

# CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT AS A STIMULUS IN TOURISM ADVERTISEMENT RECALL – AN ANALYTICAL STUDY IN MUMBAI, INDIA

Dr.B.V.Jayanthi  
Associate Professor,  
ITM Business School, Navi Mumbai

Dr.Roopam Gosain  
Associate Professor  
ITM Business School, Navi Mumbai

**Abstract:** In this ad cluttered world, every marketer tries to attract the attention of his potential audiences. The customer experience must be of vital importance to the marketers or else the installation of ad blockers will rise on the digital media. Traditionally TV and the print media have dominated the Indian scenario. According to 3M report, 14 to 15 percent of today's advertising goes into digital mode of marketing. From the consumer's point of view, one third of his time is spent on digital media. As far as the younger audience's ad viewing toes, it is two thirds of their time on digital world and its experiences. It is now the time for the Indian tourism sector to concentrate on the experience and emotions of the tourists than on the other related nuances. With the beautiful Priyanka Chopra roped into the Awesome Assam Campaign, one is reminded of the earlier occasions where many other celebrities also featured in attracting the tourists to different Indian destinations. That gives rise to an interesting question as to whether a celebrity is significant in a tourism ad for a better ad recall. This study, with cross tabulation and one way ANOVA, is a humble effort to find out answers to the critical question on the relationship between the celebrity endorsement and ad recall

**(Keywords:** *Ad recall, celebrity endorsement, tourism marketing, verbal and visual brand promise*)

## Introduction

An exceptional number of people are travelling around the world and the figures are only expected to soar. This is not the case with the domestic travellers, the number is growing tremendously with international arrivals as well. The tourism industry has become a priority for countries around the world, making real difference in the lives of people by driving growth, creating jobs and fostering development and tolerance.

In the recent years India has stupendously improved its travel tourism competitiveness, rising from 65<sup>th</sup> position in 2013 to 40<sup>th</sup> position in the "Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017". India has created a demand and an adequate supply for its travel and tourism industry.

Already bestowed with spectacular natural beauty and a one of its kind of cultural heritage and diversity, India has become a hot spot for tourists, creating unique experiences for travellers. India's vast cultural and natural resources and the flora and fauna are the key drivers for tourism. With so many excellent destinations to visit the Indian tourism is finding ways i.e., how destinations could be fixed in the minds of the prospective tourists with myriad ways of promoting the destination.

Today with the integration of technology, the ability to crowdsource and the immediate uploading and sharing of images and videos should be the advantage the destination must think of. The incredible India campaign launched 15 years ago was extremely successful in raising awareness about India as a preferred destination. The campaign was beautiful, and the slogan is memorable.

India has everything, from a very long coastline of approximately 700Km, rain forests, deserts and snow capped mountains to age old temples, mosques, wildlife, tribal habitation and a multicultural population. India's 29 states are essentially 29 small countries each with its own set of customs, languages, culture, traditions and a way of life which surely is a crowd puller.

## Celebrity Endorsements

Every product needs to be taken to the consumer. Advertising strategies aim to persuade the consumer. Celebrity endorsed advertising has become an important element of the advertising strategy. An advertisement that uses celebrity endorsement enjoys high recognition among the consumers (2013). Today companies spend a huge amount of money to get celebrities to endorse their products and services. This strategy is not new, long back in 1893, actress Lillie Langtry was hired as an endorser of Pears soap, (2011).

Celebrity endorsements help the consumer recognize and recall the brand. In India celebrity endorsement is becoming a fast-successful tool for marketing. India is a country where people are attracted by film stars, cricketers and other sport personalities. Celebrity endorsement fascinates the consumer to buying or using the product and, in this case, visiting a destination endorsed by a celebrity.

Service industry is finding it difficult to bring in creativity and differences among the products that are being advertised. Penetrating the market and gaining awareness of the consumers is a challenge. There is a lot of add clutter on TV and the print media, which they find difficult to remember. One way to overcome this problem is to make effective use of celebrity endorsement.

