

A Study on the Evolution of Digital Marketing

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ABSTRACT

Objective: *Digital marketing in the growing world has paved the way for many small-scale businesses to reach every corner of the geographic locations that they could not reach physically. The study focuses on the digital marketing usefulness based on past trends, in forecasting the near future trends in emerging markets when it comes to evolution of digital marketing, the effect of COVID-19 on digital marketing, comparison of past, present and scope for future businessmen to analyse the market to launch digital platform. SWOT analysis is also an integral part of this study as an attempt to dive in depth of positive and negative sides of digital marketing.*

Methodology: *The study on the systematic Evolution of digital marketing is studied depending on the secondary sources with an intention to dive in depth of emergence and evolution of digital marketing. The semi-systematic review is done by studying different reports and articles published from Google Scholar, ResearchGate, SSRN and other such publication websites.*

Findings: *The study on the evolution of digital marketing has come out with the common ground that digital marketing of products, services, businesses and any other things would see an increasingly greater demand in upcoming years. Due to emergence of high-speed internet, electronic gadgets, standard of living has paved the way for people to buy products that make them feel on par with their peers. The intense feeling or want that makes people to find pleasure in buying expensive products has led for the growth of digital marketing. Moreover, the study has been an evidence by itself how rural areas have revolutionized from lack of internet and network to modern way of internet and electronic gadget usages. COVID-19 is found as another reason in this study for the booming of digital marketing.*

Practical Implications: *This study on Evolution of digital marketing would help students, researchers, readers to learn various reasons for the causes for evolution of digital marketing, the base COVID-19 has formed for the dependency of people on internet and electronic gadgets and also the impact digital marketing has on businesses due to which they have gone digital from traditional approach of marketing.*

Originality/Value: *This study is purely a secondary study which would give out understanding of digital marketing, its benefits, the future scope, various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and Traits for the marketers. The main limitation of the study as this is a secondary study, the study could be better analysed by conducting face-to-face interviews with the involved people like sellers, buyers, patients recovered from COVID-19 virus as they would be in a better position to contribute to the study with their real-life situations.*

Paper type: Case Study

Keywords: Evolution, Digital Marketing, COVID-19, Electronic Gadgets, Internet

1. INTRODUCTION :

Digital marketing has led to a drastic evolutionary transformation in the Environment of Business, the strategies inculcated by businesses have evolved, which indirectly benefit profit making ideas, the return on investments, the business handling approaches of different vendors have been considered as

a very interesting topic by various authors to perform their researches in the recent past decades [1]. Every industry be it a small scale or a start-up, marketing is the only source of reaching the products and services to buyers. Marketing without the terminology of “Digital” has its effect on the complete system of the way it functions. Traditionally, marketers used hoardings, outlets, paper advertisements to preach the launch of new product and its features to general public with an intention of converting them into a potential buyers. The evolution of digital marketing through the introduction of technology, internet has made it impossible for traditional marketing to win over digital form of marketing. Currently, both traditional as well as digital form of marketing are adopted by the businesses [2]. It is the motto of marketers, vendors, business units to build a bridge between buyers and brands. Technology has led for the changing dimensions in the facets of qualitative goods and services [3]. Digital marketing was born out of the increasing competition amongst the marketers, the growing hunger to earn more profits, to lead the global market, to reach every corner of the world. This would not have been possible without the discovery of digitalization. Physically travelling with few products in hand and delivering the goods to a different geography would incur cost and the small scale vendor cannot dream of such a tremendously huge risk of incurring more expenses than income. Introduction of digital marketing has been a boon, a gift of eternal bliss for the marketers. A marketer could be in any form such as a vendor, seller, and a content creator on social media platforms advertising various brands through vlogs, blogs, articles, videos, content creations, paid promotions and other. Going digital from physical with the help of electronic devices like smartphones, laptops and computers, they have become an integral part of daily lives of businesses and consumers to access the websites, applications, payment and money transactions virtually without visiting banks both within India and international [4].

