

# **A New Marketing Paradigm - Social Media Or Web 2.0: An Empirical Analysis To Study The Awareness, Key Deliverables, Engagement And Usage Of Social Media By Small And Medium Enterprises In Delhi**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The growth of Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) sector in India is inevitably associated with increased productivity and ,therefore, increased competitiveness. Technology has been the main key instrument in enhancing their productivity. SMEs that have a strong technological base, international business outlook, competitive spirit and willingness to restructure themselves can withstand the current challenges and come out successful to make their own contribution to the Indian economy. Small and Medium Enterprises are one of the key growth drivers for India.

This paper attempts to study the perception of these Small & Medium businesses towards social media marketing as well as to identify online social media tools that work for them. This paper explains the nature, effects and current trends of the new generation of Internet applications, commonly known as Social Media or Web 2.0, reviews their role as marketing instruments and identifies opportunities for SMEs for engaging them as part of their marketing strategy. Based on the experience of pioneering firms, the paper identifies the main conditions and options for SMEs willing to utilize the Web 2.0 as a commercial tool in order to advance their marketing operations like generation of revenue, acquiring new customers, bring in new qualified and targeted leads, increase site traffic, build new business partnerships and alliances, gain positive recognition, boost brand awareness, build a stronger reputation, and connect to new consumers in the virtual and physical marketplace. SMEs surveyed were from sectors like Auto components, retail outlets of food products, confectionery, apparel and furniture, IT Hardware, Travel & Tourism, Sanitary fittings, Electrical Engineering Equipment and Gems & Jewellery. One of the major misconceptions with online marketing is that social media can only be used by large organizations. In fact, if a small business utilizes & invests its time wisely, it can considerably improve client loyalty and traditional word of mouth marketing efforts. A chi-square test was carried to find out the association between influence of Sales of Small and Medium Segment Enterprises by traditional marketing tools and social media marketing tools like blogs and social networks. The researcher also investigated whether customers' purchase decision is impacted by social media marketing tools or not, or do customers still get impacted by traditional marketing tools used by SMEs.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The following are the objectives of the present study:

- ✿ To determine whether respondents in the Small and Medium Enterprises have an awareness of social media tools like blogs, social networking sites, wikis etc.
- ✿ To determine whether Small and Medium Enterprises have a thorough understanding of social media environment - particularly blogs, social networks, RSS etc.
- ✿ To determine whether social media tools - particularly blogs, social networks, RSS etc. in the SME sector impact business and marketing.
- ✿ To determine what social media can deliver to the Small and Medium Enterprises.
- ✿ To determine the various activities SMEs are actually engaged in using social media tools.

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## RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were used to solve the problem to meet the objectives of the study:

**1)  $H_0$ : Sales of Small and Medium Segment Enterprises is equally influenced by traditional marketing tools and social media marketing tools like Blogs and Social Networks.**

**1(a)  $H_1$ : Sales of Small and Medium Segment Enterprises are not equally influenced by traditional marketing tools and social media marketing tools like Blogs and Social Networks.**

**2)  $H_0$ : Purchase decision of customers is equally influenced by traditional marketing tools and social media marketing tools like Blogs and Social Networks.**

**2(a)  $H_1$ : Purchase decision of customers is not equally influenced by traditional marketing tools and social media marketing tools like Blogs and Social Networks.**

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) were defined as in RPCD Circular No. RPCD.PLFNS.BC. 31/06.02.31/2005-06 dated August 19, 2005, which is reproduced below:

*"At present, a small scale industrial unit is an undertaking in which investment in plant and machinery does not exceed ₹ 1 crore, except in respect of certain specified items under hosiery, hand tools, drugs and pharmaceuticals, stationery items and sports goods, where this investment limit has been enhanced to ₹ 5 crore. Units with investment in plant and machinery in excess of the SSI limit and up to ₹ 10 crore may be treated as Medium Enterprises (ME)."*

