

Celebrity Endorsement in Tourism Advertisement: A Study of Gujarat Tourism

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ABSTRACT

Celebrity endorsements in the recent years have become a trend in the domain of advertisements. Advertisers, advertising agencies and even viewers somehow believe that celebrities are among the influential elements of the advertisement to persuade the mass and advertisements itself being a way to communicate with the mass about products, services, etc., are being used by both the central and state governments in India to advertise the tourism nationally and even internationally. Among several states, one such state is Gujarat. The unique and most important element of the Gujarat tourism advertisement campaign was the celebrity factor. The campaign being advertised by the Bollywood megastar Amitabh Bachchan made sure to steal the lights. The quantitative approach of content analysis will be followed to evaluate the objectives of the study. The research included the advertisements of Gujarat tourism available on YouTube page of Gujarat Tourism. Also research will tend to seek the reasons behind the effectiveness of the advertisement campaign and role of celebrity endorsement in it, and how the celebrity factor throughout the advertisement campaign is able to persuade and influence the public.

Keywords: Celebrity, Endorsement, Tourism, Advertisement, Gujarat.

INTRODUCTION

In this 21st century, advertisements have become a medium to persuade, to attract, to influence, to inform the mass or the audience. Advertisements are now not only used for promotion of products or the brands, etc., but they are now used for several purposes by several bodies or the institutions in a much broader sense. The states are also using advertisement as a medium to propagate and promote their tourism and heritage so as to attract tourists in the state respectively. Advertisements are among the most influential ways to leave imprint on the minds of people. What adds to the effectiveness of the advertisements is the "celebrity endorsement". Featuring of celebrities from different domains makes the advertisement more influential, effective, attractive and persuades the audience towards the product, service etc., that is being advertised. Gujarat is one such state to endorse celebrity in the advertisements of state tourism. The State's tourism advertisement campaign "Khushboo Gujarat ki" being endorsed by Bollywood celebrity Amitabh Bachchan is among the most effective, attractive state tourism advertisement.

Celebrity Endorsement

Among the several marketing techniques, the

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celebrity endorsement is among the most popular technique. Since the celebrity face in the advertisement makes it easy for the consumers to recognise the product and the popularity of the celebrity makes it easy for the advertiser to popularise the product, brand etc. as well. Celebrities are the iconic personalities to influence the target group.

Celebrity Endorsement in India

The reason why in India the celebrity endorsement is a powerful tool is that, the general tendency of the people is to follow the trend. People here believe more in idealising celebrities and following them. Consumers have perception that is something is endorsed by the celebrity they admire or follow then it is something genuine and superior. Majority of the people are driven more by celebrity faces like of film stars, politicians, sports persons rather than the product quality. Celebrities build the brand image.

Celebrity Endorsement in Tourism Advertisement

With the growing craze of the public for the celebrities and their popularity, India, being diverse in terms of culture, tourism, heritage etc. attracts the tourism. To attract and address the global as well as domestic tourists the Government of India initiated an advertisement campaign in 2002 "Incredible India". Later in 2008 the Ministry of Tourism launches a campaign endorsed by Bollywood celebrity Aamir Khan. This campaign was "Atithi Devo Bhava", this advertisement targeted the local population and educated them regarding the good behaviour and etiquettes towards the foreign tourists. After this,

Gujarat came up with advertisement campaign promoting the state tourism. The “Khushboo Gujarat ki” advertisement campaign was initiated in May 10 and it was finally launched in September 2011 on 31 TV channels on prime time slots prominently. Gujarat has always been an affluent state in terms of heritage, archaeological sites, ecology, wildlife, spiritual locations, etc. The only need was to attract the tourists towards the state but not only because of the spiritual sites. Because Gujarat is much more diverse in any terms than it seem to be. So, the need was to change the perception of not just the people of Gujarat but also of the tourists across the country and globe.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The research paper ‘A Study of Perception and Opinion on Gujarat Tourism Marketing’ by Permar, S.M. (2007) had findings that there should be revamping in the marketing strategy, the campaign should now come up with more creative and innovative thought process apart from the STAR factor in the advertisement. Advertisement should also promote the sports tourism, film tourism and regional food festival, after the Khushboo Gujarat Ki advertisement campaign there has been considerable rise in tourist’s footfall.