Celebrity endorsement for consumer products is widely used in advertising, taking advantage of the public's fascination with celebrities and the belief in a personal connection with them. The essence of celebrity lies in the public interest in the person which leads to their high visibility in the media. A recent study examining The Cult of Celebrity identified that 55% of women and 39% of men are interested in hearing about celebrities in the news or media (Future Foundation, 2007). For many years, advertisers have made use of the public fascination with celebrities and have employed them as endorsers or spokespersons for a wide range of products (Pringle, 2004), including for the promotion of tourism destinations. According to Boorstin (1992, p. 57) a celebrity is 'a person who is well known for their well-known-ness' and '(t)heir chief claim to fame is their fame itself' (Boorstin, 1992, p. 60).

## Ad Recall

There are explicit memories which we can recall with conscious effort, that are different from implicit memories, which maybe evoked only with a recognition stimulus. There may be advertising induced memories we associate with brands. One of the most important things to learn about memory is which parts of an ad will stick to become part of that brands image, (Charles Young, 2010).

Ad recall is a measure of advertising effectiveness. Advertising plays an important and prevalent role for marketers. It attracts people to what exists and seek to enhance people's standard of living by intimating them of the presence of the goods and services in the market place (Odia, Edith, Onowe,2014).

## Aided and un aided ad recall market studies

Ad recall market study could either be aided or unaided. While the former gauges the people's awareness about specific brands in question when prompted, the latter tests the same without a clue. When aided the sample finds it convenient to remember the brand as the prompt would be related to any brand associative properties like the celebrity endorser, the sequence of the commercial, memorable jingle or any of the features which the consumer may find useful to remember the ad in question. Unaided recall depends solely on the brand's equity quotient and proves to be a stringent evaluation of brand recognition since it gets into analysing the top of the mind awareness of the consumers. Ideally an unaided recall test would be conducted via an open-ended questionnaire to facilitate hassle-free expression of ideas

# Literature Review

India is a vast country of great beauty and variance. The tourist prospective is very expansive with its rich cultural heritage as wondrously distinct in many of the architectural wonders

(palaces, temples, mosques, forts, etc), caves and prehistoric wall paintings, the extensive and multifarious topography ranging from the prosaic plains to the magnificent mountains of the world, the large climatic disparity ranging from some of the wettest and the driest as well as from the hottest and the coldest parts of the world, alluring long beaches on the sea coast, vast stretches of sands, pleasant tropical forests and above all the great variety of the life style. India offers an eternal choice for the tourist.

### **Pilgrimage as a form of tourism**

The root of tourism can be traced to pilgrimage. Places of pilgrimage have been attractive sites for tourism in the beginning and continue to be an attraction for promoting tourism in India. It is interesting to note initially this kind of tourism was only for domestic nature but in the recent years large number of foreign tourists have also started visiting places of pilgrimage.

With other attractions gradually gaining ground, the picture of the Indian tourism has shown great changes, with a move from pilgrimage to pleasure trips. With a larger income at their disposal coupled with incentives have driven the stay at home people to look around for a place to visit. (Kamen, et,al 1975). Endorsements are advertising using famous personalities who command a high degree of recognition, trust and awareness amongst the people. Celebrities advertise for a product lending their names or images to promote a product or service.

### **Endorsements in advertising**

Marketers feel that endorsement by a celebrity could influence buyers favourably. An advertisement that uses celebrity endorsers enjoys high recognition among the consumers. It helps the consumer to recognize and recall the brand, (Rosma Jolly,2016). This kind of advertisement connects with a lot of people than ordinary advertising can. Many consumers believe that if a product is good enough for a star, it is also good enough for them. Celebrity influence is seen across all age groups. The younger generation would glorify the icons of their generation whereas adults tend to admire older celebrities. Celebrity endorsements has come up a long way since the early research was done in the seventies, (Friedman, et al., 1976, Kameer et al., 1975). Celebrities are the preferred choice because they act as role models and are powerful cultural, financial and media figures and image creators, (Andrews & Jackson, 2001).

