

TRENDS IN CELEBRITY BRAND ENDORSEMENTS ON INDIAN TELEVISION

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ABSTRACT

There has been a tremendous growth in the impact of Television (TV) as a source of revenue for advertisers around the world. As shown by various recent reports, TV has emerged as one of the most effective media for popularising brands owing to its wide reach. Purchasing power of people in most countries including India is moving in an upward direction and this trend is expected to continue in the next few years. Both men and women are no longer averse to buying branded products and services endorsed by well-known celebrities and advertised through TV. The TV is no longer an idiot-box, and, with its 'audio-visual' feature, is enabling the aam aadmi (common man) to peep into the glamorous world of celebrities. Living a seemingly luxurious life as that of a celebrity is everybody's hidden desire, and by adopting the same product/service as endorsed by one's favourite celebrity, the consumers 'feel' like being in the same league as the celebrity. It is but obvious that marketing firms are aware of this inherent desire of people, and so, more and more Indian firms are competing to showcase their celebrity-endorsed brands on TV. This paper reviews the trends in Celebrity Brand Endorsements on Indian Television through advertisements featuring celebrities.

KEY WORDS: Brand, Celebrity, Endorsement, Television.

INTRODUCTION

Impact of Celebrities on Consumers Worldwide

Celebrity endorsement may not be as effective as many believe, and in some major western markets, has no strong influence on a consumer to make a purchase, according to a poll conducted by GMI Inc., the world's leading provider of global online market research services and software (Couzens and Ablett, 2005). The effectiveness of Celebrity endorsement in promoting brands varies across the globe, reveals the research. Western nations were most

indifferent to the use of Celebrities in advertising. In the US, 79% of respondents said that Celebrity endorsement does not have any effect on how valuable they think a product is and only 13% thought that it made a product more valuable. 79% of German and 71% of French and British also said Celebrity endorsement did not work for them. In China and Japan, however, there is a stark contrast. In Japan, 60% of respondents think that the use of Celebrities in advertising makes a product more valuable and a similar number of respondents in China (52%) and in Russia (58%) agreed. The GMI poll also found that Celebrity endorsement was rated below other techniques (like free samples, word-of-mouth, test-runs, etc.) to influence the purchasing decision of consumers. The country which most valued Celebrity endorsement was Russia with 12% of respondents claiming it influenced their buying decisions, making it the third most popular form of promotion there after free samples (46%) and word-of-mouth promotion (30%).

Global media can make global stars, but it does not mean they translate into universal marketing assets that can transform any brand's value and market share in any country anywhere. Worldwide, people are becoming more sophisticated consumers who are less ready to accept simple, uniform marketing messages. Very strong indifference to the power of the Celebrity in some western markets may even point to how overt Celebrity endorsement may be working in the reverse, turning consumers away from the very products being endorsed and so having a negative impact.

The use of a Celebrity is one of the most successful ways of gaining the consumer's attention and getting him or her to infer the right message in a limited amount of space and time. Celebrities are used by marketers to build their brands. Branded products are successful because consumers prefer them to 'ordinary' unbranded products. In addition to the psychological factors, brands give consumers the means whereby they can make choices and judgements. The secret to successful branding is to influence the decisions, i.e. the way consumers perceive the product, and brands can affect the minds of the consumers by appealing to the information acquired and analysed. And this is what a Celebrity does. He/she tries to manipulate the purchase behavioural intention of a customer by promoting the endorsed brand. Friedman and Friedman (1979) suggested that the promotion of branded luxury goods by Celebrity endorsers would lead to a significantly more positive purchase intention than advertisements using an "expert" or "typical consumer" endorser. Further, in a study concerning adolescents, Bush, et al. (2004) advocate that Celebrity sports athletes have a positive influence on adolescents' favourable word-of-mouth and brand loyalty. Though studies are in disagreement that whether it is the physical attractiveness of the Celebrities or perceived expertise that affect purchase intentions, they broadly converge in suggesting that use of Celebrities in brand endorsements resulted in stronger purchase intention.

