1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of information technology and marketing mix, the emergence and utilization of digital marketing has gained eminent popularity among the marketers. Industries across various spectra have been deploying digital marketing, social media tools, and advertising and promotion strategies to influence the consumer purchasing behavior, and to stop them from straying to other brands. The same is the case of pharmaceutical industry, wherein the competition exists for not only enhancing the consumer consumption, but also influencing the prescription behavior of the doctors.

The customer purchase behavior study in pharmaceutical industry addresses the multitude of marketing strategies that gains trust and loyalty of the end-consumers and doctors. With the increased competition, it is relevant to comprehend the impact of such strategies on the purchasing behavior of customers. The social media “describes a variety of new sources of online information that are created, initiated, circulated and used by consumers intent on educating each other about products, brands, services, personalities, and issues”

The 21st century is witnessing an explosion of Internet-based messages transmitted through these media. Pharma companies need to think beyond direct product promotion when using social tools. Johnson & Johnson has created an active social presence that utilizes a blog focused on stories of employees, wellness information, and corporate content. These value-adding endeavors will ensure that customers experience and perceive their social networking experience to be enriching. Education and awareness campaigns are key focus areas pharma companies should continuously invest in. Information should be easily retrievable and communicated in a manner that makes sense to the diverse customer base. The usage and presence of social media channels is rising, though still lags among the population segment that utilizes healthcare services the most: patients over 65 years of age, and those with multiple chronic conditions. Digital activities are currently highest in areas with the least healthcare impact.

In the past decade, the technology advancements have made a significant impact all around the world in day to day life. As life styles are being affected, these progressions have led to the drastic changes in the marketing world; however pharmaceutical marketing has no exclusion from this technological evolution. Pharmaceutical companies are capitalizing this technology for digital marketing.
Conventional pharmaceutical marketing practices are involved with face to face contact between sales representative and medical professional for the drug promotional activities. However, drug companies are increasingly turning to electronic detailing or e-detailing for help in marketing their products. This has become a widespread practice in the developed countries and emerging in developing countries. E-detailing includes diverse strategies, such as videoconferences, the provision of electronic education modules, and the use of email and related technologies as prompts and to promote two-way communications. It has been used for disease-awareness campaigns, and for „customer relationship management“.

Apart from flexibility in terms of various modes of communication and detailing strategies, e-detailing has proven its significance in terms of wider acceptability by the physicians, less time and economy in the operations per an active call along with increments in the revenues. In this front, this manuscript presents the influence of digital drift on pharmaceutical marketing.

Marketing of products or services with the help of Technology is digital marketing. Digital Marketing, also termed as e-marketing, web-marketing, online-marketing or Internet Marketing,
e-marketing also includes the management of digital customer data and electronic customer relationship management (e-CRM) systems. e-marketing allows the placement of media along many different stages of the customer engagement cycle.

This research delineates that the customer purchase behavior in Pharmaceutical advertisement is based on the consumer purchase behavior because buying the medicine lies in the hand of customer (doctor) rather than final consumer (patient). So the customer (doctor) acts as an indirect consumer. Due to this there are two types of customers earmarked in this study, one is doctor who is indirect consumer and the other one is patient who is direct consumer. In context to the pharmaceutical industry in India advertisements make an impact on the prescription behavior of the customer (doctor), along with the direct consumer who purchase the OTC drug (Over the Counter Drug) which doesn’t require the prescription of the doctors. The Pharmaceutical marketing differs from other OTC drug are medicines sold directly to a consumer without a prescription from a healthcare professional types of marketing because the consumer i.e. the patients are not the target audience, whereas the physicians prescribing the medicines are the target audience of the pharmaceutical companies. It is the doctor who makes the decision on
behalf of the patient. Physicians are privileged with the right of recognizing the need of their patients and recommend medications for the well-being of their patients. Hence, the relation between the physician and pharmaceutical companies may create a conflict between the ethical professional interest of a doctor and his financial self-interest. The increase in incentives to attract the doctor’s prescription behavior reflects as a rise in the price of prescription medicines. The pharmaceuticals resort to many ways in marketing their product. Giving away gifts, free lunches, sponsoring education and holidays have all been criticized as inducements which compel a doctor to prescribe without scientific basis (Gonul FF et. al 2001).

**Pharmaceutical Digital marketing**

**Target Audience:**

Digital Marketing is an extension, can be implemented across Verticals i.e. Doctors, Hospitals, Patients & Sales Team:

**Health Care Professionals (HCPs):** This is based on providing services, scientific data, business analytics etc. to the specialists in order to promotion of products/services.

**Patient’s:** to ensure awareness & adherence to the therapy.

**Sale’s Team:** To make their customer calls more interactive & upgrade their skills and motivation

As Internet gains more significance in different aspects of our lives, the world of pharma bound to have its share of Internet use gradually.