Celebrity endorsements is not that has just started, it goes way back to the 1800s, the aim of such appointments has always been to increase the persuasiveness of the message, (Knott & James,2004). This trend may have started to grab the attention of the consumers and also it could be easier for a consumer to remember a product because of the celebrity who had endorsed the particular product. Celebrities are favoured because they are more likely to capture people's attention than an unknown person, (Agarwal & Kamakura 1995; Hsu & McDonald 2002; Misra & Betty 1990).

### **Indian celebrities in tourism destination advertising**

With the increasing celebrity endorsement for products, the service industry has also started using celebrities in a big way. The tourism industry has seen a sharp rise in celebrity endorsements, and Bollywood has played a very important role in this. Yash Chopra made Switzerland the ultimate honeymoon destination for Indians by showing off the lovely locales in his films. A road-trip to Goa became a must-do for most youngsters after watching *Dil Chahta Hai*. These are just some examples of Bollywood influencing travel trends in the country. More recently, Pangong Lake in Ladakh topped tourists' itinerary after *3 Idiots* was shot there, while Spain saw a huge influx of travellers after Zoya Akhtar had Hrithik Roshan, Farhan Akhtar and Abhay Deol driving across the country on a bachelor trip of sorts.

While many destinations associate with movies for a short duration, some tourism boards, taking note of the influence B-Town has on footfalls, have signed on actors to promote them. According to Karan Anand, Head — Relationships, Cox & Kings Ltd, "Celebrity endorsement is a vehicle that brands — especially destinations — use to increase their visibility. In India, more than 80 international destinations are vying for the attention of the Indian traveller and to rise above the clutter, destinations have successfully used celebrities and more so Bollywood stars, as they have a wide appeal."(2018).

Amitabh Bachchan as the face of Gujarat Tourism was noted by everyone. Right from donning the traditional attire to highlighting the state's wildlife, Big B's presence sure added value to the campaign. Neelu says, "Gujarat is a perfect example of how an influencer can bring value to the destination by educating travellers

about the tourism offerings. Other Indian states and International destinations have been gaining immense visibility from travellers after appointing popular Indian celebrities as tourism ambassadors.”

While some actors are chosen for their youth appeal, others are chosen for their influence on people of all sectors. Other factors like association with a particular state can also be a reason that an actor becomes the face of that destination. For example, SRK, who is the owner of the IPL team Kolkata Knight Riders has featured in the tourism ad of West Bengal, while John Abraham, who is the owner of Indian Super League franchise NorthEast United FC, is the ambassador of Arunachal Pradesh Tourism. The actor even said that he was keen to shoot a movie there.

The reason why more actors are being considered for this task is because of the rise in footfalls that these destinations have seen. In India, a number of states have roped in celebrities as their brand ambassadors. Domestic tourism campaigns involving celebrities were immensely successful due to their star value, credibility and enormous fan following.” However, he also points out that there are states like Goa, Rajasthan and Kerala whose tourist influx has always been good even when they didn’t have any celebrities to promote tourism. Aronson, Wilson & Akert, (1999), proved that celebrity involvement and affective image have close linkages along with the selected celebrity who is also significant to the destination marketers.

**Ad recall and recognition** has been an ongoing debate in the advertising arena for a long time. Many companies go for a form of recall elements as a part of their copy-testing formats. In the process, persuasion also is dealt with by the researchers for better clarity on the ad effectiveness. According to Alexander Biel, prior to 1985, the pre-testing of advertisements was divided between those who believed that they succeed if their ads were recalled and those who thought that the persuasive content in their advertisements was the true triumph. Later George Gallup, a former head of American Institute of Public opinion, developed a yardstick for the ad recall perspective which created a great debate of copy-testing of ads. He rightly pointed out that recall of any ad was the true measure of ad effectiveness before the advent of television which had much more factors and reasons for an ad to be remembered. He observed that making a consumer remember an advertisement with a verbal cue was a hurdle. Krugman observed that multiple exposures to a specific advertisement in a short period of time would only lead to confusion among the target audiences that may result in a confused brand image. Schlinger, in his View Response Profile (VRP) introduced a method of quantifying consumer’s subjective reactions to television commercials. In the process he came across many factors for the mixed consumer reactions like entertainment, relevance of the brand news, the promise given by the brand, empathy, familiarity with the brand and many more

