

successfully within the market. In this regard they must be occupied with brand that is composed of various characteristic (Bertilsson, 2009). All these aspects come to a conclusion that while considering the social media marketing there is a need for laying down focus on branding as an essential and huge part.

As per Edelman, (2010) brand is termed to be a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them that is intended for identifying particular sort of goods and services in relation to one seller when compared to other seller, so that they can differentiate a group of sellers from their market competitors. There are three significant roles that have been played by a brand. Firstly, it helps organization to attract new consumer for carrying out their operations. Secondly, it indicates about a reminder to customers with respect to organization product and services. Finally, brand can be essential in order to have an emotional tie up of consumer and the business. Moreover, the attitude of a consumer towards a brand will be playing a great role in business in order to lay down efforts for moving the organization in a profitable path. It is because of the fact that stringer brand will be helpful in gaining competitive advantage and for leading their position within a particular sector. It is the reason why strong brand image can help firms in gaining competitive advantage in order to lead their positions within a particular sector (Kim et.al.2008). There is no surprise that many of the organization either large or small have got their access to different social media channel in order to respond towards a negative feedback in relation to business brand or products (McDonald & Sharp, 2003). Thus, it could be said that social media and branding undertake their activities hand in hand. Even it could be seen that social networking is taking branding to new dimensions that has been helped in offering quicker deployment and return of information. Hence, it is considered to be a significantly cheaper platform when compared with traditional marketing and a channel that can be used by individuals in order to get into conversations in relation to brand and in this particular way they can spread information in a more effective manner (Chordas, 2009). It has also been proved that majority of social media platforms have been turning into important branding mechanisms. It has been indicated by different researchers that various social networking channel has helped in building fans of a brands online and have been laying down positive attitude rather than a negative one (Chordas, 2009). It cannot be a case always with respect to positive word of mouth. Even there are few researchers who have laid down their focus of their working towards negative word of mouth and consumer dissatisfaction. The consequences that can be seen with respect to

various kinds of marketing communication are seen to be in majority of the cases and are crucial for the enterprise. In the period of 1983 it has been found by Richins that around 30% to 90% of the consumers are seen to be dissatisfied and don't carry out the purchase of the brand gain and even 34% of these individuals have been sharing their dissatisfaction with their friends and family.

The above dictated research has been carried out in the period 80's it has still got the value in the today's time as with the emergence of social media the spreading of information is seen to be in a much easier and affordable manner. It has been seen that media has helped in laying down the opportunities for the organization, so that they are able to spread the information with respect to brand to a consumer in a faster pace and also helps in building appropriate relationship with them (Percy, 2008). However, consumer has been connecting with their brands in newer ways that is seen to be different from various traditional media through various media channels. These are seen to be the facts that are seen to be necessary in the adaptation of traditional marketing strategies for building new relationship with consumers and the brands (Edelman, 2010). Even it has been observed that now a day's major focus of market research is seen to be more of consumer oriented than product oriented as it was seen to be in past periods. Further, it has been seen that marketers have lay down their concern in relation to consumer attitudes and behaviours and to test a way that how a particular brand or product gets fit into a particular individuals lives (Guosong Shao, 2008). Even it can be noticed that social media and branding are seen to be mutually connected, but still there is an aspect that is required to be taken into consideration. In a situation when business have been applying social media for the purpose of branding then in that case platform it uses must be implemented in a smarter and professional way. Thus, the message it lay down to a consumer must be consistent, well defined and generating actions (Chordas, 2009).

### *Social media branding strategy*

There are some social media branding strategy to amplify the results (Edelman, 2010). The strategies are given below-

- There are hundreds of social media network and each social network won't be fit for the company aspects. The foremost job of the company is to find targeting social network which increases the brand image of the company.

- Visual presentation plays an important role on social media branding. The branding must be consistent at all the social channels. For example –Coca-Cola Company on Facebook, twitter and instagram maintain company profile by colour consistency on each network. The company profile is shown by vibrant red- white colour.
- The symbol presents the association to a particular company. Thus it is necessary to use same logo on each social site to represent the organisation.
- To attract the visitors the images should be organised and consistent. To make them more attractive, brand may use templates. Unique tools templates are made by Canva tool.
- The personality of brand is reflected on how a brand represents itself on social sites. The voice of company must be unambiguous and contains complete information about what a company is about, what it is offers and the things which make the brand special from competitors.
- The voice of the proposed product must be fit for the brand. For example- huggies and Taco Bell's voice are genuine to their brand.
- The company should publish some articles and wealthy feedbacks. for example- monster.com which is a popular career site regularly tweets article about customer satisfaction and their career growth. So it gains the interest of people.