The research paper titled ‘Celebrity Endorsement as an Effective Tool for Destination Marketing among Occupation Groups in Bangalore’ by Jolly, R.M. and Mynavathi, L. (2013) had found that celebrity endorsement does not influence the respondents to visit the destinations but it influenced in getting attracted towards the destination. The respondents also responded that it is not necessary that is the advertisement is endorsed by the celebrity they will look up to product or service details. The celebrity endorsers are used to differentiate and position the service, products, etc. from the competitors.

The research article ‘Khushboo Gujarat Ki: Branding a Fragrance’ by Dhote, T. (2015) had analysed the various aspects of the Khushboo Gujarat ki advertisement campaign. The research gives the details of growth of tourism branding; competitive scenario; challenges faced for promoting tourism; the creative translation of Khushboo or the Fragrance in the advertisement campaign; the creative strategy behind the campaign; the phases of the advertisement campaign; and the launch of the advertisement campaign.

The book ‘Research Methodology: Methods and Technique’ by Kothari C.R. and Garg G. (2014) had extensive discussion on content analysis that

it consists of analysing the contents of documentary materials such as books, magazines, newspapers and the contents of all other verbal materials which can be either spoken or printed. Content-analysis prior to 1940’s was mostly quantitative analysis of documentary materials concerning certain characteristics that can be identified and counted but since 1950’s content-analysis is mostly qualitative analysis concerning the general import or message of the existing documents.

The research paper entitled ‘Content Analysis method- An introduction’ by Kuthiala B.K. in Media Mimansa July-September (2010) had a comprehensive discussion analyses content analysis is an important method of communication research to understand, describe, rectify and plan human communication. Today, content analysis has evolved as an important tool for evaluative media studies. Its applications are so widespread that many software packages have been developed to carry out the analysis of not only the textual content but also of visual content and meta-communication.

OBJECTIVES

1. To find the importance of celebrity endorsement in propagation of tourism in Gujarat state.
2. To analyse the impact on the views from the number of likes and dislikes on the selected advertisements available on official Gujarat Tourism channel on YouTube.

HYPOTHESIS

1. Advertisement campaign being endorsed by the celebrity has made it more popular and presence of Amitabh Bachchan adds more value to the advertisements.
2. The advertisement succeeds in delivering the proper content through the advertisements and gives a reason to visit Gujarat in a different way all the time
3. Celebrity endorsement distinguished the campaign from other state tourism campaign

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for this research by the researcher is the content analysis of the Gujarat tourism advertisements endorsed by Amitabh Bachchan. The method used to select advertisements is viewership of the advertisement available in YouTube. The content are analysed with different parameter of audio visual production, five most viewed

advertisements of Gujarat tourism are being selected for content analysis.

ANALYSIS

Advertisement 1: Rann Utsav Hindi

This advertisement of 40 seconds was uploaded on Gujarat tourism's YouTube handle on 29 December 2015. The advertisement was shot in Rann of Kutch. It features Amitabh Bachchan, and people in the traditional Gujarati costumes. It tends to invite the tourists for the Rann Utsav. The beautiful description of Rann of Kutch by Amitabh Bachchan steals all the lights from very beginning. From beginning to end the advertisement holds the viewers. The advertisement begins with the ship of desert and then takes the tour of desert. Not only the desert but in the 40 seconds the advertisement aims at covering all the things that a tourist will enjoy and the things that will fascinate the tourists to visit Kutch. The way the advertisement is driven by the narration of Amitabh Bachchan adds the value to the advertisement. Also the advertisement tries to change the perception of people regarding the desert. The advertisement does not divert from the theme "Khushboo Gujarat ki" and concluding with "Kuch Din To Guzaro Gujarat Mein" the advertisement reinforces the tourists to visit Kutch. This advertisement has 184,912 views, 15 likes and 2 dislikes.

