

## IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR WITH REFERENCE TO CHERANMAHADEVI TALUK, TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU

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### Abstract

As a communication tool, social media has taken on increasing importance. People from all over the world use social media to communicate with other people or organisation. Social media is described as "consumer-generated media that covers a wide range of new online information sources created and used by consumers intent on sharing information with others about any topic of interest." People throughout the world have begun to utilise social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn to share their experiences. More buyers than ever before are using social media networks. Consumers want feedback and recommendations. People contribute product reviews, service information, food or health recommendations, product warnings, product usage suggestions, and much more as consumers. People have a lot of "connections" on social media. As a result, many individuals devour information. This knowledge has an impact on customers and their purchasing habits. According to surveys, many consumers plan their future purchases based on the information and evaluations they find on social media.

### Introduction

On social media, firms are exposed to a wide range of information, including information about clients and current events. As a result, social media provides a platform for customers to express themselves. Social media is a platform where numerous individuals from all over the world may engage and communicate at the same time via the internet. The internet has altered the way

people communicate, do business, and socialise. The internet has become an inseparable element of today's youth. This generation cannot imagine a world without the internet. Communication styles are shifting from face-to-face to social networking on a virtual platform. Social media is concerned with the electronic interchange of information, material, ideas, and so on. Social networking, on the other hand, is associated with sharing shared interests with individuals or organisations. Social media allows these businesses to recognise and collaborate with their prospective clients. Organisations may easily communicate with clients on social media platforms by using social media groups, chats, direct messaging, and the comments area. On social media, firms are exposed to a wide range of information, including information about clients and current events.

### **Review of Literature**

**Thelma Valeria Rocha, Caroline Louise Stedefeldt Jansen, Eduardo Lofti, Rodrigo Ribeiro Fraga (2013)**<sup>25</sup> had conducted a study on the usage of networks in building relationships in the context of companies in Brazil. The employees and officials of the companies actively participate in social networks. Social networks provide an opportunity for the company to interact with target audiences and in building relationships. Twitter happens to be the most favoured network, followed by Orkut and Facebook.

**RekhaDahiya (2013)**<sup>26</sup> revealed that Digital marketing is more comprehensive in scope and appeal than Internet Marketing. Communications developed through chat rooms help the customers to have information, evaluate and take the experience of others before the final purchase decision. Companies adopting social media as a marketing mix will have the edge over their competitors.

**AnkitaGaba (2013)**<sup>27</sup>, a social media strategist and consultant, had outlined how to make a career through social media. A social agency is an organisation that handles a brand's social media activities on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc. Social media agency started by AnkitaGaba in 2008 spans more than 450 branches all over India. People can earn by working either as freelancers or social media consultants for small and medium scale businesses.

**Jennifer L. Klass, Christine M. Lombardo, David A. McManus, and Andriette A. Roberts (2013)** advocated that social media such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Flickr are used by investment advisers and broker-dealers to attract and interact with clients and prospective clients. Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) made a spot check of social media communications used by firms to conduct their business. The firms understand the features and functionality of the sites much better in the promotion of their business.

## **Statement of Problem**

This process can be defined as is an electronic process that allows consumers to deal with business people and meet their purchases' needs. Social Media have played an essential role in spreading this phenomenon faster. Interacting with consumers on Social Media may increase potential consumers and the probability of turning potential consumers into actual shoppers. In addition to changing existing potential consumers into buyers, social media encourages those buyers to promote and share their purchases experience among their friends by giving their positive or negative opinions towards a purchased product. The present study is initiated under the title "Impact of Social Media on Consumer Behaviour with Special Reference to Tirunelveli district" to determine how social media influences consumer behaviour in the study area.

## **Significance of the Study**

Social networking is become an integral aspect of most people's lives. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn have a large user base that is constantly increasing. It is believed that more than 500 million individuals use social media. Marketers have been drawn in by the expanding number of social media users. Marketers have noticed the importance of social media marketing in their marketing communication strategy. Furthermore, social media allows businesses to engage with their customers. These encounters assist marketers in determining client demands and gaining an understanding of their market. The major business elements of social media enable customers to appraise items, make suggestions to contacts or friends, and broadcast any purchases via social media.