## 2.7 Attitude formation

Attitude is seen to be an aspect that is essential in relation to individual's personality. This is something that every individual human being has got. Different individuals have their own way to express their different attitudes. Under this some of the individuals will be having an attitude of loving, hating, agreeing or disagreeing. Even there will be some who will be accepting what is happening within the life others don't. The things that keep them attached are concerning the fact that they are all under the reinforcement of attitude change. Even it has been seen that such an aspect constantly happen around us in one or the other form such as marketing communication, Internet or seen to be under the effect of social media (Bohner & Wanke, 2002). Attitudes has got a significant importance as it helps in outlining perception of peoples on their overall perception in relation to the world and have been laying down influencing on their future behaviour (Crano & Prislin, (2008). The attitudes has got the potential of elicit affective, behavioural or cognitive responses. It is all about the emotions that an individual carries, others by believes and last is to be straight forward having greater tendency to act. It has been seen that

branding is a concept that is a very broad term. However, the present research is going to have a deeper research as it will be helpful in taking brand attitude perspective and effectiveness of social media, so that there is creation of positive attitude of consumers toward brands. The concept of attitudes is seen to be very important not only in psychology but also in branding. Even it has been observed that are various number of researchers who have laid down special attention to it. They have also stated that brand attitude is seen to be an essential step in order to build brand equity (Gallaughier, 2010). Once, manager of the business is able to build strong brand equity then it is going to provide the business with many of the advantageous. It is mainly composed of increased loyalty of consumer, effective marketing communication, positive attitude for setting out higher prices of product, higher possibility in brand extension success and it has also got many other advantageous that are to be laid down against the competitors (Homburg.et.al, 2009). The proper definition that can be laid down with respect to brand attitude is all about consumers overall evaluation in relation to a particular brand. It has also been observed that attitude of brand is seen to be very important as it helps in giving a basis for a consumers behaviour and lays down answer with respect to peoples thinking with respect to a product or service. Even it helps in answering to the question that whether product is able to meet the needs of consumer and the way product is wanted, appreciated or recommended by consumer.

## 2.8 Theories on social media

### **2.8.1 Interactionism Theory**

Symbolic Interactionism theory as stated by Mead is used for describing the methods in which people give shape to their individuality and authenticate the informal norms by interacting with other individuals. There has been constant change in the methods through with people interact with each other. But this theory has stood the test of time and is even applicable in the modern world of interaction using the digital media. If the theory pertaining to symbolic Interactionism is applied on social media, then the following can be postulated, that the users of present in the communities of the social media form their individuality and offers a large sphere in establishment of correlation. This theory is important as it helps in examining how social media affects the buying decision and behaviour of an individual.

### 2.8.2 Symbolic Interactionism Theory

The Theory pertaining to Symbolic Interactionism comprises of three basic principles, which narrates as to how individuals interact among themselves by the use of language, meaning and their thoughts for creation of their self (Mishra, Narendra Kumar and Sharma, 2012). Interactions are considered to be the focal point in the development of an individual's social identity and associate functions as per the norms and the values. Elaborations are method on the methods using which an individual forms the social truth. The method and technique that an individual uses for working with other individuals is based on the sense that the individual has allocated on the various relations. The language is considered to be a medium, which is used for the assigning the meaning. The language is used for allocating a specific sense of perception for anything. Perception based on inference of the language can either be positive in nature or negative in nature. The thought process is the final step, which arises during the deciphering of the language and their associated perception. IT has been stated that at the point of time when the three basic principles of language, meaning and thought arises, that is an indication of the formation of "self" within an individual in the community (Jones and van Putten, 2008).

This theory by Mead was presented before the advent of the web or the internet. Although the principles of the theory is very much applicable to the interactions that are taking place by the use of social media. For example, and analysis of a Facebook page based on the principles by Mead will help us in understanding the process of creation of the "self". The theory of Symbolic Interactionism has a major role in the formation of the profiles that are seen on Facebook and also is involved in the methods that helps an individual on social media to discover their own identity while interaction over the internet.

### 2.8.3 Hyper-Symbolic Interactionism Theory

The theory of Hyper-Symbolic Interactionism is a modification of the theory present by Mead on Symbolic Interactionism Theory for the social media. The modification in the theory was required as Mead had formulated the initial theory before the introduction of Internet.