The present paper highlights the trends in Celebrity Brand Endorsements on Indian Television.

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(A) Volume Growth in Celebrity Endorsement on TV (2003-07)

Celebrity endorsement on TV saw a whopping growth of six times during 2007 over 2003 (Fig.1). The figure shows that since 2003, there has been a consistent increase in the number of TV advertisements showing celebrity-endorsed brands. Growth of Indian TV-owned households owing to growing incomes is a big factor supporting this trend.

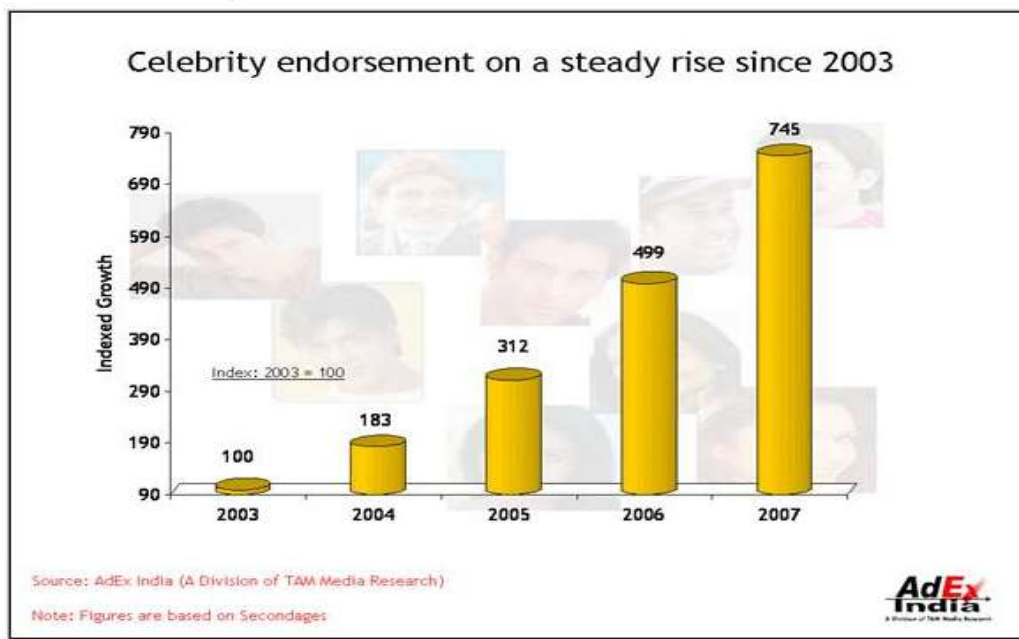


Fig.1

(B) Celebrity Endorsement on TV by Profession (2003-12)

India is a land of three C's – Cinema, Cricket and Curry. The citizens just love their film and sports stars and would go to any extent to show their support for their favourite celebrity. India is amongst the biggest producers of films in the world and many superstars like Amitabh Bachchan, Shahrukh Khan, Kareena Kapoor, Aishwarya Rai and many more are the heart-throbs of many a Indian. Film actors and actresses have always held the majority share of celebrity endorsements on TV as shown in Table-1. Sports persons are another big group of endorsers on Indian TV. This group mainly comprises of Indian cricket team members who have proved their mettle on the global cricketing scene. The top cricket stars who have got a huge fan following are Sachin Tendulkar, M. S. Dhoni, Virat Kohli and others. Other games like tennis (Sania Mirza), badminton (Saina Nehwal) and chess (Viswanathan Anand) also feature in some TV advertisements promoting some or the other brand.