Objectives of the study:

- To ascertain the influence of user-generated content/online reviews on the buying behaviour of the respondents
- To study the role of social media in the consumers buying decision process.

- To offer suitable suggestions for better use of social media as a business promotion tool.

### Selection of sample size for the study

Sl.No	Sample Units	Questionnaires Distributed	Responses Received
2.	Cheranmahadevi Taluk	175	168

Table 1

### Age of the Respondents

Sl.No	Age of the Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	< 25 years	44	26.19
2.	25 – 40 years	77	45.83
3.	40 – 50 Years	22	13.10
4.	>50 years	25	14.88
<b>Total</b>		<b>168</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Primary Data)

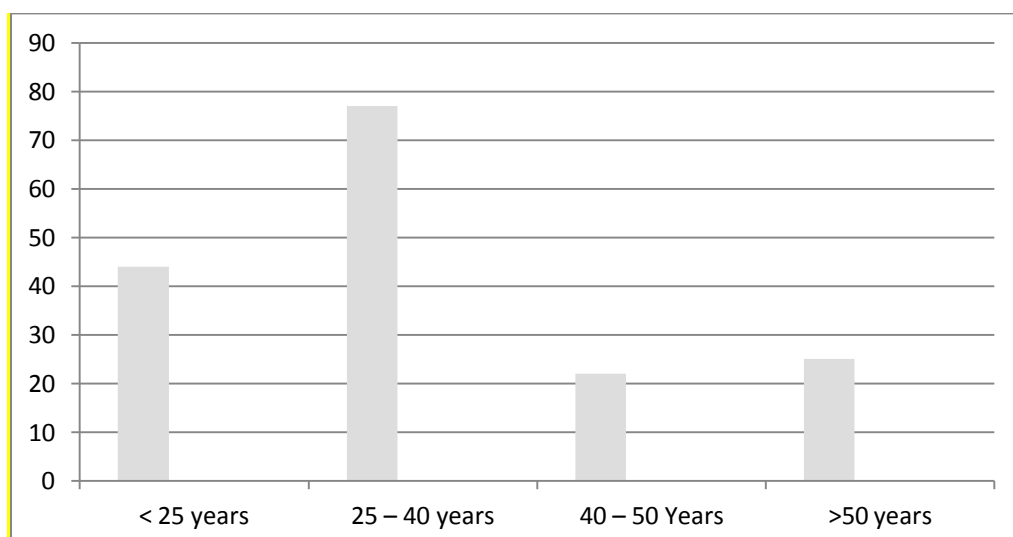


Table 1 reveals the age of the respondents selected for the study. It is noted that a maximum of 44 respondents (26.19 per cent) belonged to the age group of below 25 years, followed by 77 respondents (45.83 per cent) 25 – 40 years, 22 respondents (13.10 per cent) 40–50 Years, and 25 respondents (14.88 per cent) belonged to the age category of above 50 years.

### Gender of the Respondents:

Gender roles are changing, and males and females differ in consumer traits, information processing, decision-making, and buying patterns. Evidence suggests that gender differences exist in the time spent on social media, considering the reviews and giving like an option or vice versa. The consumption pattern of males and females may also differ. Hence this variable is considered for the study.

**Table 2**

### Gender of the Respondents

Sl.No	Gender of the Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Male	102	60.71
2.	Female	66	39.29
<b>Total</b>		<b>168</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Primary Data)

