

# From the Desk of the Editor-in-Chief

The last thing Snapdeal expected when their brand ambassador spoke about the growing intolerance was to deal with a consumer backlash. Almost 91,000 customers have downgraded the Snapdeal application to one on a scale of five as per the news headlines of the various National newspapers and News channels. Businesses have long used celebrities to attract the attention of the potential customers, who are constantly being bombarded with commercials. Endorsement is a channel of Brand Communication in which a celebrity acts as the Brand's spokesperson and certifies the Brand's claim and position by extending his/her personality popularity or stature in the society. Several Brands have been extremely successful on account of the Brand endorsers. However, success is not an outcome every-time. Golfer Tiger Woods lost a bevy of brands after facing allegations of adultery a few years ago.

Now, when Snapdeal sidelined itself by saying that the remarks of Amir Khan were "in his personal Capacity", it becomes mandatory to think that any remark made in public needs to be evaluated for it is impacting millions. Actor Amir Khan's revelation that his wife Kiran Rao had suggested moving out of the country because of the rising levels of intolerance ripped open sentiments and became the biggest talking point on social media. It has led to a 'Hate' campaign across all social media platforms. So, how would this controversy impact the actor's brand equity? The major question which was looming in the minds of teeming Indians was...if adorable Khan is not safe then who is? How does he define safety? A nation which installed him as a hero and adorned him with admiration and respect was appalled at his statement. Khan, over the years has painstakingly projected himself as a sensitive and ethical entertainment brand through films like 3 Idiots and PK etc. Was it a farce? Education is growth of wisdom and a wise man is one who thinks about the outcome and implications of his/her words.

From time immemorial, this so called 'intolerance' has been in practice. 'Intolerance' is unwillingness to accept the existence of others. It has got nothing to do with religion, cast or creed. A person can be unwilling to tolerate the views, behavior or attitude of others without any rationale or logic. It is a mental block which has been into existence since the evolution of human life. If we screen the historic and religious scriptures, be it Hindu or any other, we find numerous instances where intolerance existed, such as between Duryodhan and the Pandavas; Bali and Sugreev; Aurangzeb and Dara Shikoh to name a few. However, the outcome of such intolerance gave sound lessons to humanity.

Celebrities should be selfless, secular and judicious as they carry the expectations of millions of people. A smart and occasional statement can save millions while an irresponsible statement which is biased and politically motivated can adversely impact and break the hearts of many.

The often quoted lines of the Great Poet, Rabindra Nath Tagore "Where the mind is without Fear and the Head is held high, where Knowledge is Free, where the world has not been broken up into Fragments of ..... Let my Country Awake." have immense depth and meaning and cannot be quoted lightly. Freedom of Expression no doubt is a Fundamental Right but accompanied with the duty of not making any such irresponsible controversial statements that they may trigger a storm of feelings of hatred or creates irreparable feelings of hurt amongst countrymen who have earlier looked upon celebrities with passion to an extent of hero worship and incarnation.

I have an ardent hope that you will enjoy reading all the articles in the current issue and will revert with your valuable comments.

Happy reading!

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