Marketing firms, both MNC and Indian, are well aware of the kind of excitement and obsession generated by these celebrities and are forever ready to sign them. These firms sincerely believe that celebrity stars would definitely propel their respective brands towards the top by attracting hordes of customers. TV actors and actresses are also sometimes roped in by firms but their numbers are negligible as shown by Table-1. Their fan following is mainly confined to the Indian housewives who are glued to daily family soaps whenever they find any free time from their household chores. They consider the protagonist in any popular serial (like Shweta Tiwari in *Kasauti Zindagi Kay*) as one amongst them and are prepared to spend money on branded products made popular by these TV stars.

Table-1

Profession	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 ^a	2009	2010	2011 ^b	2012 ^c
Film Actress	21	70	80	78	31	34	43	44	39	40.8
Film Actor	44				50	47	37	41	37	42.4
Sports Person	27	24	17	16	14	16	15	12	19	11.7
TV Actor	1	6	4	6	3	1	2	1	2	1.6
TV Actress	7				2	2	2	1	2	1.6

^a Figures for 2008 are for H1 from January-June, 2008

Source:- http://www.tamindia.com/tamindia/Adex_News_TV.htm

^b Figures for 2011 are from January-September, 2011

^c Figures for 2012 are for Q1 from January-March, 2012

(C) Top Celebrities with Maximum number of Brands Endorsed on TV (2006-12)

Table-2 exhibits the trends of top Indian celebrities with maximum number of brands endorsed on TV between 2006 and 2012. The figure clearly shows that top movie stars (viz. Amitabh Bachchan, Shahrukh Khan, Kareena Kapoor and Katrina Kaif) and sports stars (viz. Sachin Tendulkar and M. S. Dhoni) rule the roost in the world of celebrity brand endorsements. There is only one TV star (Shweta Tiwari) who feature in this elite list of most popular celebrities.

Table-2

Rank	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011*	2012**
1	Amitabh Bachchan (26)	Shahrukh Khan (21)	Shahrukh Khan (21)	M S Dhoni (26)	M S Dhoni (28)	Shahrukh Khan (6)	Shahrukh Khan (7.7)
2	Shahrukh Khan (19)	Amitabh Bachchan (20)	M S Dhoni (20)	Shahrukh Khan (21)	Shahrukh Khan (23)	Katrina Kaif (5)	Saif Ali Khan (5.7)
3	Shweta Tiwari (18)	Shweta Tiwari (19)	Hrithik Roshan (12)	Kareena Kapoor (15)	Sachin Tendulkar (18)	Kareena Kapoor (5)	Katrina Kaif (4.5)
4	M S Dhoni (16)	Sachin Tendulkar (17)	Saif Ali Khan (11)	Sachin Tendulkar (15)	Amitabh Bachchan (13)	MS Dhoni (4)	Kajol (4.1)
5	Sachin Tendulkar (15)	Rahul Dravid (16)	Katrina Kaif (11)	Katrina Kaif (14)	Kareena Kapoor (13)	Sachin Tendulkar (4)	Abhishek Bachchan (3.8)

(For 2006-10, figures in brackets denote Number of Advertisers Endorsed by Celebrity on TV, while for 2011-12, figures in brackets denote Share % of Celebrity per Total Ad Volume on TV)

* Figures of 2011 are from January-September

** Figures of 2012 are for the first quarter (Q1) from January-March

Source:- http://www.tamindia.com/tamindia/Adex_News_TV.htm

If we take a look at Table-3 which lists the top 10 celebrity endorsers on TV during the year 2011, we find that only two are from the sporting world (cricket). Sachin Tendulkar – the Little Master, and M. S. Dhoni – the Indian Cricket Team Captain, command the highest fan following amid cricket lovers, and naturally, they are the favourites of marketing firms.