Table 1(a) : List of Some SME Clusters In Delhi (At Present)			
Delhi	North West Delhi	Wazirpur, Badli	Stainless Steel Utensils & Cutlery
Delhi	South & West Delhi	Okhla, Mayapuri	Chemicals
Delhi	West & South	Naraina & Okhla	Electrical Engineering Equipment
Delhi	West & South	Naraina & Okhla	Electronic Goods
Delhi	North Delhi	Lawrence Road	Food Products
Delhi	South Delhi	Okhla, Wazirpur Flatted Factories Complex	Leather Products
Delhi	South, West Delhi	Okhla, Mayapuri, Anand Parbat	Mechanical Engineering Equipment
Delhi	West, South, East Delhi	Naraina, Okhla, Patparganj	Packaging Material
Delhi	West & South	Naraina & Okhla	Paper Products
Delhi	West & South	Naraina Udyog Nagar & Okhla	Plastic Products
Delhi	West, South, North West	Naraina, Okhla, Shivaji Marg, Najafgarh Road	Rubber Products
Delhi	North East Delhi	Shahdara & Vishwasnagar	Wire Drawing
Delhi	West & North West	Mayapuri & Wazirpur	Metal Fabrication
Delhi	West & North East	Kirtinagar & Tilak Nagar	Furniture
Delhi	North West Delhi	Wazirpur	Electro Plating
Delhi	South, West, North West & North East	Okhla, Mayapuri, Naraina, Wazirpur Badli, G.T. Karnal	Auto Components
Delhi	North East Delhi, East Delhi & South	Shahdara, Gandhinagar, Okhla & Maidangari	Hosiery
Delhi	South & North East	Okhla & Shahdara	Readymade Garments
Delhi	South Delhi	Okhla	Sanitary Fittings

## SOCIAL MEDIA FORMS

Godes, David, and Dina Mayzlin (2004) described social media, or consumer-generated media or consumer-generated content as a term that is used to describe any kind of text, image, audio, or video clip that is uploaded to the Internet by ordinary people, and can be easily shared and located by other people. Social media is different from the articles, programs and broadcasts created by professional journalists, photographers, broadcasting networks, or by authority figures and experts that have a special privilege or position that makes it more likely that they will have an

automatic audience. Sharma & Kalra (2011) affirmed that social media is realized on the Internet in a wide range of formats: written or textual forms of social media are typically found on blogs, web forums, email discussion lists, message boards, and consumer reviews and complaint sites; photographs are displayed as images on Flickr or other image sharing sites; audio broadcasts are created as podcasts; and consumers who create video clips can upload them on YouTube, or other video sharing sites. Social media has been modernized to reach consumers through the internet. Social media has become appealing to big and small businesses. Credible brands are utilizing social media to reach out to customers and to build or maintain a good reputation. Social media continues to grow as the ability to reach more consumers worldwide has also increased.

Larry Weber (2007) believed that the social web is a new world of unpaid media created by individuals or enterprises on the Web. It has started playing a major role in brand promotion and influences customer's thinking about making a purchase decision. These new strategies, which have the capacity to change public opinion every hour - if not every minute - include:

- ✳ **Reputation Aggregators** are search engines such as Google, Yahoo, Ask, and Microsoft's Live. They aggregate sites with the best product or service to offer and usually put things in order of reputation.

- ✳ **Blogs** (a contraction of *weblogs*) are online journals where people can post ideas, images, and links to other web casts or sites.

- ✳ **E-communities** are generally advertising supported, although some are free; they focus on professional media such as trade magazines. Examples include [BusinessWeek.com](http://BusinessWeek.com), [SmartMoney.com](http://SmartMoney.com), and [FastCompany.com](http://FastCompany.com).

- ✳ **Social Networks** are places where people with a common interest or concern come together to meet people with similar interests and express themselves.

## SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Bough, Bonin, and Agresta (2011) described Social Media Marketing (SMM) as a term that describes the use of blogs, social networks, online communities, wikis, RSS, or any other online collaborative media for marketing, brand awareness and promotion, sales, public relations and customer service. It is a form of online marketing, which seeks to achieve marketing communication goals, branding awareness and value through the participation in various social media networks (MySpace, Facebook, LinkedIn), social bookmarking (Digg, Stumbleupon), social media sharing (Flickr, YouTube), blogs, forums, news aggregators. Each social media site can be optimized to generate awareness or traffic. SMM is the way of generating and building interest and excitement in a product or service through various online social media tools such as Social Networks, Wikis, Micro blogging, Blogs, and RSS feeds. The user-generated content of SMM can be an effective channel for creating brand awareness and building product reputation.

## THE SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MARKETING PARAMETER

Some marketers feel that Social Media, also known as Web 2.0 is a controversial issue. Keegan and Wilson (2007) questioned the ethical foundations of Social Media, stating that the fundamental element of it - namely the User Generated Content (UGC), poses a serious threat to well established businesses. According to critics, the social media movement endorses and promotes low quality amateur content, threatens intellectual property rights, and confuses people by blurring the boundaries between original content and advertising. Objections about the Social Media movement have also to do with issues of privacy and the lack of editing responsibility for what is published online.

