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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

OBJECTIVES

HYPOTHESIS (ES)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

CONCLUSIONS

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- Always indicate the date that the source was accessed, as online resources are frequently updated or removed.

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ADVERTISING ON SOCIAL MEDIA: THE INDIAN SCENARIO

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ABSTRACT

Social media advertising has become an important part of companies' marketing mix because of both – the rise of the social media platforms and the availability of a large number of target audience at one place. Businesses have realized the potential for reaching out to a large number of audience at one go, by using their social media pages and profiles. Social media marketing involves publishing user friendly content on social networking websites in the form of texts, messages, images, videos, etc. Carrying out a successful social media advertising campaign is a challenging task. The paper at length talks about the meaning and rise of the social media, with special emphasis on India and discusses some case studies to come up with the essentials of a successful social media advertising campaign.

KEYWORDS
Social media marketing, social media advertising, advertising on social media, Indian social media campaigns, Twitter case studies.

INTRODUCTION
Social media has become an important part of everyone's life. Besides providing people a platform to interact with each other it has also emerged as a powerful medium for the marketers to communicate with their customers and prospective customers. Social networks assemble a large amount of useful information, helping marketers in targeting their audience in a wider way. Social media advertising is becoming a part of the media mix as marketers leverage their online campaigns to drive valuable word of mouth and influence prospective customers. Marketers are gaining benefits through social media marketing by better understanding customer needs and building better customer relationships. Achieving better coordination between social media and advertising is possible through following clients, achieving their requirements, and controlling and measuring their activities.

Social media is a source of boundless clients' views and situations. The marketers face a challenge of controlling this information in an apt manner bringing real benefits for themselves. Social networking is a worthy framework for core marketing activities on the internet. It provides marketers an opportunity to talk with customers on a personal level.

METHODOLOGY
The paper makes extensive use of secondary research and mentions some recent examples of social media advertising campaigns from India.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES
The objective of this paper is to establish the importance of social media as a medium of advertising. With the help of case studies the paper will also determine the basis for successful advertising on social media platforms.

THE RISE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING
Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Google+ etc. have become daily destinations of millions of people. This has led to marketers increasingly offering their products and services to the customers on these platforms by specifically targeting people according to demographics, social connections, interests and habits. Social media offers brands a wide landscape- having enormous user bases and deep databases. It also gives brands a fascinating audience for their content.

Brands are continuously increasing their spending on the social media platforms. According to Hubspot, 92% of marketers in 2014 claimed that social media was important as a marketing platform, with 80% suggesting that their social media marketing efforts increased traffic to their websites.

The reasons why social media is playing an important role in companies' advertising strategies can be best explained as below:

1.   INCREASE IN BRAND RECOGNITION
Social media platforms provide numerous opportunities to marketers to increase their visibility and to make their brand more valuable. They are new channels for the brands, offering them easy accessibility to new customers, also making them more recognizable for the existing customers. Regular Facebook posts and frequent tweets help a brand gain more visibility.

2.   IMPROVEMENT IN BRAND LOYALTY
As per a report published by Texas Tech University, brands engaging on social media platforms have higher customer loyalty. The report also states that marketers should take advantage of social media tools, while connecting to their audience. A strategic and well executed social media plan can prove significant in building brand loyalty.

3.   INNUMERABLE OPPORTUNITIES
Every post, video, image, comment shared on any of the social media platform is an opportunity to convert a person into a new customer. Having followers means having access to a wide range of people – existing customers, prospective customers, old customers. Every interaction doesn't result in a conversion, but every positive interaction increases possibility of a conversion.

4.   INCREASE IN INBOUND TRAFFIC
Usually, the inbound traffic of a brand is limited to only those people who are either familiar with the brand or are the customers of the brand. But, with the creation and existence of social media accounts, a brand adds a path leading to its website. Every piece of information the brand shares on these accounts increases the opportunity of visit of a new person. The more the quality content, the more is the chance of generating traffic, leading to more conversions.