Advertisement 2: Gujarat - Wild Ass Sanctuary

In this advertisement Amitabh Bachchan is seen as a tourist visiting Wild Ass Sanctuary in Gujarat. Donkeys are considered as the useless animals, and in general people use it as a slang or an insult but Amitabh Bachchan in this advertisement gives people a reason that why they should feel good if someone refer them as donkey next time because this Sanctuary in Gujarat is home to more than 4500 wild ass. These wild ass are found nowhere except this Wild Ass Sanctuary of Gujarat, these are not those dumb donkeys we see, these wild ass can run with a speed of 70 km/h. What makes the viewers watch the whole advertisement are the beautifully captured shots of the wild ass running in the desert, no people around, just the pleasing beauty of wild ass and the infinitely stretched land. The transition from one shot to another continues with the beauty of wild ass and the impactful voice of Amitabh Bachchan overpowers the calmness of the scene. This video uploaded on 12 January 2015 has 92,309 views with 486 likes and 49 dislikes.

Advertisement 3: Ambaji Mata Temple - Shakti Peeth of India

This advertisement targets all the devotees around. The advertisement has the sense of spirituality; Amitabh Bachchan's dialogues are so appealing that they directly hit the viewers. Shot in the Ambaji mata temple, Amitabh Bachchan takes a tour of temple, offers prayer and gives a reason to all the devotees to visit the temple. The essence of devotion continues throughout the advertisement; the devotional environment, devotees in the frame are so well complimented by the background score of the advertisement. Uploaded on 28 September 2012, this advertisement has 30,069 views, 162 likes and 4 dislikes.

Advertisement 3: Uttarayan - Kite Festival (Hindi)

This advertisement is of joy, of celebration, this advertisement is of Kite festival. The whole festive vibe of the advertisement fascinates the viewers. The way advertisement begins with a shot of thread rill and kites flying in the sky and the way Amitabh Bachchan drives the charm of this festival, the mood of the people flying kites, the enthusiasm of flying kites, the colourful and varied kites in the sky itself gives the audience kite festival goals. The rhythm in the background prevents the viewer from getting bored. The celebration of land in the honour of sky is how beautifully Amitabh Bachchan has described kite festival. The 44 second advertisement makes viewer feel that they are actually part of this festival. Uploaded on 7 January 2014, this advertisement has 20,308 views, 34 likes and 3 dislikes.

Advertisement 5: Ahmedabad - Gujarat Ka Dil (Hindi)

No matter anyone have visited Ahmedabad or not, this advertisement will give the glimpse of Ahmedabad. In the 60 seconds one will get the whole idea about Ahmedabad. What tourists seek in tourists places are the natural beauty, good authentic food, shopping, cultural heritage and peace and this is all what Ahmedabad tends to offer in the advertisement. More than that advertisement has the sense of unity and the sense of being rooted with the culture. Ahmedabad has been portrayed as the heart of Gujarat, despite Gandhinagar being State capital. The advertisement starts with the opening of the doors of a temple and ends at the Mosque. Another approach to attract tourists is dissolving communal differences. Apart from the thought process, the proper execution and various shots have together made an effort to leave impact on the viewers. Uploaded on 29 September 2014 this advertisement has 18,721 likes and 138 dislikes.

CONCLUSION

Gujarat tourism campaign featuring Amitabh Bachchan has been a successful step. Since after this, Gujarat tourism has seen rise in tourists. With this research it can be concluded that yes Amitabh Bachchan being the face of Gujarat Tourism attracted tourists. Every advertisement was centrally based on the theme "Khushboo Gujarat Ki" and the tagline and way each advertisement concluded was with "Kuch Din To Guzaro Gujarat Mein". Of course, the star factor of the advertisement has led to the popularity of the advertisement. Since, Amitabh Bachchan is the dynamic face of the Bollywood industry and the way he carries himself, he owns the advertisement. Amitabh Bachchan is seen dignifying the Gujarat tourism advertisements. And also advertisers made sure that with the campaign endorsed by Amitabh Bachchan people should be able to recognise and distinguish the Gujarat tourism advertisements. It is secondary that whether after watching the advertisement people actually visited Gujarat or not, but at least the presence of Amitabh Bachchan with the same theme presented with different aspects and objectives made it easier for the viewers, tourist to distinguish Gujarat tourism advertisement campaign from the other state tourism campaigns. No doubt this celebrity factor has of course led to the growth of tourism industry in Gujarat, but only presence of the celebrity is not enough, the campaign should now broaden the domains covered by the advertisements. There should be novelty, creativity and innovation in

the thought process of the storyline of the advertisement.

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