**Fig 2**

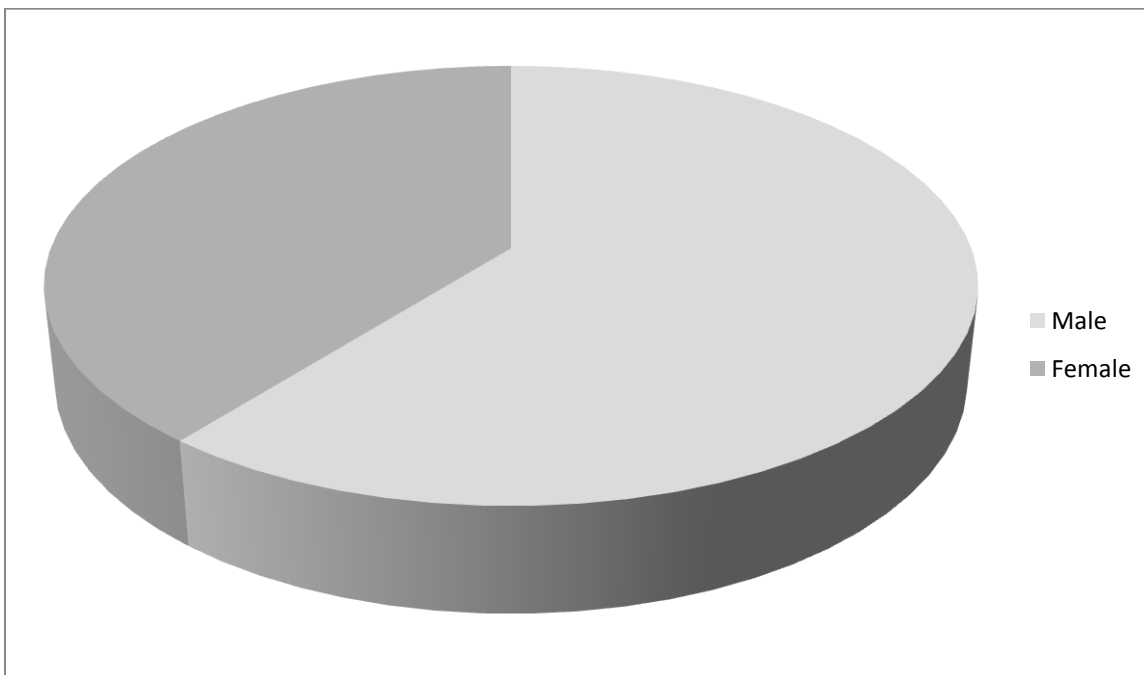


Table 2 discloses the gender-wise classification of respondents. It is found that a maximum of 83 respondents (54.61 per cent) were female, and 69 respondents (45.39 per cent) were male.

**Table 3**  
**Educational Qualifications of the Respondents**

Sl.No	Academic Qualifications of the Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Higher secondary	22	13.10
2.	Graduate	77	45.83
3.	Post Graduate	44	26.19
4.	Others	25	14.88
<b>Total</b>		<b>168</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Primary Data)