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE :

In the current world, consumer’s perspectives towards purchasing of goods have got a sharp transformational shift from traditional to modern purchasing behaviour. This has impacted the mind-set of industrialists to remodel the pattern of merchandising goods, reaching the products to the door-step consumers with the adaptation of various social media platforms in digital marketing [5]. The bond between Business to Business for buying and selling of goods and services, the money arising out of these activities have become a part of our global economy. Moreover, the connection between Businesses to Consumer have strengthened due to the evolution of digital marketing– a modern form of advertising and promotion [6]. Multiple publications have been referred on Google Scholar consisting different keywords relevant to the topic, “A study on the Evolution of digital marketing”. These multiple keywords are: “Online Shopping”, “Business to Business”, “Business to Consumer” “Digital marketing”, “Traditional Marketing”, “Digital marketing Trends” and “SWOT analysis”. The article has been developed through the thorough analysis and study of the articles derived out of these keywords to identify the gap in detail.

Table 1: The table represents studies on keywords conducted on the multiple publications by authors.

S. No	Area	Contribution	Authors
1	Online Shopping	Initially people had the opportunity to interact and extract maximum benefits over internet but not all were lucky enough to have the privilege to access internet which led for innovation in technology and technology became a boon.	Lissitsa, S., & Kol, O. (2016). [7]
2	Digital marketing	Covid-19 introduced an out of the ordinary modus operandi for businesses to shift from physical to digital sales techniques. Lockdowns, quarantines, Containment zone rules surged advertising, promotion and trading needs over e commerce platforms.	Alshaketheep, I., Salah, A., Alomari, M., Khaled, S., & Jray. (2020). [8]
3		Business aims return on investment, reaches wide range of consumers through digital marketing, to understand competitors pricing strategies.	Brosan, F. (2012). [9]

	Business to Business	Competition paved the way for low priced products on e-commerce websites than the local shops or malls.	
4	Business to Consumer	Digitalization attracts consumers in an impeccable way. Consumer is the King, who chooses, decides and buys. Marketers provide every commodity in a customized form to fulfil each and every want of consumer. Advertisements and promotions influence consumers to purchase products from their preferred place with flexible internet facility that runs 24*7	Hamdani, N. A., Muladi, R., & Maulani. (2022). [10]
5	Digital Marketing Trends	Digitalization is playing a tug of war with the current marketing activities followed in legacy system. It takes some time for people to digest the fact that technological changes have led for the physical marketing and shopping experiences to be just one-click away at the fingertip.	Reddy, V., & Neeraja, M. (2016). [11]
6	SWOT Analysis	Digital marketing has many constraints and challenges that are linked with budget, time, costs, and failure. Strengths and opportunities are vivid that could fetch the marketers maximized profits, increased sales and return on investments. SWOT Analysis helps to identify the future aspects based on past trends in marketing.	Chaffey, D., & Bosomworth, D. (2013). [12]
7	Traditional Marketing	Traditional Marketing gave a real experience to the consumers, they could feel the goods with bare eyes, this helped them analyse the quality, worth and price. Digital marketing has helped marketers reach wide range of people, with fast and easy pace.	Salehi, M., Mirzaei, H., Aghaei, M., & Abyari, M. (2012). [13]

Within this frame of reference, digitalization has laid the groundwork for modern renovation of traditional marketing legacy system into a comprehensive digitalized marketing experience. Various promotional activities, advertisements, research and development, ecommerce activities digital transactions are being synchronised for the upcoming growth of factors such as returns and financial gains by boosting sales and productivity, which indirectly stands proportional to the brand value and goodwill of the firm. Thus, the future beholds within extraneous transformational surge in the technology and digital experience, which could as well be a reason for the implementation of another reformation in latest technological innovation, a new phase, for the only reason that is, 'higher the goodwill of the company, the greater investment opportunities'. The Government of India has been supporting digitalization through initiatives such as social media applications that support people of India living in abroad, application that provides SMS based on climatic condition and forecast of weather, facilities like Aadhaar card, PAN card could be availed by citizens of India [14]. Thus, digital transformation has metamorphosed the structure of marketing by bringing in a completely divergent mechanism of marketing.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

Multiple objectives have been set for the study to be conducted. Evolution of digital marketing has been a subject of debate in the present era. Here are the main objectives of the study:

1. To understand the origination of digital marketing
2. To study the present and COVID-19 scenario of digital marketing
3. To anticipate the future for digital marketing
4. To review various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of digital marketing

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :

For the successful study on the evolution of digital marketing, a multitude of secondary sources have been referred and analysed to pen down this article on, 'The Evolution of digital marketing'. The semi-systematic literature review has been performed by discovering diverse published articles on ResearchGate, Springer, Google Scholar, Srinivas Publications, SSRN and many other similar websites.