On the other hand, Gillin (2007), O'Reilly (2005) and others argued that in fact, Social Media is a healthy phenomenon, promoting the ideas of free expression and becoming an emerging source of consumer influence and empowerment. The influence of the Web 2.0/ social media phenomenon is affecting the way people communicate, make purchase decisions, socialize, learn, entertain themselves, interact with each other, or even do their shopping. Social media has redefined the marketplace dynamics by causing a substantial migration of market power from producers or vendors towards web users / online customers. The customer empowerment is visible in different ways : people have more access to information, unbiased criticism, product reviews and peer recommendations and almost unlimited alternative choices.

## CLASSIFICATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MARKETING TOOL

The Social Media/Web 2.0, the second generation of Internet applications has become a part of the social and professional life of an ever growing segment of online population. The popularity of Social Media can be attributed to the fact that consumers experience these as sources of empowerment and part of their social environment : a social environment addressing their need to share knowledge, information and creativity, and also fulfilling a variety of other personal objectives.

The emergence of Web 2.0 or Social Media domain presents corporations, big and small, with challenges and opportunities. The most important challenge is how to reach the new, increasingly virtual customer; the opportunities are to utilize these media in order to improve their marketing strategies in novel and effective ways, as well as influence the new customer's attitudes.

Big corporations so far have been the pioneers in adopting the Social Media as a marketing tool. This means engaging different types of Web 2.0 -based applications like Social Networks, Forums/Bulletin Boards, Web Logs, Online Communities and Content Aggregators in order to listen to the customer's voice and/or as marketing tools for PR and Direct Marketing, for reaching the new market influencers, for offering to their customers, a personalized experience and for utilizing their customers' creativity and willingness to co-create. Although the results of such activities have still not been properly measured and evaluated, there are compelling signals that these methods work. SMEs can learn from the experience of the large corporations pioneering in this field, and selectively engage the Social Media as part of their marketing strategies. Engaging the Social Media offers businesses the potential of low cost access to large numbers of customers and access to niches and specific audiences. SMEs pioneering in this field can count on the first mover advantage. Willingness to invest and managerial commitments are necessary conditions for successful engagement of Social Media as a marketing strategy. Equally important is that the managers eager to do that realize that openness, honesty and sincere willingness to build up relations must underpin any effort in this direction. For many SMEs, such an approach requires a substantial organizational and cultural transformation and often, an extensive process reengineering.

SMEs belonging to sectors like cafes, retail stores, auto component manufacturers, gems & jewellery manufacturers and even professional services like travel & tourism can build their online reputation and increase initial trust. By taking advantage of social media, businesses can make themselves more approachable, personable, and maintain long-term relationships. For a small business looking to increase referrals, social media can be an extremely successful & powerful tool. Creating a social media marketing strategy, building a focused network of friends and relatives, maintaining your website pages can trigger increased revenue and company growth in few months.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It was decided that a study using primary data would be appropriate to investigate the objectives. The instrument used to collect the data was a questionnaire and the said study was conducted during the period of March to April 2011.

✿ **The Study :** The present study comprises of an empirical investigation in which an attempt was made to determine the new marketing paradigm and the awareness, impact and engagement that Social Media exerts on the respondents (employees of Small and Medium Enterprises located in Delhi).

✿ **Population :** Universe of this research were the Small and Medium Segment Enterprises existing in Delhi.

✿ **The Sample :** A sample size comprising of 200 employees from Small and Medium Segment Enterprises (one employee each represented one SME) were chosen using stratified random sampling method with 20 SMEs representing each of the 10 SME sectors chosen for the survey.

SMEs surveyed were from sectors like Auto components, retail outlets of food products ,confectionery, apparel and furniture, IT Hardware, Travel & Tourism , Sanitary fittings, Electrical Engineering Equipment and Gems & Jewellery. Invitations to participate in the survey requested responses from employees who are responsible for creating brand awareness, promotion and generation of leads in business and marketing activities in the small and medium segment enterprises .The target respondent in each firm was the Chief Information Officer (CIO), the director of MIS, IT Manager, Marketing or Business Development Manager or any person responsible for inception, execution and implementation of the marketing activities of the company. The respondents were in the age bracket of 31-60 years.