**Fig 4.3**

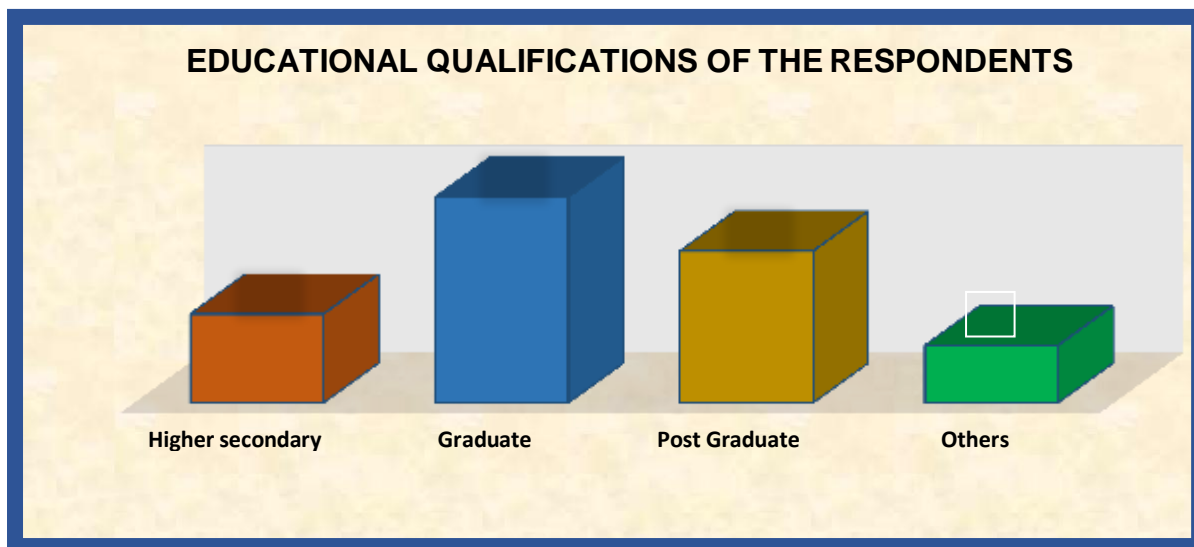


Table 3 and fig 3 expose the educational qualifications of the selected respondents. It is noted that the majority of the respondents (45.83 per cent) are graduates, followed by 26.19 per cent postgraduates, 14.88 per cent completing higher secondary, and only 13.10 per cent of the respondents having professional (other) qualifications.

**Table 4**

**The religion of the Respondents**

Sl.No	The religion of the Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Hindu	112	66.67
2.	Muslim	22	13.10
3.	Christian	34	20.24
<b>Total</b>		<b>168</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 4 discloses the religion of the respondents. It is understood that 112 respondents (66.67 per cent) are Hindu, 22 respondents (13.10 per cent) are Muslim, and 34 respondents (20.24 per cent) are

Christian.

**Table 5**

**Social Status of the Respondents**

Sl.No	Social Status of the Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	OC	45	26.79
2.	OBC	98	58.33
3.	SC / ST	25	14.88
<b>Total</b>		<b>168</b>	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 5 divulges the religion of the respondents selected for the study. It is perceived that a maximum of 98 respondents (58.33 per cent) belonged to the OBC category, 45 respondents (26.79 per cent) OC, and 25 respondents (14.88 per cent) belonged to SC/ST category.

**Table 6**

**Role of Social media in Respondents decision making process while purchasing goods and services Extracted Factor Loadings of the Variables under the Factor “Purchase decision.”**

Sl.No	Variables under the head “Purchase decision.”	Code
1.	The quantity and quality of the information of a particular product	<b>PD1</b>
2.	Perhaps the pressure that everybody is using a product.	<b>PD2</b>
3.	The immediacy and variety of product information received	<b>PD3</b>



4.	Both positive and negative comments of the products give critical thinking on the purchase decision.	<b>PD4</b>
5.	In social media, you can argue with friends about future purchase, shortcomings and their previous experience with the same products	<b>PD5</b>
6.	Social media reduces risk-taking and paves the way for quick decision making	<b>PD6</b>
7.	Product selection is easy and enjoyable for me through social media	<b>PD7</b>
8.	They motivate me to make a purchase decision	<b>PD8</b>
9.	I spend time checking my account while going through products/services before I purchase them	<b>PD9</b>
10.	I will purchase from a dealer that has fewer negative reviews on social media platforms	<b>PD10</b>
11	I am more likely to purchase from a dealer who is active on social media platforms	<b>PD11</b>