Therefore, these various secondary sources of evidence have been a pillar of support for the study to be conducted and the paper to be written on, “The Evolution of Digital marketing”.

5. DIGITAL MARKETING :

Internet is evolving in a very quick pace [15]. Digital marketing is defined as the ritual of promotion and advertising of various products and services creatively, in a unique manner through multiple distribution channels which act as medium between marketers and consumers. The base for digital marketing is cost-cutting and time-bound activity. The goal of digital marketing is to convert leads into strong loyal customers and then to preserve their upcoming needs and customize products and services as per their choice [16]. Thus businesses adapt modern form of marketing through digital marketing with tools that help them market to expand and reach the target audience [17]. Every human being is connected to each other through internet. Social media applications like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and many others have been helping marketers reach customers quickly [18]. The early times where only rich and efficient men could use the internet does not exist any longer. Currently, every common man has access to internet [19]. Marketing in another way means that a marketer satisfies the needs and wants of a customer through their products and services that meet the requirement of customer [20].

5.1. Transformation of Traditional to Digital Marketing:

The term of digital marketing was primarily coined in 1980 by the company by the name, 'Channel erstwhile Soft Ad Group' that advertised in digital form that then gave rise to various promotional activates via digitalized form, later in 1981 for the first time, personal computer was introduced by the company IBM after which every other firms, businesses and households began to opt for computers. It was in the later years starting from 1990, everyone started using the term digital marketing and by the year 1995, 16 million people where already the users of internet around the world, which then in 2002 was increased to around 600 million and the time duration of Americans using internet was increased from half an hour to approximately 11 hours per day. Mainly due to the slow speed and low access facility to internet in every household region, people faced obstacles to use internet conveniently. The cost of internet access also was high, the middle-income earning people could not afford internet due to which the fame of digital marketing took a while to spread across the globe from America to every part of the world. The actual importance of internet was formed in the year 2004 when Mark Zuckerberg founded the software company Facebook with its application that united people from every corner of the world, simultaneously Gmail was introduced as the hub for sending and receiving letters digitally rather than in physical form. It was in 2006, Twitter, another social media application competing Facebook came into existence [21]. As an impact of digital marketing, in India the internet was introduced in the mid-year 1995, which led for the transformation of traditional form of business dealings into digital form. It was later in the year 1980, the marketing strategies were modernized and brought in the form of digital marketing from traditional form [22].

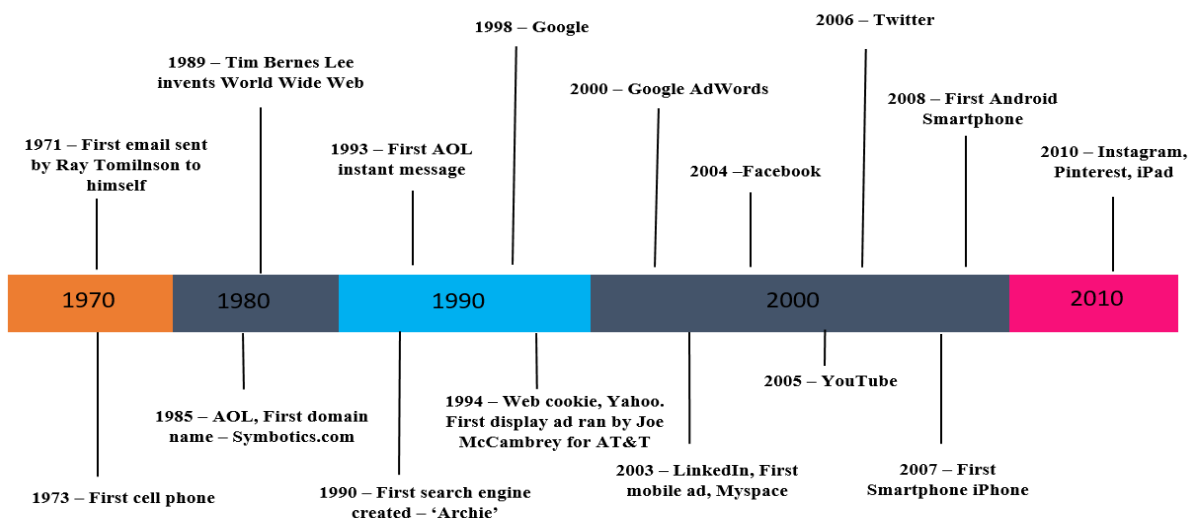


Fig. 1: Growth of various digitally based solutions and social media applications