## Data analysis

Research design: Descriptive

Samples: people of any age as long as they had experiences of going on tours and recall ads related to tourism

Sample size: 120

Sampling technique: Convenience sampling

Data: Primary and secondary

Data collection tool: Structured questionnaire with close-ended and open-ended questions

### Objectives of the study

**The study focuses on decisively answering the following 2 objectives**

1. To analyse the impact of celebrity in tourism advertising as ad recall enhancer
2. To understand the emotions attached to the brand identities in the tourism industry

# Data interpretation

**Table 1 – Cross tabulation**

*Significance between age group and the perception that celebrity endorsement in tourism commercials is important and will enhance ad recall perspective*

H0: There is no significant relationship between age group and the perception that celebrity endorsement in tourism commercials will enhance ad recall

H1: There is significant relationship between age group and the perception that celebrity endorsement in tourism commercials will enhance ad recall

			Celebrity significance					Total
			to remember the destination	to create a connect	for ad viewership	no much difference	unnecessary if the spot is already popular	
Age group	16 to 30	Count	9	23	13	12	10	67
		% within Agegroup	13.4%	34.3%	19.4%	17.9%	14.9%	100.0%
		% within Celebrity significance	60.0%	79.3%	54.2%	60.0%	32.3%	56.3%
		% of Total	7.6%	19.3%	10.9%	10.1%	8.4%	56.3%
	31 to 45	Count	3	3	8	4	4	22
		% within Age group	13.6%	13.6%	36.4%	18.2%	18.2%	100.0%
		% within Celebrity significance	20.0%	10.3%	33.3%	20.0%	12.9%	18.5%
		% of Total	2.5%	2.5%	6.7%	3.4%	3.4%	18.5%
	46 to 60	Count	2	3	3	2	12	22
		% within Age group	9.1%	13.6%	13.6%	9.1%	54.5%	100.0%
		% within Celebrity significance	13.3%	10.3%	12.5%	10.0%	38.7%	18.5%
		% of Total	1.7%	2.5%	2.5%	1.7%	10.1%	18.5%
Above 60	Count	1	0	0	2	5	8	
	% within Age group	12.5%	.0%	.0%	25.0%	62.5%	100.0%	
	% within Celebrity significance	6.7%	.0%	.0%	10.0%	16.1%	6.7%	
	% of Total	.8%	.0%	.0%	1.7%	4.2%	6.7%	
Total	Count	15	29	24	20	31	119	
	% within Age group	12.6%	24.4%	20.2%	16.8%	26.1%	100.0%	
	% within Celebrity significance	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	12.6%	24.4%	20.2%	16.8%	26.1%	100.0%	

**Inference:** Among all the age groups, 16 to 30 is very optimistic that a special connect could be created with a tourist destination if a celebrity endorses it in commercials. The same age group also feels that the celebrity endorsed tourism commercials help remember the place. The people above 60 years feel that if the tourist destination is already popular and proves to be a crowd-puller, the presence of a celebrity in the commercials makes no difference whereas the 16 to 30 age group considers celebrity endorsed commercial significant despite the popularity of the destination

**Table 2 – One way ANOVA**

*Significance between age group and the frequency of visits to the various tourist destinations*

H0: There is no significant relationship between age group and the frequency of visits to the various tourist destinations

H1: There is significant relationship between age group and the frequency of visits to the various tourist destinations

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9.414	3	3.138	1.295	.280
Within Groups	281.178	116	2.424		
Total	290.592	119			

**Inference:** Since the significance value is less than 0.05 there is no significant relationship between the age group and the number of times one visits a tourist destination. The tourists visit the destinations as they have planned, and their age does not have any special bearing on deciding how many times he or she would visit tourist spots. The frequency may be very rarely, once in a year, once in two years, only on LTC or whenever he or she wishes to have one irrespective of the age of the tourists