5.   DECREASE IN MARKETING COSTS
Creating and maintaining accounts on social media platforms is free (until a brand opts for paid advertisements). The marketer has to invest time in building quality content to be shared on every social media platform as per its requirements (different social media platforms use distinct type of content). Depending on the advertising goals of every marketer, paid advertising through Twitter and Facebook is relatively cheap.

6.   BETTER CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

Social media platforms provide an opportunity to the customers to interact directly with the brands. Thus, every customer interaction on social media gives a brand an opportunity to exhibit its rich customer service and strengthens the relationship between a brand and its customer. A customer's grievance can be handled promptly and necessary action could be taken and similarly, a compliment can be accepted with warmth and thanks.

Social media advertising, if monitored in a right way, can help a brand get more customers, more traffic and more conversions, at a reduced cost.

THE INDIAN SCENARIO

Companies all over the world have increased their spending on social media and same is the case with India too. The companies and brand in India have also increased their social media spending even when they find it difficult to measure the effectiveness of their social media engagement.

As per EY's second annual social media marketing India trends study, about 90% of the companies (of the total companies part of this study) are planning to spend almost 15% of their annual marketing budget on social media, compared to a meager 78% organizations in 2013.

Another important findings from the report are:

- The main reason for brands to be present on social media (in 2014) was brand awareness
- One third of the brands surveyed in 2014 posted on their social media platforms once a day, while another 43% posted updates more often.
- In 2014, average response time of 38% brands was recorded at 30 minutes or less.
- Out of the total survey respondents, 57% launched their brands on a new platform, conducting integrated 360 degree campaigns.
- Identifying and reaching out to the right target audience on social media continues to be the top-most challenge for Indian brands.
- Engagement (94% of the brands surveyed), social reach (89% of the brands surveyed), visitor growth rate (72% of the brands surveyed) stand out as important metrics tracked by most social media savvy brands.
- Close to 70% of all companies, that said they use social listening tools, admitted to having a better understanding of how their brand is perceived in the social media universe
- Brands surveyed stated that they are looking to introduce Social CRM and Social Commerce as priority items on their social media agenda, followed by customized ads/campaigns and gamification.

The above statistics clearly indicate that marketers use social media platforms for creating brand awareness as it helps them to reach their target audience (which is a challenge at times). It is important for a brand to track online conversations about it, as it helps it in understanding how it is perceived by the social media audience.

SOME INDIAN CASE STUDIES

Nestlé MUNCH's – Time for #MUNCHification

In the January of 2015, Nestlé MUNCH launched its new campaign- time for MUNCHification on the digital platforms, followed by its release on television. In this campaign, the brand urges its audience to be unapologetic and to accept their flaws and their passions. The brand posted the ads (related to the campaign) on its Facebook page, Twitter handle and YouTube channel. By February 6, 2015 the Facebook page and the YouTube channel of the brand had gained over 3 million views and the music of the ad became an instant hit among the netizens with over one lakh downloads within two weeks of its launch.

The ad showed a happy-go-lucky college student impressing a girl, with his 'broken English'. The commercial inspires youth to embrace their flaws by parading them in open. Put in the words of Nestlé the ad gives the message – Nestlé MUNCH khao, Apne Manch pe Aao!

Soon after the launch of the campaign online, Facebook and Twitter exploded with conversations using the hashtag #MUNCHification. People started tweeting about the ad, praising it while the Facebook users fell in love with the idea of broken English, updating their Facebook statuses around Nestlé's campaign.

LINE and Freecharge

LINE tied up with Freecharge to offer users up to 200% extra talktime. A week long campaign was launched by LINE and Freecharge where LINE users shared Freecharge stickers with groups to win cashback of Rs 60 on a recharge of Rs 30.

The objectives of the campaign were to:

- Leverage LINE to build a strong connect with Frecharge
- Help Freecharge use LINE user's social network to propagate it by sharing its stickers
- Encourage conversations around Feecharge on LINE
- Attract LINE users to experience brand Freecharge and hopefully converting them into long term customers

Users opted in for the engagement on LINE on their own and made the campaign viral on LINE. This week long campaign resulted in some phenomenal results in the terms of both reach and engagement. In total 6.3 million stickers were sent and Freecharge distributed a total of 3, 50,000 vouchers.

