



E-ISSN: 2706-8927  
P-ISSN: 2706-8919  
[www.allstudyjournal.com](http://www.allstudyjournal.com)  
IJAAS 2022; 4(1): 389-393  
Received: 04-02-2022  
Accepted: 10-03-2022

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## Social Media and Consumerism: A Study of Meerut District

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### Abstract

Social Media is a tool by the usage of social networking platforms to get people's attention. This motion now influences the way we use the internet and has produced common sites like Facebook, Youtube, Instagram and Twitter where users are communicating, creating and posting information. When the knowledge regarding a product/ service/ brand/ business is posted by a person, it is shared by many people in social media. Social media acts as a peer group and gives way to the demonstration effect introduced by Duessenberry (1949). He wrote that consumer's behaviour is strongly influenced by demonstration effect. People imitate their friends, neighbours and colleagues for their purchase decisions. Now in the era of social media demonstration effect is expanded. Consumers imitate whatever they see at social media platform. People are moving towards consumerism. Resulting from enhancing use of social media, Consumerism refers to the consumption of goods and services at a higher rate. Our Indian culture doesn't support consumerism as India is known for its spiritual values not for chasing material wealth. Moreover consumerism is enhancing global warming, industrial pollution and depleting natural resources. The present study is an attempt to explore how far social media has influenced consumer behaviour in Meerut District.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Consumption, influencing factors, Meerut District

### Introductions

The last decade has witnessed a growth of user driven social media online applications blogging, social networks and channels for media distribution. Even kids are growing today with information technology access Internet is not only a mass media but more than that a 'multifaceted mass medium' in the sense that it contains many different configurations and communications (Morris and Organ 1996) <sup>[1]</sup>. Social Media marketing is a tool by the usage of social networking platform to get people attention. Social networks offer an atmosphere in which users can connect on the internet which has an important effect on the idea of customer socialism (Vinod Chandwani, 2016) <sup>[2]</sup>. This technical transition had a major impact on conventional marketing, introduced new age for advertisers; the social media changed the relations between marketers and stakeholders entirely. Due to enhancing use of internet, retailers are taking advantage to enlarge their business capacities and to expand their revenues. Amazon, e-Bay, Dell.com, Ez Mall etc. developed a series of business opportunities that expanded consumerism worldwide.

Consumption never remains static for a long time in the modern advanced societies where shifting needs occur quite often. The dynamic nature of human needs makes consumption a dynamic character. The definition of what constitutes a 'necessity' is changing and the distinctions between luxuries and necessities are blurring (UNDP, 1998) <sup>[3]</sup>. In the present scenario, the pronounced tendency to consume has become indispensable part of one's life and individuals are assessed based on their materialistic lifestyles. In this way we are moving towards consumerism. Consumerism refers to the consumption of goals at a higher rate. It is appreciated in western countries but not in India as we Indians are known for our spiritual values not for material wealth.

### Related Studies

Karve, Sunil and Shilpa C. Shinde (2013) <sup>[4]</sup> in their paper "Effectiveness of Social Networking Sites (SNS)" have made an endeavour to make sense of the encounters of the web clients with respect to internet based life and have likewise attempted to discover the example of SNS utilisation of buyers. The scholars express at online networking has turned out to be very much famous.

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Social networking sites have changed the manner in which individuals invest their energy on the web and make their purchase decisions Liu. *et al.* (2013) [5] conducted a study of online shopping of Chinese customers. The findings of the study have shown that detailed information is necessary because purchase decision is only based on the information available online Design and content of website would be attractive to improve customers satisfaction. Website transaction capability is necessary element to complete a transaction Safko and Brade (2009) [6] state activities, practices and behaviours among communities of people who gather online to share information, knowledge and opinions using conversational media. Conversational media are web based applications that make it possible to create and easily transmit content in the form of words, pictures and audios. This media creates a wide market for customers. Naidu Geetanjali *et al.* (2013) [7] analyse the influence of social media on purchasing division of students in Raipur. According to survey result, 75% of young population uses internet for sharing their opinions, views and comments on numerous websites. People use social media weekly to collect information about the product they want to purchase.

**Study Area**

- The study covers Meerut District situated between Ganga and Yamuna having their proximity to New Delhi, a part of National Capital Region (NCR) and one of the largest cities of Uttar Pradesh. It is fastest growing city in the NCR in terms of educational facilities, social activities, infrastructural development commercial, agricultural and industries and as a hub of real estate business. According to 2011 census the total population of the district is 34,47,405 of which 18,29,192 are males and 16,18, 213 are females. Meerut has 2.78% of the total population of Uttar Pradesh. The per capita income of the district is found to be Rs. 23,533 which is outstandingly higher than state average of Rs. 23,132. (<https://cenusindia.gov.in>)

**Objectives of The Study**

- To analyse the interests of consumer households of Meerut district towards social media.
- To find out factors motivating consumers to purchase things using social media.
- To make people aware of negative side of social media.