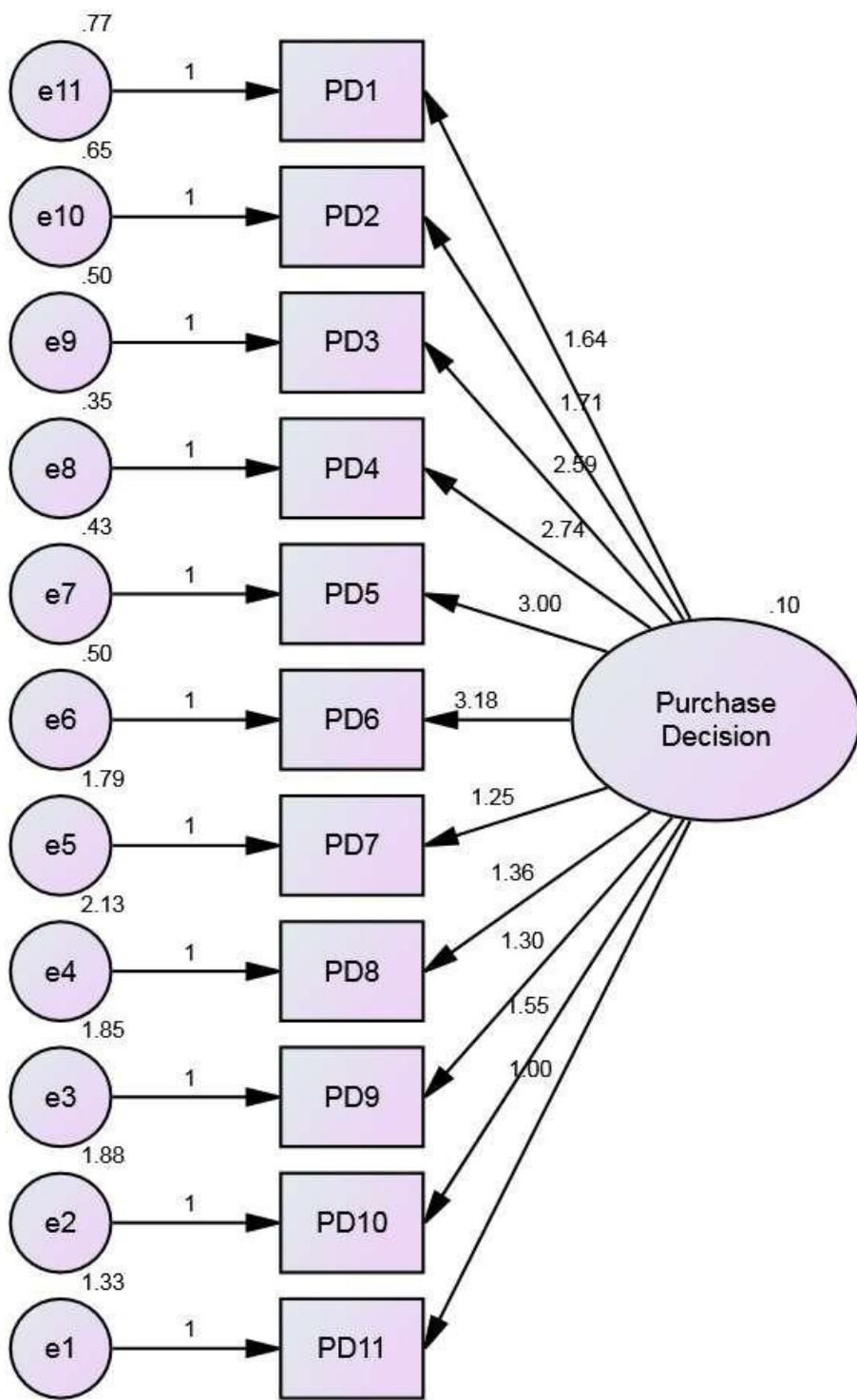


Fig 6 Variables under the head “Purchase decision.”

**Table 7**  
**Model fit summary of Structural Equation Model**

Indices	Value	Suggested Value
Chi-Square value	190.414	--
Degrees of Freedom	58	--
Chi-Square value / Df	3.283	<5.00 ( Hair et al., 1998)
P Value	0.692	>0.05 ( Hair et al., 1998)
GFI	0.917	>0.90 (Hu and Bentler, 1999)
AGFI	0.902	>0.90 ( Hair et al., 2006)
NFI	0.906	>0.90 (Hu and Bentler, 1999)
CFI	0.893	>0.90 (Daire et al., 2008)
RMSEA	0.073	<0.08 ( Hair et al., 2006)

From the above table, it was evident that the calculated P-value is 0.692, which is more than 0.05, which indicates a perfect fit. GFI (Goodness of Fit Index) value 0.917 and AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index) value 0.902 more than the threshold level, representing a good model fit. The calculated CFI (Comparative Fit Index) value is 0.893, which is perfectly fit. It is also found that the RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) value is 0.073, which indicates it is a perfect fit model. Hence Null

hypothesis is accepted and states that the proposed model is a fit and bought for added analysis.