✿**Tools Used For Data Collection** : After reviewing relevant literature on the subject, a structured questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire was implemented on a 5 point Likert scale. (1= strongly agree & 5= strongly disagree) Questionnaire survey method was selected as the research instrument. The questionnaires were filled through emailers, word-of-mouth or were filled telephonically by the researcher. The survey resulted in a total of 390 started surveys; a response count of 363; and 200 completed surveys.

All the filled up questionnaires were selected for statistical analysis. Statistical analysis of each question only took into account valid responses to that specific question and not the total number of entries, thus allowing for a more precise evaluation. The questions incomplete in any respect were rejected at this stage & all valid responses were scored & tabulated.

## TECHNIQUES USED FOR DATA ANALYSIS

For the purpose of testing the hypotheses, the non-parametric test analysis technique such as Chi-Square test (also chi-squared or  $\chi^2$  test), which is an important non-parametric test was used as a test of independence in this case. It enables us to explain whether or not two attributes are associated. And other descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage analysis and cross tabulation were also used.

## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Results were tabulated and analyzed by using appropriate statistical techniques mentioned in the research methodology. The results from the statistical analysis and the objective-wise analysis of the study are present in this section. All the numerical results of the percentage analysis were rounded off.

✿**Influence On Sales Of Small & Medium Enterprises Through Traditional Marketing Tools And Social Media Marketing Tools** : To determine whether sales (of Small and Medium Segment Enterprises) got equally influenced or not through social media marketing tools like Blogs, RSS, Wikis, Social Networks in comparison to traditional marketing tools like advertising through TV, print, radio etc., direct marketing, company logos etc., purchase decision of customers - using products of the Small and Medium Segment Enterprises - were captured and analyzed using percentage analysis and Chi-Square test with the following null and alternative hypotheses.

**1)  $H_0$ : Sales of Small and Medium Segment Enterprises are equally influenced by traditional marketing tools and social media marketing tools like Blogs and Social Networks.**

**1(a)  $H_1$ : Sales of Small and Medium Segment Enterprises are not equally influenced by traditional marketing tools and social media marketing tools like Blogs and Social Networks.**

Table 1 : Cross Tabulation: Influence On Sales of Small & Medium Enterprises Through Traditional Marketing Tools vs. Social Media Marketing Tools							
Product Sales of SMEs Through Traditional Marketing Tools							
Product Sales of SMEs through Social Media marketing tools		Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
	Excellent	0	0	8	8	16	32
	Very Good	0	0	16	28	8	52
	Good	0	0	8	36	32	76
	Fair	0	0	4	8	20	32
	Poor	0	0	0	0	8	8
	Total	0	0	36	80	84	200
Chi- Square( Significance at 5% Level) = 36.6 ; Source : Primary Data							



Degree of Freedom =  $(C-1)(R-1)$ ,  $C \rightarrow$  No. of columns,  $R \rightarrow$  No. of rows  
=  $(5-1)(5-1)$ ,  $4*4=16$

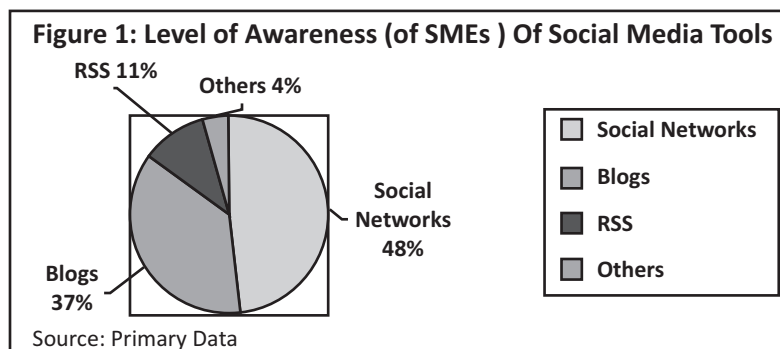
❖ **Interpretation:** The Chi-Square result from Table 1 indicates that the calculated value of hypotheses (36.6) is greater than the table value (26.6) given at 5% level of significance with 16 degrees of freedom. Hence,  **$H_0$  is rejected and  $H_1$  is accepted** at 5% level of significance. Thus, the Sales of Small & Medium Enterprises do not get equally influenced by traditional marketing tools and social media marketing tools. The realization by SMEs that Social Media is not just a sales tool, rather, it is also a tool to create brand awareness and generate initial level of trust among customers in the organization has been understood by most of the organizations. However, a lack of this basic understanding of the Social Media rule could prove to be expensive for the companies.