Hyper-Symbolic Interactionism is a theory that helps in explaining the creation of a unique and new reality, dependent on the symbols that are found in the digital environment. The theory consists of the minutes of symbols ranging from the 1's and 0's of the computer language to the smallest of the pixels found in digital images, along with the pixels found in the contemporary and complex images pertaining to the advertisements and the various

commercials, which are being produced on a daily basis. The imagery and the larger form of symbols that are being created by these details are leading to the creation of new norms and values, which are different in nature as compared to the norms and values of the non-digital communities (Lim, Chung and Weaver, 2012). The new digital community comprises of advertisers and marketers, whose actions have a direct effect on the constructs of reality of an individual. The affect is felt on the values and norms that an individual abides to, along with affecting the meaning that we assign to various symbols that we observe. Our methods of socialising in the digital realm are different than the methods that we use for socialising in the real world. Moreover, the increase in the advertising and promotional activities in the digital format has caused us to have a perception that the ads and the marketers are real in nature. A bird's eye view has been provided herein, which portrays the relationship that exists between the behaviour of a consumer and social media.

It has been observed that 20% of the users who are using Facebook, uses the site for collecting information pertaining the commodity that they want to purchase, other studies indicated that 42% of individuals online, enquired about a specific commodity by the use of various online options. Through previous studies, it is possible to segment the social media consumers as high sharers and low sharers. The high sharers are the individuals, among which it has been observed that 20% are teenagers, who are devoted towards brands and are possession of various electronic gadgets. The low sharers are the individuals, among which 80% have been observed to be older people, who are rather interested in the quality of a product instead of the brand of a product.

## 2.9 Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Behaviour

It has been noted that the methods of shopping has changes significantly in the past few decades. During the period of traditional methods of marketing, it has been observed that the customers had the habit of shopping at physical outlets, but the same methods of purchasing were applied. However, with the advent of modern communication technologies and the internet, the customers have gained the power of shopping through various portals available over the internet. Thus it can be stated that marketing through social media has an important role to play in the various aspects of the life of an individual. According to the present conditions, it is being observed that the customers are increasing their utilisation of technology; especially Social Media is being used for influencing the decision and perception of an individual. Social Media is

considered to be an effective and powerful tool that is helping spread the trend of online shopping (Liu and Lopez, 2014). During the analysis of the perception of the consumers towards the marketing presented by Social Media, it is pertinent to discuss regarding the different types of customers, influenced by the Social Media.

While adhering to the present situation in the industry, it is being analysed that the consumers have an important role to play on the phase of the market place. Additionally, the consumers can be termed as the actors or the individuals, who are using the various products either offline or online. Similarly, it is also necessary that discussion is done on the reasons pertaining to the customers' preference of usage of social media as a medium for purchasing various products. As it has been observed in earlier studies, the significant fact pertaining to visit various websites is for interacting with other individuals to fulfil the needs and purpose of an individual. The factors of the social media that plays a major role in influencing the behaviour of a customer are the design factors, product factors, information factors, psychological factors and cultural factors.

## 2.10 Social media and consumer

### **2.10.1 Social media as a mean of giving consumers a voice**

Possible components involved in the consumer decision process have been explained in the earlier part. The natures, features and essence of social media are also discussed in the earlier part. Researchers believe that social media influences the purchase decision of consumer these days. Social media plays a vital role from the point of search to post –purchase stage. According to Dew & Kwon (2009) social media engages customers and has become growing marketing channel. This section discusses the effect of social media on customers. It also suggests marketers to tap the phase of purchase process which influence the purchase decision most.

Erkan & Birol (2011) describes information processing theory of consumer choice. According to this theory there are various advertisements which compete among themselves to influence the customer most. Wang et al. (2010) describes that even if the marketers communicate right message to target consumer, it is impossible for consumer to remember it.

Social media plays an important role of receiving, giving and exchanging information. It also enables two way communications between company and consumer. The flow of

communication influences the way companies target the end consumer. It influences throughout the process of communication from interpreting the message to purchase action. According to Rust et al. (2005) the barriers in the flow of communication are mis-interpretation, rejection of message and misunderstanding. Aaker & Robert (2001) discuss the biggest fear of companies and brands in context of social media marketing is to give up the control over frequency and content of information thus, it has become more significant for marketers to realize and discuss the content and transparency of company. Thus, social media provides a platform to consumer to post their experience, ideas and information related to product, service or brands. The experience can be positive and negative. The people sharing common experience get connected on social media to support the view. The aim of customer is not to create marketing of product but the activity of customers on social media acts as word-of-mouth.