**Table 8 Standardised Regression Weights**

Dependent Variables	Relationship	Independent Variable	Estimate	Item Reliabilities	Standardised error Variance
PD1	<---	<b>Purchase_Decision</b>	.731	0.696	0.304
PD2	<---		.753	0.563	0.438
PD3	<---		.780	0.752	0.248
PD4	<---		.833	0.503	0.497
PD5	<---		.770	0.360	0.640
PD6	<---		.636	0.598	0.402
PD7	<---		.692	0.489	0.511
PD8	<---		.766	0.681	0.319
PD9	<---		.757	0.692	0.308
PD10	<---		.809	0.654	0.346
PD11	<---		.739	0.546	0.454
			<b>CR **0.567</b>	6.240/11*100 = <b>AVE ** 69.337</b>	

Confirmatory factor analysis was done with the eleven variables for expounding the Role of Social media in the Respondents decision-making process while buying goods and services under the head Purchase decision. The hewed Factor Loadings/ Regression weights of the Variables under the Factor “Purchase decision”, the effects were good-natured, and items had in tensely suitable loadings. The CFA analysis reveals that standardised factor loading varies from 0.636 to 0.833. The reliability of the above said variables are also measured through the Cronbach alpha (0.6892), more significant than the threshold value of 0.50 and postulates that all the variables are agreeable to measure the “Purchase decision.”. The average variance explained was 69.337. The rule of thumb of AVE is 0.50, or higher directs adequate convergent validity. The construct reliability is 0.567. The rule of thumb for

a construct reliability estimate is that .7 or higher suggests good reliability. Eventhough the value between 0.5 to 0.7 is also tolerable.

**Table 9 Profile variables of the selected respondents &Role of Social media in Respondentsdecision making process while purchasing goods and services - Variables under theFactor - Greater force on buying decision**

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Role of Social media in Respondents decision making process while purchasing goods and services - Variables under the Factor - Greater force on buying decision					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	325.288 <sup>a</sup>	43	7.565	10.570	.000***
Intercept	198.183	1	198.183	276.916	.000***
Age	28.501	4	7.125	9.956	.000***
Gender	18.146	4	4.537	6.339	.000***
Educational Qual.	58.855	4	14.714	20.559	.000***
Error	402.926	563	.716		
Total	5170.000	607			
Corrected Total	728.214	606			
a. R Squared = .647 (Adjusted R Squared = .604)					

Table 9 releases the two-way Anova results between the Profile variables of the selected respondents & Role of Social media in Respondents decision making course while buying goods and services - Variables under the Factor “Greater force on buying decision”. R<sup>2</sup> is the percentage of variation in the response illuminated by the model. The higher the R<sup>2</sup> value is, the good the model fit. The R Squared = 0.647 and Adjusted R Squared = 0.604, R<sup>2</sup> value is more than 0.60. So the model is fit. The “F” value of all the nominated profile variables are more than the critical value of 1.96, and the corresponding variables significance value is less than 0.05. Hence it is established that the profile variables of the selected respondents have statistically considerable importance on the dependent variable, “Greater force on buying decision”.

### **Suggestions of the Study:**

- ✓ Social media introduces various new products, so the respondents find the best deal for their needs.
- ✓ Word of mouth is a very effective way of communication about the product and service.
- ✓ Social media appears to be more honest even though the respondents cross-check the required information.
- ✓ Social media is user-based, interactive, and emotional, so the respondents should take necessary care before using the same.
- ✓ Social media is very much connected to the world.
- ✓ They contribute more knowledge about the product.
- ✓ Personal experiences from previous users become an excellent source of information.
- ✓ Social media allows knowing a lot of different opinions of real consumers.
- ✓ Product or services information from their peers through social media have more effective.
- ✓

### **Conclusion**

The research has shown the impact of Social media on consumer behaviour with special reference to Tirunelveli District. No doubt that Social media has conveyed important information to both consumers as well as businesses. The research has shown that consumers are cautious while making a purchase. Though there is sufficient data and sources of information on Social media, the personal attitude of the consumers makes a lot of difference in selecting and making a purchase. The quality of content on Social media makes a significant impact, so it should be consumer relevant. When the Product promotion is done through Social media, it is not all about consumer awareness or selling itself. It is more than that, which includes retaining a built-up relationship and building it between the potential buyers and corporations. Now the consumer is the king who can get all the information regarding a product or service simply from social media. So, companies and marketers should be cautious about the lousy mouth on Social media because it can destroy the company's reputation.

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