❖ **Impact On Customers' Purchase Decision Of Products Of Small & Medium Enterprises Through Traditional Marketing Tools And Social Media Marketing Tools :** To determine whether the purchase decisions made by the customers of Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs) get equally impacted (or not) through social media marketing tools like blogs, RSS, wikis, social networks in comparison to traditional marketing tools like advertising through TV, print, radio etc., direct marketing, company logos etc., the purchase decision of customers using products of Small and Medium Segment Enterprises were captured and analyzed using percentage analysis and Chi-Square test, with the following null and alternative hypotheses :

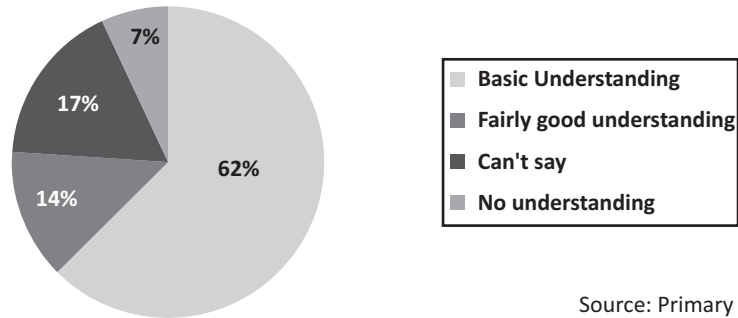
**2)  $H_0$ : Purchase decision of customers is equally impacted by traditional marketing tools and social media marketing tools like Blogs and Social Networks.**

**2(a)  $H_1$ : Purchase decision of customers is not equally impacted by traditional marketing tools and social media marketing tools like Blogs and Social Networks.**

Table 2 : Cross Tabulation: Impact On Customers' Purchase Decision Through Traditional Marketing Tools vs. Social Media Marketing Tools							
Impact On Customer's Purchase Decision Through Social Media Marketing Tools							
Impact on Customer's Purchase decision through Traditional Marketing Tools		Impacts Completely	Impacts Somewhat	Can't say	Doesn't Impact much	Doesn't Impact at all	Total
	Impacts Completely	4	4	0	0	20	28
	Impacts Somewhat	4	0	40	60	20	124
	Can't say	0	4	8	24	0	36
	Doesn't Impact much	0	0	0	8	4	12
	Doesn't Impact at all	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>200</b>
Chi- Square( Significance at 5% Level) = 61.4 ; Source : Primary Data							