**Table 3 – Cross tabulation**

*Significance between who accompanies on a tour and the preferences of destinations in different zones*

H0: There is no significant relationship between who accompanies on a tour and the preferences of destinations in different zones

H1: There is significant relationship between who accompanies on a tour and the preferences of destinations in different zones

		Preferred Zone				Total
		North	North east	West	South	
With whom	My family	8	8	2	10	28
	Friends	6	7	2	5	20
	Both	18	11	4	20	53
	Anyone if the trip is enjoyable	5	5	1	8	19
Total		37	31	9	43	120

**Inference:** It was very much expected none would choose 'with no one' as an option among the others when it came to the question of the company that one would like to have during tours. Tourist destinations of both southern India and northern India have captured the attention of those who preferred to travel with both friends

and family. Among those who chose to go on tours with family alone, Southern tourist spots looked lucrative. 15% of the samples expressed that to have an enjoyable trip they would be indifferent between friends and family as it was only pleasure that mattered to them.

#### Table 4 – One way ANOVA

*Significance between the preferences of destinations in different zones and the image of the state tourism*

H0: There is no significant relationship between the preferences of destinations in different zones and the image of the state tourism

H1: There is significant relationship between the preferences of destinations in different zones and the image of the state tourism

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.716	4	1.179	.732	.572
Within Groups	185.251	115	1.611		
Total	189.967	119			

**Inference:** The ANOVA table clearly expresses that the null hypothesis is accepted indicating that the image of the state tourism does not have any impact on the destination preferences of the tourists. The tourists have many other factors of considerations like accommodation, pocket-friendliness, safety of the tourists, rail/road/air connectivity etc as the deciding factors. The perception of the tourists towards any specific destination does not depend on the image created by the respective government through various promotional strategies.

#### Table 5 – Cross tabulation

*Significance between the frequency of visits to a specific destination and the visual or verbal promises about the tourist place conveyed through the commercials*

H0: There is no significant relationship between the frequency of visits to a specific destination and the visual or verbal promises about the tourist place in the commercials

H1: There is no significant relationship between the frequency of visits to a specific destination and the visual or verbal promises about the tourist place in the commercials

		Visual Promise					Total
		strongly agree	agree	may be	disagree	strongly disagree	
Frequency of tours	very rarely	6	8	4	1	0	19
	yearly once	5	23	9	5	0	42
	once in 2 or 3 years	0	9	4	1	1	15
	only on LTC	0	1	0	0	0	1
	As and when I feel like	8	15	16	2	2	43
Total		19	56	33	9	3	120

		Verbal Promise					Total
		strongly agree	agree	may be	disagree	strongly disagree	
Frequency of tours	very rarely	3	6	4	6	0	19
	yearly once	6	15	16	5	0	42
	once in 2 or 3 years	0	5	6	3	1	15
	only on LTC	0	0	0	1	0	1
	As and when I feel like	5	11	16	8	3	43
Total		14	37	42	23	4	120

**Inference:** The visuals shown in the commercials prove to be a significant factor to attract the tourists. 24% of the tourists either agreed or strongly agreed that visual promises did matter. 23 samples of the study who would visit a tourist destination as and when they felt like agreed or strongly agreed that visual promise acted as a special reason for selection. While coming to verbal promises made in the commercials, 21 tourists strongly agreed or agreed that it was an important strategy to attract tourists. People who go only on LTC did not attach much importance either to visual promise or verbal promise.

### Table 6 – Cross tabulation

*Significance between the gender and the trust on the brand promise*

H0: There is no significant relationship between the gender and the trust on the brand promise H1: There is significant relationship between the gender and the trust on the brand promise