**Research Methodology**

The study is an empirical study based on household survey of consumers living in Meerut District. Primary data based on Income, expenditure family size, occupation structure and consumption was collected through schedule based on structured questionnaire.

The rural and urban households selected by stratified

random sampling with the help of suitable designed schedule. The number of samples were quality divided in rural urban population. Ratio of population in urban is 51% and 49% in rural area as per 2011 census (<https://www.cenusindia2011.com>). 500 consumer households were surveyed. In order to know the impact of social media on consumption the main variables were demographics, web graphics, online shopping, place of purchasing daily needs, motives of purchase, branded/ non-branded, purchases, use of smart phone, purchase of fashion outfits etc.

**Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive analysis was conducted to understand the demography of the population. The sample comprises of 48% of female and 52% of male respondents. The sample were well educated as 48.4% has their degree in UG, PG or in Ph.D. and 35.2% sample were high school and intermediate education (refer table below). The average age of the sample was 44. According to age groups, highest number of respondents belongs to the 39-48 with 47% followed by age group 49-58 (25.8%), age group 29-38 (10.4%). In terms of occupation, most of the respondents were Self-employed (43%) followed by Agriculture (28.2%), Government jobs (14.8%) and Private jobs (14%). Thus, the respondents were selected from varied age, education and occupation. Respondents are representatives of their respective households. Hence the samples were exhaustive enough for fulfilling the objective of the study. The summary of descriptive statistics is presented in Table followed by supporting graphs and charts.

**Table 1:** Descriptive statistics

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	240	48
	Male	260	52
Education	Illiterate	5	1
	Below High school	77	15.4
	High school	90	18
	Intermediate	86	17.2
	UG	117	23.4
	PG	90	18
Age	Doctorate	35	7
	Not disclosed	3	0.6
	Below 18	9	1.8
	19-28	32	6.4
	29-38	52	10.4
	39-48	235	47
	49-58	129	25.8
Occupation	Above 58	40	8
	Agriculture	141	28.2
	Govt Professional	74	14.8
	Private job	70	14
	Self Employed	215	43