Source: Kamal, Y. (2016). [21]

5.2. Digital marketing at-the-moment:

Traditional marketing expected marketers to be proficient in 4P's Place, Price, Promotion and Product. Thus, digitalization has brought a set of transformation [23]. Business run on models that emphasize on business to consumers and business to business [24]. Digital marketing is growing in a faster pace. Every company, social media application, software and technological tools and robots are competing with each other to do better than each other. This has totally transformed people's thinking from the real world to virtual world. Reformulation in mechanisms are occurring, that shape the marketing experience of both marketers and customers [25]. Advertising of various products, services, brands have witnessed a drastic change [26]. Currently, the total number of internet users have increased to 400 million as on 2019, which is 10% add-on to that of the previous year. However, the number of mobile phone users has increased to 2.5% compared to that of previous year. The social media users globally are around 4 billion which is around 10% hike as compared to 2018. The greatest increase in the users was in the category of mobile phone users, with around 4 billion users around the world. This is an opportunity for marketers to reach this number of mobile device users to target them for selling and advertising any new products or services or re-launch outdated products with new ideas and research and developments [27]. Internet has helped for the smooth flow of communication and various channels of sales has been combined into one main platform through internet [28]. Managing business is a roller coaster. Marketers overcome various hurdles to think out-of-the-box and implement unique ideas from time to time [29]. It is filled with ups and downs. Technological transformation has paved the way for a smooth flow to an unknown spot with the magnificent discovery of internet [30].

5.3 Digital marketing during Covid-19:

Digital marketing crossed the booming stage mainly during COVID-19 period. Through technological medium, healthcare sectors, utilised marketing tools and ideas to advertise the hospital brand name, their services, the professional services and doctors they provide. They even attracted patients, expanded the business strength, took constant care of patient loyalty by gaining their trust. They provided many benefits to patients to provide positive reviews regarding their experience in the hospital and the services they offer [31]. While people were stuck at their homes during COVID times, digital marketing introduced work from home option due to which employees feel cared and safe working from home. This has been a common scenario during pandemic times [32]. Marketers suffered a huge loss as they incurred loss, this encouraged them to crawl open another source of reaching the customers through digital platforms of marketing. Marketers sold out most of their stocks on e-commerce websites and applications by showing attractive advertisements, providing home-delivery service, fast delivery service, coupons, offers and discounts [33]. Evolution of digital marketing during pandemic was a great opportunity for small and medium scale enterprise marketers to reach out their goods and services generated within India to the customers. The power of marketing on digital platforms can fetch the marketers extra benefits such as hike in sales, expended branches of opportunities to promote and advertise [34]. Businesses that converted solely from traditional to digital followed internet marketing. Marketers learnt that customers search for commodities online [35]. Travel and tourism, physical exposure to shopping from shops, retail outlets, and malls were not possible due to lockdowns and quarantines, digital marketing built a bridge between marketers and customers. This helped the marketers to expand their business and customers to buy products for cheaper prices [36]. Small and Medium enterprises have extracted maximum benefits from digital marketing and social media platforms. They have supplied their products to customers with the help of various digital tools. Tourism had been blocked during peak times of COVID, but as soon as the pandemic subsided, the companies, travel agencies advertised the safest and most luxurious hubs and locations through-out the world for people to visit and travel to explore. This is another instance where digital marketing proved to be a right source of a tool for marketers and customers for the best value [37].