### **2.10.2 The Influences on Decision Making Process**

Delighting and service to customers has become the centre point for business. Blackshaw & Nazzaro (2006) believes that social media influences the brand awareness, sales and loyalty. Thus, social media influences the forecast and prediction of marketers. Raman (2009) describes that social media marketing report depicts the increasing attraction of social media and value of social media in business.

The time-honoured buying behaviour process theory is influenced by social media as new component influencing buying behaviour. Now, the buying behaviour is not only influenced by traditional factors but also by online platforms. The factors influencing decision making and preferences are inputs provided by parties not in control of marketers like referrals, peer review, social network, blogs and other forms of user-generated content. Aurial & Saniscalco (2005) suggested on the basis of Kotler framework, an innovative stimuli and response model due to increasing use of social media. Traditional marketing mix affects consumer buying decision such as ads on TV, radio and newspaper. There are other uncontrollable stimuli such as societies, values, perception, demographics, etc. Further, the marketers cannot control the social media experience and online marketing mix such as banners, emails, corporate websites, etc.

Barwise & Meehan (2010) describes that contents of social media are neutral and democratic. Various types of social media are becoming popular among consumers for searching information and making purchase decision. Chen & Wang (2011) discuss that reviews and user-



generated contents on social media such as books, movie, music review and other things influences the attributes and consumer purchase decision. More than 25% social media users pay attention to ad shared on social media. Additionally, social media users find it suitable that the ads are tailored on the basis of their profile information. Berthon et al (2000) studies that individual trust content of social network sites which are distilled, objective and filtered. The classic purchase funnel model explains the impact of social media on purchase decision by consumer and the phase of purchase process which marketers can tap.

On the basis of research conducted by Bertilsson (2009), it can be concluded that different marketing channels influences the purchase decision of consumer, especially in case of online purchase. The research study also shows that social media serves as a medium to create awareness in purchase process. Morrison & Cheong (2008) discuss that in this competitive environment, brands can create competitive advantage by marketing through blogs and posting videos on YouTube. Edelman (2010) describes that social media is applicable in purchase process as a medium to create awareness and support purchase decision. Social media play a significant role in maintaining and building a feedback loop. The impact of social media on purchase funnel is the transparency and accessibility of experiential data generated by current customers. From the point of view of consumer perspective and marketing, the usage of traditional channels has declined. But in triggering awareness, traditional media still plays an important role. Gallagher (2010) describes the importance of feedback in purchase process. Consumer may find a product on TV ad and may search for its review on internet. Social media also serve a platform for post-purchase experience and act as word of mouth for product. Blakeman & Brown (2010) describes that user-generated content built up by the post purchase conversation is validated by collective wisdom of crowd. Traditional and modern media both influences the purchase decision of consumer but social media is in trend. Thus, marketers are also considering social media while understanding the purchase process of consumer. Social media provide the platform for feedback from consumer and it is a two way communication process where company communicates its message to end consumer and consumers provide feedback about their experiences related to product. Marketers should consider these feedbacks while formulating strategies to capture market. Thus, social media is applicable in purchase process as a medium to create awareness and support purchase decision. Social media play a significant role in maintaining and building a feedback loop.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Research methodology is been generally termed as the procedure being used for collecting the data and information in order to gain in-depth knowledge about any of the subject matter. It is defined as a well built structure being utilized by the researcher to carry out its study in an effective manner. The researcher provides special emphasis on this segment as it is been used for representing a well structured plan which the investigator could follow to attain the objectives of the study in an efficient manner. With respect to a study the research methodology informs the users about the techniques and methods being used in the study for achieving the desired objectives effectively (Lewis, 2015). The research methodology assists the readers in gaining enhanced understanding and knowledge regarding the ways in which the investigator had made efforts to acquire the desired outcomes. The basic elements which are been involved in the research methodology are research approach, research philosophy, research design, research type, sampling technique, data collection, data analysis, accessibility issues and ethical consideration and research limitations. These aspects are been discussed in detail in the study below.

### **3.2 Research onion**

The process of research onion includes the aspects where the investigator depicts the research methodology like an onion. This particular method is been followed from the external side to the internal side. The research onion mainly highlights the fundamental structure of the research methodology. Moreover, it also assists the investigator to carry out the study in a rationale or comprehensive manner.

### **3.3 Research philosophy**

As per Mackey and Gass, (2015), research philosophy is been concerned with the understanding and knowledge an investigator acquires regarding the subject matter in the study. However, the research philosophy depicts the state of mind of an investigator while carrying out the research properly. With the help of adequate knowledge of the research philosophy a reader is able to understand the capabilities of an investigator and gets an idea about how the study is