Table-3

Rank	2011 (Jan-Sep)	Rank	2011 (Jan-Sep)
1	Shahrukh Khan (6)	6	Abhishek Bachchan (3)
2	Katrina Kaif (5)	7	Amitabh Bachchan (3)
3	Kareena Kapoor (5)	8	Saif Ali Khan (3)
4	MS Dhoni (4)	9	Akshay Kumar (3)
5	Sachin Tendulkar (4)	10	Priyanka Chopra (2)

(Figures in brackets denote Share % of Celebrity per Total Ad Volume on TV)

Source:- http://www.tamindia.com/tamindia/Adex_News_TV.htm

(D) Top 10 Product and Service Categories in Celebrity Endorsement on TV

Table-4 shows the top 10 product and service categories endorsed by celebrities on TV between 2006 and 2010 (figures for 2007 are not included for lack of availability). Daily-use FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) items like shampoos, toilet soaps, fairness creams, washing powder, hair oils and tooth pastes are the ones for which marketing firms hire the services of one or the other celebrity in order to popularise the product/service. As more and more villages and small towns of India get electrified, the *nouveau riche* are buying TV for their households and eagerly watch their beloved stars publicising their favourite brands. Also, new-age products like cellular phones, cellular phone services and DTH (Direct-To-Home) services have also found takers in recent years. Celebrities have played a huge role in making these ‘prestige’ items admirable by millions.

Table-4

Rank	2006	2008	2009	2010
1	Aerated Soft Drinks	Cellular Phone Service	Cellular Phone Service	Shampoos
2	Shampoos	Toilet Soaps	Shampoos	Toilet Soaps
3	Social Advertisements	Aerated Soft Drinks	Toilet Soaps	Cellular Phone Service
4	Toilet Soaps	Shampoos	Aerated Soft Drinks	Aerated Soft Drinks
5	Biscuits	Two Wheelers	DTH Service Providers	Fairness Creams
6	Hair Dyes	DTH Service Providers	Two Wheelers	Cellular Phones
7	Cars/Jeeps	Liquor	Milk Beverages	Branded Jewellery
8	Two Wheelers	Milk Beverages	Biscuits	DTH Service Providers
9	Hair Oils	Cellular Phones	Social Advertisements	Washing Powders/Liquids
10	Tooth Pastes	Biscuits	Fairness Creams	Televisions

(Ranks based on secondages)

Source:- http://www.tamindia.com/tamindia/Adex_News_TV.htm

(E) Top 10 Brands Endorsed by Celebrities on TV (2008-11)

Table-5 gives the ranks of top 10 brands endorsed by celebrities on TV during the last 4 years viz. 2008-2011. As discussed in the last section, the most popular brands represent the most popular products and services endorsed by celebrities (like Colgate Max Fresh Gel for Toothpaste, Idea 3G and Idea Cellular for Cellular Phone Service, Vivel Satin Soft and Santoor Sandal and Turmeric for Toilet Soap, Pantene for Shampoo, etc.).

Table-5

Rank	2008	2009	2010	2011*
1	Airtel Cellular Phone Service	Clinic All Clear Tech Soft	Lux Toilet Soap	Colgate Max Fresh Gel
2	Pepsi	Airtel Cellular Phone Service	Idea Cellular	Idea 3G
3	Airtel-Nokia	Airtel Digital TV	Airtel Cellular Phone Service	Idea Cellular
4	Hero Honda Motorcycles	Idea Cellular	Clinic All Clear Dandruff	Vivel Satin Soft
5	Royal Stag Mega Music	Lux Toilet Soap	Panasonic Viera Flat-panel H	Pantene
6	Boost	Boost	Pantene Pro V Nourished Shine	Santoor Sandal and Turmeric
7	Idea Cellular	Lux Peach Cream	Wheel Active	Dish TV HD
8	LUX Strawberry Cream	BSNL-Corporate	Pepsi	Pepsi
9	Pantene Pro-V Shine	Coca Cola	Coca Cola	Lux Fresh Splash
10	Dish TV	Dish TV	Santoor Sandal and Turmeric	Wheel Active

(Ranks are based on secondages)

Source:- http://www.tamindia.com/tamindia/Adex_News_TV.htm

*Figures for 2011 are from January-September, 2011

(F) SELECT BRANDS ENDORSED BY CELEBRITIES

Select brands (Table-6) across different categories of products and services endorsed by Celebrities have been taken for the present research study. These are the top 10 brands (Table-5) endorsed by Celebrities on TV during January-September, 2011.