Pepsi – crash the Pepsi IPL

Pepsi launched a creative campaign during the 8th season of the Indian Premiere League (IPL). The promo ad for the campaign 'crash the Pepsi IPL' asked showed actor Ranbir Kapoor being frozen by a family trying to tell him to how to make an ad film for Pepsi.

Pepsi cleverly blended the cricket with creativity to launch 'crash the Pepsi IPL' and invited people to make a 30 second commercial showing their love for the brand Pepsi. The campaign created buzz through the brand's social media channels. A contest was also run on Twitter where users were asked to share their idea for the next Pepsi ad using the hashtag #PepsiAdInATweet. The winning entries were rewarded with the passes to the YouTube festival. A dedicated website 'Crash the Pepsi IPL' was also created for the campaign where the people could access the dos and don'ts for creating the ad. The final winner of the 'crash the IPL' contest was chosen from among 6 best entries (5 entries were chosen by the judges from among all the entries received and 1 was chosen via public voting) and was also rewarded with a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh.

The campaign was a smart move by Pepsi as the user generated content has various advantages- it lets consumers be a part of the story, gives fans an opportunity to add their association with the brand, to name a few. Interestingly, Pepsi had a ton of 30 second commercials created by the enthusiastic fans of the brand, which could be further used by the brand for marketing and promotional purposes.

Cadbury Silk's – what #FirstLoveIs

In the February of 2014, Cadbury Silk, the premium addition to Cadbury Dairy Milk chocolates started a campaign on Twitter wherein they promoted its newly launched limited edition pack for Valentine's Day. The netizens were asked to share what first love meant to them or reminds them of. Personalized doodles were also created on what users had tweeted about their first love. The hashtag #FirstLoveIs also trended on top 10 India twitter trends.

The brand started to share first love updates on its Twitter handle and soon after that the video talking about the new pack was shared. People were to follow the brand on Twitter and tweet about their idea of first love. The best meanings of first love were drawn into doodles and were displayed on Twitter along with the twitter handle of the winner.

The campaign was successful in creating a buzz about the brand's new pack and it left a sweet memory in the mind of people as it was related to first love.

Each of the example discussed above demonstrates the magic of co-creating with the community. This makes consumers feel special and the engagement before meaningful.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the above case studies it could be concluded that advertising on social media platforms has to be creative to engage customers. To attract attention, the brands need to deliver their message in a way which is new. The social media websites have empowered users and made them creative so the campaigns which the brands come up with also need to be creative enough to give rise to meaningful and engaging conversations. The concept of co-creation

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with the users give the users a greater sense of involvement and helps them identify with the brands at a deeper level. Even if the campaigns don't turn out to be extremely creative they should be able to encourage user involvement and participation in a particular campaign.

Some of the essentials of a successful social media advertising campaign are:

- **QUALITY CONTENT:** The most important aspect of a successful social media campaign is the quality of the content. Identification of the right target audience and then framing the contents accordingly plays a key role in this. A brand should always try to connect with its audience rather can constantly bragging about its products and services.
- **APPROPRIATE HASHTAGS:** Another important factor which needs to be considered while coming up with a campaign on Twitter is that the hashtag used to run the campaign should be appropriate. The hashtag used should reflect what the campaign is all about and should not be too big.
- **PERFECT TIMING:** Timing is very important when it comes to a social media campaign. There should be perfect timing of launching a particular campaign. A brand should consider whether a campaign has to be launched before introducing a new product/service in the market, a campaign has to be launched for a particular occasion (like Cadbury Silk's campaign around the Valentine's Day), etc.
- **CONNECT WITH PEOPLE:** The social media platforms exists not only for selling a product. Instead, they act as a medium where a brand can strengthen its bond with its customers. A campaign should be such which becomes a hit with the people instantly and engage them in meaningful conversations.

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