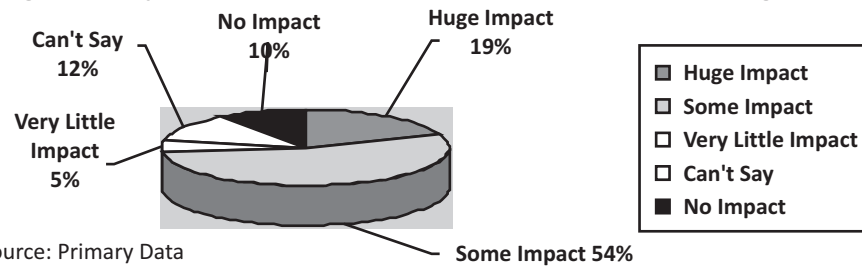


**Figure 2: Level Of Understanding (Of SMEs) of Social Media Tools**



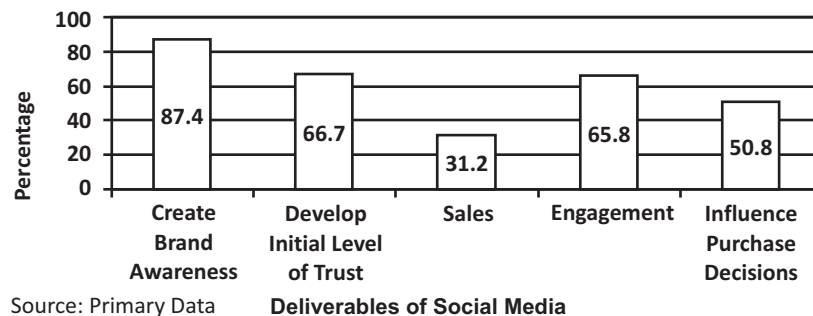
Source: Primary Data

**Figure 3: Impact of Social Media Tools On Business & Marketing of SMEs**



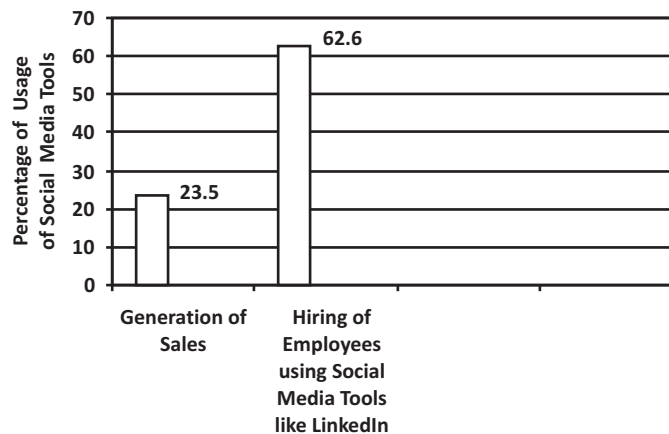
Source: Primary Data

**Figure 4: Deliverables of Social Media For The SME Sector**



Source: Primary Data

**Figure 5: Various Activities Undertaken By SMEs By Using Social Media Tools**



Source: Primary Data

Activities SMEs are engaged in using Social Media

❖ **Interpretation:** Chi-Square result from the Table 2 indicates that the calculated value of hypotheses (61.4) is significantly greater than the table value (26.6) given at 5% level of significance with 16 degrees of freedom. Hence, *H<sub>0</sub> is rejected and H<sub>1</sub> is accepted* at 5% level of significance. Thus, the customers of Small & Medium Enterprises do not get equally impacted by traditional marketing tools in comparison to social media marketing tools. The customers agreed that Social Media has an impact on purchase decision of products and service categories such as automobile parts, IT, telecom, healthcare, travel & tourism, retail outlets etc.

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

❖ The hypotheses one ( 1 and 1(a)) clearly indicate that the sales of Small & Medium Enterprises do not get equally influenced by traditional marketing tools as compared to social media marketing tools. By percentage analysis, it was found that just 23.5% sales are generated by SMEs using social media tools.

❖ The hypotheses two ( 2 and 2(a)) clearly indicate that the customers of Small & Medium Enterprises do not get equally impacted by traditional marketing tools in comparison to social media marketing tools. Customers agreed that social media has an impact on purchase decisions (50.8%) of products and service categories such as automobiles parts, IT, telecom, healthcare, travel & tourism, retail outlets etc.

❖ In general, it was seen through percentage analysis that SMEs were most aware (48%) of social networks as one of the social media tools followed by blogs (37%), RSS (11%) and other social media tools like (wikis, micro blogging etc. ) with 4% awareness.

❖ Fascinatingly, a clear majority of the respondents (54 %) believed that social media definitely has some impact on business and marketing and 19% of the respondents believed that social media has a huge impact on business and marketing in the SME sector.

❖ Through percentage analysis, the researcher also found that a majority (62%) of the SMEs had a basic understanding of social media tools, whereas 14% of the SMEs had a fairly good understanding of the social media tools.

❖ The key deliverables (according to the employees of the SME sector) that the social media can provide are - creating brand awareness (87.4%) ; developing the initial level of trust among the customers towards the SME companies (66.7%) ; generating sales (33.1%) and most SMEs (65.8%) realized that social media tools not only acted as a way of generating sales, but also engaged customers in interactions with the company.

❖ It was also observed that the main activities that SMEs in Delhi are involved in using social media tools were generating sales (23.5%) through social media, and it was also observed that SMEs had started using social media tools like LinkedIn for hiring(62.6%) prospective employees for their organization.

## CONCLUSION

From the present study, we can conclude that there is an increased awareness and understanding of social media tools by both the customers and the organizations in the SME sector. Consumers today have more power than ever and are able to make more informed decisions about the purchase due to the influence of social media tools. They blog, share, tweet, make friends using Facebook, Twitter etc. Some SMEs have even started integrating social media on their corporate websites - generating sales through referrals, hiring prospective employees through LinkedIn etc. Often, customers can express their views and create user-generated content, whether positive or negative, to be viewed by an audience of millions. This surely creates enormous opportunities , challenges and even liabilities for organizations. Social media is already transforming the consumer purchase decision and even SMEs are getting organized for long-term social media success to gain a competitive advantage.

## SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study is limited to a particular geographic region. Therefore, the author suggests that the scope of this study can be enhanced in the future by conducting a study at the national/international level, and more consumers from different demographic profile can be involved for future studies.



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