Table-6

Rank	Brand	Company	Product/Service Category	Current Celebrity Endorser(s)
1	Colgate Max Fresh Gel	Colgate Palmolive	Tooth Paste	Shahid Kapoor and Genelia D'souza, Virender Sehwag, Gautam Gambhir and Zaheer Khan
2	Idea 3G	Idea Cellular	Cellular Phone Service	Abhishek Bachchan
3	Idea Cellular	Idea Cellular	Cellular Phone Service	Abhishek Bachchan
4	Vivel Satin Soft	ITC	Toilet Soap	Kareena Kapoor
5	Pantene	Procter & Gamble	Shampoo	Shilpa Shetty
6	Santoor Sandal and Turmeric	Wipro	Toilet Soap	Saif Ali Khan
7	Dish TV HD	Zee Network	DTH Service Provider	Shahrukh Khan
8	Pepsi	Pepsico	Aerated Soft Drink	MS Dhoni, Virat Kohli, Suresh Raina and Ranbir Kapoor
9	Lux Fresh Splash	Hindustan Unilever (HUL)	Toilet Soap	Katrina Kaif
10	Wheel Active	Hindustan Unilever (HUL)	Washing Powder	Salman Khan and Prachi Desai

Source:- http://www.tamindia.com/tamindia/Adex_News_TV.htm

(G) SELECT PRODUCT/SERVICE CATEGORIES AND BRANDS IN CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS

Select products and services (Table-7) have been taken for the present study. These are the top 10 product and service (Table-4) categories endorsed by Celebrities on TV during 2010.

Table-7

S. No.	Product/Service Category	Brand	Celebrity Endorser
1	<i>Shampoos</i>	Head & Shoulders	Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor
		Pantene	Katrina Kaif, Shilpa Shetty and Malaika Arora
		Vivel Ultra Pro	Hrithik Roshan
		Clinic All Clear	Asin and Shahid Kapoor
		L'oreal	Sonam Kapoor
		Fiama Di Wills	Deepika Padukone
		Sunsilk	Priyanka Chopra
2	<i>Toilet Soaps</i>	Vivel	Kareena Kapoor
		Santoor	Saif Ali Khan
		Lux	Aishwarya Rai, Asin and Katrina Kaif
		Lifebuoy	Yuvraj Singh
3	<i>Cellular Phone Service</i>	Tata DoCoMo	Ranbir Kapoor
		Idea	Abhishek Bachchan
		BSNL	Deepika Padukone
		Aircel	M S Dhoni
		Airtel	A. R. Rehman, Madhavan, Vidya Balan, Sachin Tendulkar, Shahrukh Khan and Saina Nehwal
		Tata Indicom	Kajol, Irfan Pathan, Yusuf Pathan and Sania Mirza
		Reliance	Anushka Sharma and Hrithik Roshan
4	<i>Aerated Soft Drinks</i>	Mountain Dew	Salman Khan
		Pepsi	MS Dhoni, Virat Kohli, Suresh Raina and Ranbir Kapoor
		Coca Cola	Imran Khan, Sachin Tendulkar, Gautam Gambhir, Aamir Khan
		Limca	Kareena Kapoor, Deepika Padukone and Riya Sen
		7Up	Sharman Joshi
		Thums Up	Akshay Kumar and Mahesh Babu
		Fanta	Genelia D'souza
		Mirinda Orange	Asin
5	<i>Fairness Creams</i>	Fair & Lovely	Asin
		Fair & Handsome	Shahrukh Khan
		Garnier Light	Genelia D'souza
		Garnier Men's	John Abraham
		Olay Natural White	Katrina Kaif
		Pond's White Beauty	Priyanka Chopra
		L'oreal White Perfect	Sonam Kapoor
6	<i>Cellular Phones</i>	Nokia	Shahrukh Khan, Priyanka Chopra, Ranbir Kapoor
		Samsung	Aamir Khan
		LG	Abhay Deol, John Abraham and Genelia D'souza
		Sony Ericsson	Kareena Kapoor, Hrithik Roshan
		Motorola	Abhishek Bachchan
		Zen	Amitabh Bachchan
7	<i>Branded Jewellery</i>	Nakshatra	Katrina Kaif, Aishwarya Rai
		Tanishq	Asin, Amitabh Bachchan and Jaya Bachchan
		D'Damas	Sonakshi Sinha, Preity Zinta, Lara Dutta