5.4. Digital marketing in the years to come:

Day to day lives of marketers is challenging to be creative, unique in order to attract customers. Technology is that medium that unites marketers and consumers. Earlier through telegraphs, People used to exchange codes that acted like electronic marketing, later with the introduction of internet, televisions and electronic gadgets, marketing developed. Digital marketing is helping those people who cannot reach market physically due to various reasons such as health issues, busy day to day lives,

location constraints. Thus, digital marketing and e-commerce platforms unite marketers and consumers, thus transfer of goods and services happen with a one-click of purchase and payment online [38]. Government of India has been laying the foundation for the upcoming growth of digital India by various initiatives like Digital India, E-market and many other. India beholds a huge portfolio basket consisting of different categories of marketers, businessmen, e-commerce markets. In the upcoming year by 2025, India is anticipated to achieve hike in e-commerce revenue to cross 120 billion target of 2020, thus to be the greatest user of internet compared to the whole world. India is anticipated to become a trillion-dollar economy on a digitalised surface. It is expected for various sectors like fashion, tourism and travels, hotel management, start-ups to see a surge from slow-pace to growing trend again [39]. The future beholds numerous opportunities for a lay man to explore the internet and the things he could do to entertainment industry, earlier people would work as an actor to become famous but currently, people become content creators, publish videos related to general knowledge, content, comedy, humour and such other and become famous just through internet [40].

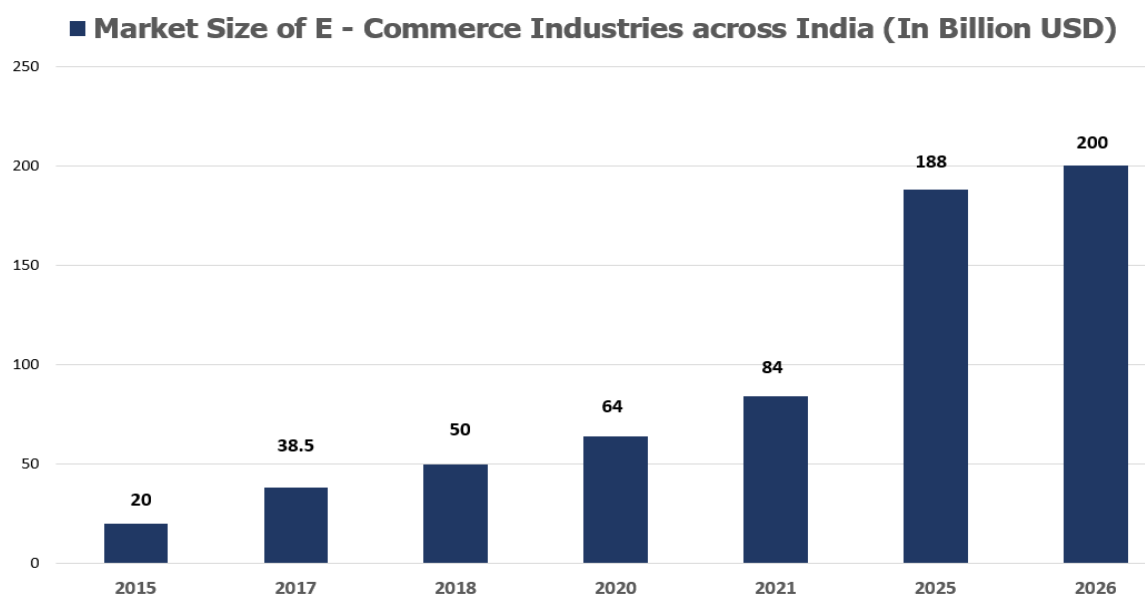


Fig. 2: E-commerce Market size across India (in Billion USD) and predictions for 2025 - 2026

Source: Nougaraahiya, S., Shetty, G., & Mandloi, D. (2021). [39]

6. SWOT ANALYSIS :

Customers purchase goods based on the level of impact the advertisement has on their mental-decision making capacity [41]. Digital marketing involves within itself many different strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that could be positive as well as negative. One among many challenges faced is in farming sector, due to legacy system of working, farmers are unable to upgrade to new technological approaches of farming [42]. Whereas, the maximum contribution in marketing and selling of goods and services in India belongs to retail sector, due to digital marketing, they offer around 10% of their share in the Gross Domestic Product [43]. For every business to advertise their assets through online marketing, various tools are very much necessary. Applications and social media are such main tools that bridge the gap between marketing and marketers to promote any kind of products through internet [44]. This enables customers to feel the luxurious treatment offered by marketers that induces positive impression in their neuron system and influences them to buy attractively advertised goods [45]. Understanding each one of them in a systematic way is considered value-driven. Below mentioned are the different SWOT analysis study conducted on the research topic, “Evolution of Digital Marketing”.