As more healthcare facilities establish point of access between physicians and pharma sales reps, industry has turned to other promotional methods and is increasing use of e-Marketing.

e-Detailing and online events (like webinars or webcasts) let doctors update themself when and where they choose, rather than having to meet with pharma representatives during rush hours in their clinics.

e-marketing can be carefully controlled and monitored.

A recent survey by Docplexus suggest that:- 80% of doctors check product information online. 74% of doctors wants to communicate with MR regarding new drugs, 68% wanted to limit the interaction to once in a month and only 33% thought that such interactions adds value to their practice.
Doctors still view pharma companies as important stakeholders to learn about new drugs and treatment approaches, however the nature of the meeting should be planned properly, MR should come across as assistance provider in making the correct decision instead of looking like a seller. The gap between doctor’s expectations and what MR is offering can be reduced by proper adaptation of digitalization.

Digital Marketing- A Panoramic approach
Digital Marketing engages all the stakeholders, the Physicians, Sales Force, Patients
Physicians are constantly checking out for latest medical advances, digitalization assists in featuring the brands at the top of these searches, thus creating relationship with the physicians and keeping them engaged
Digitalization empowers the sales force with the latest tools and technologies to give their best
Digitalization engages patients with the proper content creation, website management and social media expertise

SOCIAL MEDIA AND PHARMA COMPANIES
Pharma marketing is extremely competitive and lacking in clear social media boundaries based on current regulatory guidance. Yet some healthcare and pharma companies are doing good work in the space, finding ways to connect physicians via secure social networks to improve information sharing for example. In absence of definitive social media policy from the regulatory bodies, pharmaceutical companies need to work closely with their legal team along with marketing professionals (whether internal or external) with a strong understanding of social media engagement to ensure that the spirit of the laws are being followed despite a gray area until formal social media guidance is released. Pharma companies need to think beyond direct product promotion when using social tools. Johnson & Johnson has created an active social presence that utilizes a blog focused on stories of employees, wellness information, and corporate content. The blog contains robust content and is supplemented with YouTube and Facebook pages. J&J also connects with community members via communications staffer Marc Monseau who tweets on behalf of the brand in a more personal voice. The impact of social media on drug advertising: Why pharmaceutical companies should engage with social media? To create the system of: (1) Risk communication (2) Profiling (3) Education (4) Sentiment.

Perception about the use of social media among pharmaceutical employees
1. Indian regulatory authority should pass a law to allow pharmaceutical companies for usage of social media for Product marketing
2. Social media can help to create a specific product positioning for a specific target market
3. Social media may increase the chance of self medication among patients
4. Social media can play an important role in making good relationship with health care providers by directly interacting with them
5. Social media can cause a direct and unethical targeting of particular competitors
6. Social media helps in effective segmentation and targeting of customers by inviting product specific patients and health care providers on social media
7. Unlimited coverage, accessibility and convenience of social media usage make it a big tool for pharmaceutical marketers
8. Presence on social media can cause a maximum exposure in front of huge population of patients and health care providers which is very good for product promotions
9. Social media is helpful in getting competitive advantage by highlighting risk information of competitors
10. Success stories of any patients by using any specific medicine which share on social media can positively affect the sales volume of that specific product
11. Better understanding among the patients about the nature, prognosis and management of their current illness through social media can create a positive impact towards company
12. Social media serve as a path for keeping the doctors on their toes to constantly update themselves with recent advances offered by pharmaceutical companies
13. Patient can suggest doctors to prescribe that specific medicine which they have come to know through social media page of company
14. Social media is only suitable for the marketing of over the counter (OTC) medicines
15. Social media is a perfect tool for the marketing of any type of medicine used in any disease
16. Pharmaceutical marketing on social media specifically increase the usage of medications used in young ages because social media is heavily using by young population
17. Social media is a suitable medium for marketing research in order to develop and launch any product because from social media we can get customer’s insights both doctors and patients for new product development
18. Pharmaceutical companies should embrace social media marketing as regular marketing activity in order to increase market share and maximize the exposure of company in general population.

The present study intends to explore the different means of digital marketing and how they can be improved to assist the growth of pharmaceutical companies. For this purpose, the study will assess the impact of digital marketing strategies on consumer purchasing behavior and the challenges encountered in the existing traditional tools. The study will provide a new perspective to develop and implement digital marketing for gaining maximum benefits via influencing the purchasing behavior of customers.

Marketing of products or services with the help of Technology. Digital Marketing, also termed as e-marketing, web-marketing, online-marketing or Internet Marketing, e-marketing also includes the management of digital customer data and electronic customer relationship management (e-CRM) systems. e-marketing allows the placement of media along many different stages of the customer engagement cycle.

**SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The present study intends to explore the different means of digital marketing strategies and how they can be improved to affect the customer purchasing behavior.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The study will assess the impact of digital marketing strategies on customer purchasing behavior and the challenges encountered in the existing strategies along with providing a fresh perspective to develop and implement digital marketing strategies for gaining maximum benefits via influencing the purchasing behavior of customers.