munshi stated in his study that monotonous marketing and advertising approaches were the main reasons that advent of Internet was seen as the scope of enhancing business and marketing strategies [9].

Therefore, Digital marketing can also be understood as the process of promoting and selling the products and services by leveraging the Internet tools and online marketing

strategies, such as e-mail marketing, SEO, SEM, content creation, SMM, Email marketing and mobile marketing [10]. Zhang et al. (2013) have identified various benefits of internet marketing over the traditional forms of marketing (such as print, broadcast or telephone). This study further informed that Digital or internet marketing and it's developing on a very high pace because it provides an opportunity to interact with audiences, understand their choices and preferences and provides a wider reach to potential customers [11]. Digital marketing provides a significant source to the business for developing and maintaining strong and close relationship with customers through online activities and thus, allows the exchange of perceptions, ideas and necessities regarding new product and services [12].

4. SCOPE AND GROWTH OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN INDIA

Digital marketing industry in India has spread to all most all business areas. Expansion of the digital footprint is growing exponentially and 2014 was the year that witnessed the most significant growth in digital marketing in India. Content marketing, which is a form of digital marketing which had the slow development in India [13]. However, after 2014, content creation (which includes blogs, case studies, white papers, e-books forums, news info graphics etc) had also grown with the increasing number of Internet users [14]. Studies have identified that around 43 million new internet users were identified between the periods of October 2013 to September 2014. This had displayed the growth of 20.5% in the number of Internet users in country and the total number of internet users crossed 254 million September 2014.

Digital marketing has also provided a new career opportunity for young people that also supported in rapid growth of economy in the country. Internet had also increased not only in urban areas, but also in rural areas of India [[15]. Digital revolution in India had also impacted the consumers and business. During the last five years, there has also been significant growth in the use of social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook. Marketers and business managers started to find more values and efficiency in social media marketing, as the content creation helped in attracting more readers and consumers [16]. As study conducted by Sohrab and Naghibi identified that social media was identified as significant marketing and advertising platform by small and medium size enterprises that were seeking to achieve better place in market [17].

5. TRENDS OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN INDIA

The use of mobile phones also significantly contributed towards the growth and development of digital marketing industry in India. Evidences have shown that by the year 2016 around 371 million people in India had started using Internet through their mobile devices, which further expand the digital marketing, as the companies got the opportunity of reaching to their customers through a new source. Therefore, the growth of internet and mobile used has been a significant trend that supported the growth of digital marketing industry. The growth in internet and mobile usage, has been identified as the main trend supporting the growth of digital marketing industry in India [18].

Another major trend that is leading towards the growth and development of digital marketing in India is the increasing number of online shopping platforms and increasing interest of Indian consumers in online shopping. A study conducted by Gehrt et al (2012) argued that though the consumer conceptualisation of online shopping had not fully elaborated in India, yet consumers have a displayed increasing interest in online shopping as the result of technological advancement in the society [19]. Another important trend is identified in the content marketing area. Studies have identified that business managers are acknowledging the importance of content marketing and considering it as an important approach for higher revenue generation [20].

A study conducted by Nedumaran (2016) informed that 75% of CEOs of companies believe that content marketing is the future on Digital Marketing in India [21]. Content marketing campaigns are being increased to enhance engagement of consumers with brands and for targeting right audiences. Another digital marketing trend that significantly emerged in 2016 is visual marketing which encompass the use of visual content that help in achieving greater consumer engagement [22]. Visual marketing has also led to increased used of YouTube channels, as well as auto-paly videos on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest [21-22].

Therefore, there are various merging trends in Digital marketing industry in India, which will increase the scope of online marketing in future.

6. PERCEPTION OF INDIAN MARKETING MANAGERS TOWARDS DIGITAL MARKETING

A gap has been identified in literature, in terms of understanding the perception of business and marketing managers towards significant or benefits of digital marketing in business. There is a lack of qualitative and quantitative studies towards understanding the perception of managers and impact of changing trends. A study conducted by Khan and Siddiqui in Pakistan in 2013 argued that marketing professionals are also enthusiastic as well as sceptical towards significance of digital marketing in business [23]. Another study was found to be conducted in Bangladesh, which identified that marketing professionals consider digital marketing to be significant for business growth and identified that it will also enhance brand relationship marketing [24].

An Indian study conducted by Abdul Azeem and ZiaulHaq conducted a survey study that included students, entrepreneurs and employees to understand and analyse their attitude towards internet advertising and marketing [25]. However, this study could not provide a detailed analysis of perception of professionals in relation to significance of internet marketing and could only establish casual understanding. Therefore, there is a gap in literature towards focusing on including the perception of marketing professionals towards growth of digital marketing.

7. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The main findings of this research indicate that digital marketing industry has significantly penetrated in the Indian market and likely to grow at very fast pace in future. One of the significant aspects of this research is that it significantly contributes towards understanding the perception of marketing managers towards the use of digital marketing strategies. This research also provides the scope for the future research that can focus on conducting the empirical study for understanding the perception of managers, CEOs and other management in understanding the importance of digital marketing in future and if technology will allow this growing trend and would not result in causing technology fatigue, which may affect business activities and revenue generation. This study concludes that for understanding and supporting the continuous growth of digital marketing industry,

it is important to conducted empirical research and including perception of marketing professionals for enhancing the benefits of digital marketing in India.

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