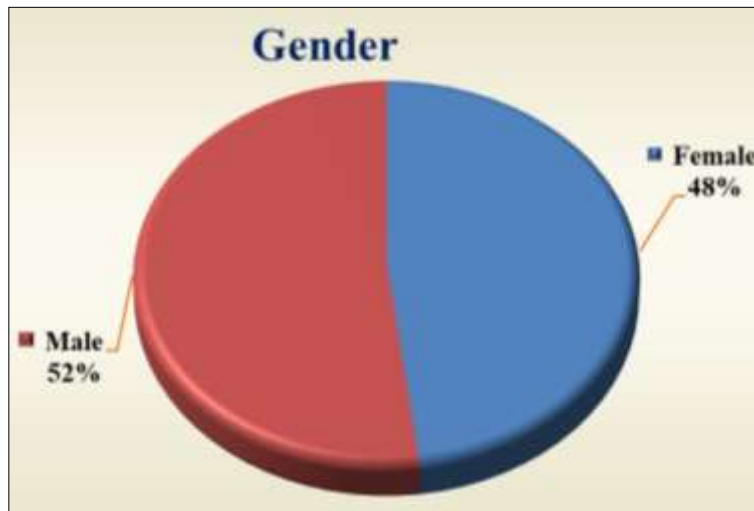


Fig 1: Gender

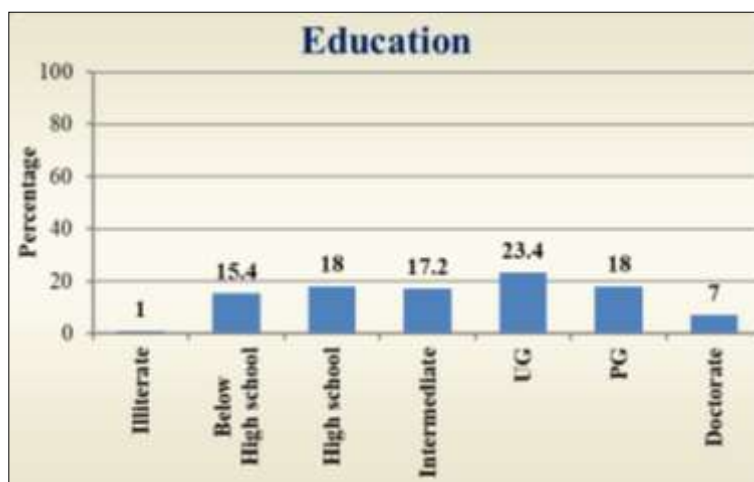


Fig 2: Education

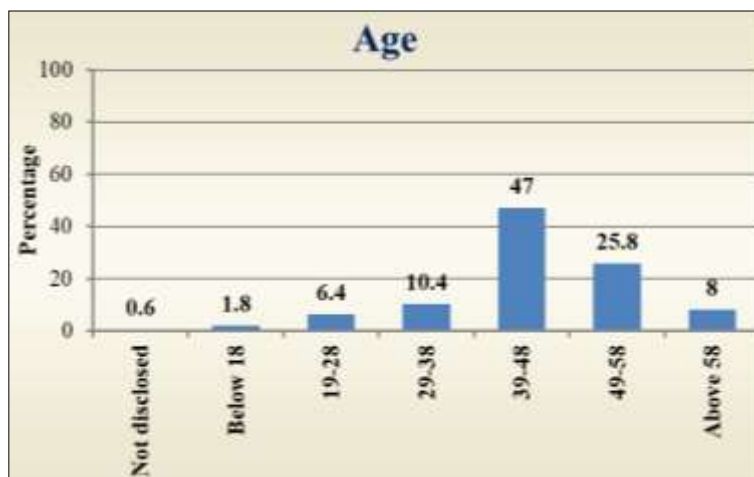


Fig 3: Age



Fig 4: Occupation

To understand the impact of social media direct questions were asked from the respondents as their purchase is influenced by social media i.e. advertisement on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. The results are presented in next table.

Table 2: Impact of Social Media/ Demonstration Effect'

		Frequency	Percentage
Purchase Inspired by	Social Media i.e. Advertisement on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, Channels.	320	64%
	Neighbours & Relatives	80	16%
	Sales and Discount offers	66	13.2%
	None of there	34	6.8%

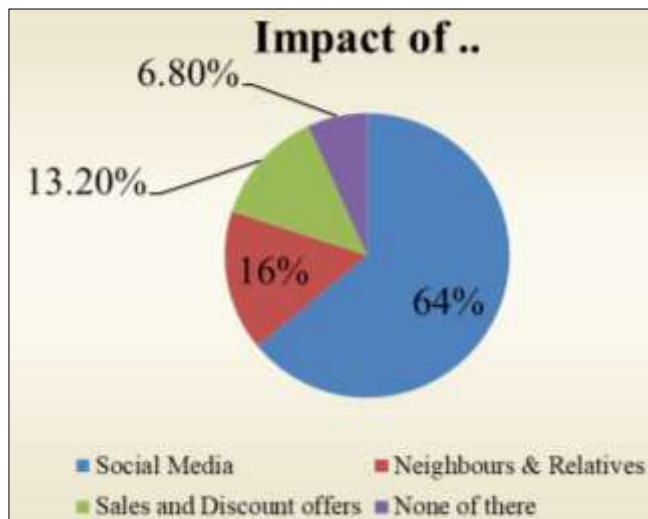


Fig 5: Impact of Social Media/ Demonstration Effect'

This table & pie diagram shows that purchases are most affected by Social Media (64%) followed by neighbours & relatives (16%) and so on

**Factors to decide which site to purchase**

Respondents were asked about their decisions to purchase their daily needs. They replied that they are most influenced by Special discount offers, advertisements, friends and relatives etc.

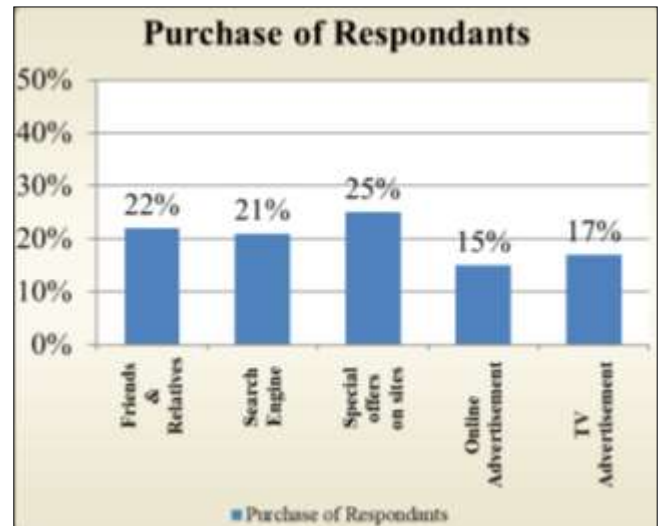


Fig 6: Influencing factors

**Consumption towards Consumerism**

Results of the study show that exposure of consumer households to social Media is taking people towards the age of consumerism. Excessive consumption leads an economy towards consumerism. New fashion products available at very short time. Cashless transactions, intact data packs available for middle income group consumers enhance the influence of social media on consumption today.

**Dark side of Consumerism**

India is developing economy. Excessive consumption leads an economy towards consumerism. We should recognize our responsibility towards sustainable development. Enhancing consumption is not good for an individual and for society as well.

- In consumerism, desires of people increase. They want to earn more and get more stress and work related tensions.
- Expensive gadgets have become choice of everyone. So crime rate is increasing for need of money.
- Consumerism is enhancing global warming. Industrial pollution is affecting health of the masses. It is depleting natural resources of the country.
- People prefer to earn more to maintain their standard of living. They work more and relationships are getting affected.

Conclusively It can be said that consumption is an economic activity but sustainable consumption is our fundamental and moral duty besides consumption, saving and investment are equally important. If we plan to save and invest the money, it will create employment opportunities for others and our country will be a Self-reliant economy.

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