Table 2: The table shows SWOT analysis for Digital Marketing.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
➤ Marketers target larger audiences	➤ Diverts youth towards unhealthy contents
➤ Increased competition	➤ Leads to prohibited websites like Dark web

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Wider edge for research and developments ➤ Wide scope for literature review and innovation ➤ Hope for marketers during pandemic and lockdowns to trade on digital platforms ➤ Scope for faster network and internet speed ➤ Low cost and increased profit ➤ Global reach of products / services and brands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Traps into involving in illegal activities ➤ Increases scams / phishing activities ➤ Higher risky activities ➤ Hackers hack the access of common man ➤ Data breach due to technology loopholes ➤ Network issues, server down leads to millions of losses to businesses ➤ Lack of network in rural areas ➤ Fake / hoax messages leads to trust issues among people
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Motivates youngsters to start business and become entrepreneurs ➤ Renders information in just a single click ➤ Alternative for purchasing products online due to competition for customers ➤ Low cost products due to heavy competition ➤ Opportunity for introverts to explore talents into better world ➤ Helps to forecast future ➤ Better connectivity ➤ Agile and time friendly ➤ Accessible without physical presence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Negative health impacts on users of electronic devices ➤ Technology / ideas get easily outdated due to trends in the market ➤ Lack of face to face interaction between humans ➤ Increased cyber attacks ➤ Lack of privacy for human data on internet ➤ Replenishes social life and increases internet addiction ➤ New National rules that impact online business ➤ Lack of knowledge of laws and compliance policies

Source: Author

7. FINDINGS :

Depending on the researches, papers reviewed above, below mentioned findings are listed out:

- (1) Discovery of technology has led for the invention of digital marketing.
- (2) Marketers invented conversion of traditional marketing into digitalised platforms.
- (3) Digital marketing has contributed to the globalisation of Indian economy.
- (4) It has also helped the booming of investments into Indian sectors from foreign investors and financial institutions.
- (5) Competition among digital marketers has lowered the cost of products leading to increased sales and higher revenue growth.
- (6) Digitalisation has motivated many unemployed youngsters to start their own businesses in the form of start-ups.
- (7) In future decades, digital marketing is going to be the main medium of communication.
- (8) Digital marketing has greater scope in the industry leading to boom in IT industries and technological sectors.
- (9) Government of India motivates people to digitize the documents and use digital platforms and UPI payments.
- (10) Invention of digital marketing has helped marketers during pandemic to reach the customers.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS :

Findings mentioned above through the secondary study has encouraged for the below mentioned recommendations by the author to contribute further for the development of digital marketing study:

- (1) For hassle-free smooth functioning of supply chain in the market, marketers must encourage customers to provide reviews to improve the service rigorously.
- (2) Marketing in the digital form is the upcoming future, unemployed individuals must be encouraged to think unique and implement their business ideas. This would provide employment to large section of the society.
- (3) Government must implement strong ecosystem of rules and compliance to stop scammers from attacking websites and public information for the safety of public.

- (4) Parents must keep an eye on their children's web-activities and marketers must enable safe search in each and every websites and applications.
- (5) Proper knowledge must be transferred to people unfamiliar with operating electronic devices. This enables them to use net banking facilities and utilise UPI payments without actually involving in cash transactions.

9. CONCLUSION :

The study on Evolution of digital marketing has mainly focused on the growth of digital marketing from traditional marketing, the various causes and inventions that led for the digitalization of traditional form of marketing, the benefits derived from marketers during pandemic, the role digitalization has played to unite marketers and customers has been thoroughly studied. This paper also has been written by studying various articles on the current scenario of the digital marketing and the various prospects the future holds for both marketers and customers to make use of the tools, strategies and values derived out of digitalization on the internet basis. Therefore, this paper has been successful in analysing and studying by referring different papers for understanding the entire feature, advantages, disadvantages, opportunities and threats that digital marketing holds for the upcoming generation of users. This paper is a ready manual for any researcher, students or readers to study the past, present and future of digital marketing and the performance of digitalization during COVID-19 pandemic situation.

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