		Asmi	Kajol
		Nirvana	Malaika Arora
		Gili	Bipasha Basu
		Kiah	Sushmita Sen
		Diya	Celina Jaitley
		Sangini	Salman Khan and Kareena Kapoor
		Adora	Suniel Shetty
		Geetanjali	Kareena Kapoor
8	<i>DTH Service Providers</i>	Dish TV	Shahrukh Khan
		Tata Sky	Aamir Khan
		Videocon d2h	Abhishek Bachchan
		Airtel Digital TV	A. R. Rahman, Saif Ali Khan, Kareena Kapoor, Vidya Balan, Madhavan, Zaheer Khan, Gautam Gambhir
		Reliance BIG TV	Hrithik Roshan
9	<i>Washing Powders/Liquids</i>	Active Wheel	Salman Khan and Perachi Desai
		Ujala	Sachin Tendulkar
		Surf Excel	Shabana Azmi
		Nirma	Sonali Bendre and Deepti Bhatnagar
10	<i>Televisions</i>	LG	Akshay Kumar, Yuvraj Singh
		Samsung	Abhinav Bindra
		Sony	M. S. Dhoni
		Panasonic	Ranbir Kapoor and Dia Mirza
		Toshiba	Sachin Tendulkar and Vidya Balan
		Philips	Sonam Kapoor
		BPL	Amitabh Bachchan

Source:- http://www.tamindia.com/tamindia/Adex_News_TV.htm

CONCLUSION

A simple way to beat the over-communicated atmosphere is to have a Celebrity endorse the brand i. e. the Celebrity appears in the advertisement featuring a particular branded product/service, saying that he/she uses and likes that product/service. Famous people are utilised by marketers for their communication messages. The endorsers can be from different fields, with fame as the only criterion. Most of the Celebrities are from the film and sports arena, as their popularity extends to relatively wider segments of the population. Celebrity endorsement serves the dual purpose of creating interest in the advertisements and overcoming the advertising clutter (Suresh, 2005). Competitors obviously cannot get the same Celebrity to endorse their brands. No wonder Celebrity endorsements are quite popular among advertisers and marketers.

Celebrities are developed to make money (Turner, et al., 2000). Media Entrepreneurs want Celebrities involved with their projects because they believe this will help them attract audiences, Film Producers use Stars as a means of attracting investment to their projects, Marketers use Celebrity endorsements as a means of profiling and branding their products, Television Programmes feature guest appearances from Celebrities to build their audiences and Sports Promoters use Celebrity athletes to attract media attention and increase the size of the gate (the number of people who go to watch a sports event or the amount of money people pay to watch it). Given the power of Celebrity and its attractiveness for millions of people, it seems highly likely that the role of famous people in promoting companies, products and services will grow and be one of the best ways of securing permission to communicate with customers (Pringle, 2004).

India, with an approximate 10% growth, will certainly be in the top 10 advertising markets in absolute dollar terms by 2015 (Sharma, 2009). In India, Celebrity endorsements are believed to be particularly useful as the average consumer reportedly identifies more strongly with Celebrities than in other countries. Filmstars and sports personalities (especially cricket players) are immensely popular among the masses. This has encouraged the widespread use of Celebrities in advertisements over the decades. And Television (TV) is the best vehicle to show such advertisements.

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