			Brand Promise					Total
			extremely important	important	not so important	negligible	don't mind at all	
gender	Male	Count	21	30	10	5	2	68
		% within gender	30.9%	44.1%	14.7%	7.4%	2.9%	100.0%
		% within Promise	80.8%	52.6%	45.5%	38.5%	100.0%	56.7%
		% of Total	17.5%	25.0%	8.3%	4.2%	1.7%	56.7%
	Female	Count	5	27	12	8	0	52
		% within gender	9.6%	51.9%	23.1%	15.4%	.0%	100.0%
		% within Promise	19.2%	47.4%	54.5%	61.5%	.0%	43.3%
		% of Total	4.2%	22.5%	10.0%	6.7%	.0%	43.3%
Total	Count	26	57	22	13	2	120	
	% within gender	21.7%	47.5%	18.3%	10.8%	1.7%	100.0%	
	% within Promise	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	21.7%	47.5%	18.3%	10.8%	1.7%	100.0%	

**Inference:** 51 male tourists considered brand promise very significant to decide a destination whereas the count among female tourists was 32. 7 males and 8 females consider the role of brand promise very negligible or even nil in picking a tourist destination. overall, it could be understood that the tourist destination creates a brand for itself and it has to be consistently in media to be seen and observed

## Findings

1. The younger tourists attached a special importance to the celebrity's stardom to create a realistic connect with a tourist destination. This age group (16 to 30) felt that the recent commercial where Ms. Priyanka Chopra endorsed Assam tourism had left a positive mark in their memory. Though they also felt that Priyanka's brand image was much bigger and more dominant than the brand image of Assam tourism, her presence in the commercial ideally created an instant connect with the place and helped them remember it for long. Big B, the brand ambassador of Indian tourism, 'the incredible India' was another popular choice of the samples.
2. The elderly tourists, above 60 years categorically rejected the significance of a celebrity endorsed commercial of a tourism destination. They seemed quite adamant that the popularity of the destination acts as a reasonable crowd-puller and roping in a celebrity for the purpose did not appeal to them as a strategy.
3. The frequency of visits to a specific tourist destination does not associate with the age of the tourist to create a significant impact. Once there is a plan in place, the tourists visit the spots irrespective of their age. One could identify this pattern among all the visit categories like rare visits, visits once in a year or 2 years, visits only during the leave travel concessions granted by organizations or visits as an when one likes to have.

4. When questioned about who the samples would take along for a tour, both family and friends were equally preferred and some expressed willingness to take both. There were no takers for the option 'with none' which was quite anticipated too. The tourists seemed equally interested in South Indian and the North Indian destinations. South dominated among those who wanted to take the families alone. 15% of the tourists replied that only pleasure mattered to them and if they were assured of an enjoyable trip, they would not differentiate between friends or family.
5. It is observed that the image created by the state governments for tourism promotion had very little or no impact upon the selection of the tourism spots by people. Rather they considered many other significant factors like safety to the tourists, comfortable accommodation, pocket-friendliness, good connectivity through air/road/rail ways etc. Thus, the efforts of the governments to create a perception among the tourists and attract them towards any specific destination could not be considered an effective strategy.
6. 24% of the samples have agreed that the visual promises made through commercials about the impressiveness of the tourist spot did have a reasonable impact on their tourism decisions. A good number of tourists visit places as and when they feel like having a travel and to them, verbal promises did matter a lot. 21 samples either agreed or strongly agreed that such verbal promises made by the respective governments over media are a distinctive strategy. The tourists who only utilize LTC facilities and go places did not feel attracted towards visual or verbal promises.
7. 51 male and 32 female samples expressed that the brand promise conveyed through the commercials was a major factor to decide upon a destination. The tourist destinations are becoming a brand by themselves because of various external factors too like bio-diversity, admirable landscapes, pleasant climates and mountainous terrains. Though the place captured by one destination cannot be usurped by another, the tourists always feel that the respective state governments need to realize that they are being observed in all media.

## Conclusion and future directions

*'I know that half of the advertising expenditure is wasted..I just do not understand which half'..John Wanamaker's* quote typically warrants that a proper analysis be made before the effectiveness of advertising and decide upon the mode and channel of doing the same. Though there may be myriad ways of sending the brand information to the consumers, not every piece of information reaches the targeted audiences. A lot needs to be done by the state and central governments to align with the preferences of the tourists and ensure maximum turnout of the targeted audiences at different destinations. This study has attempted to highlight the significance of suitable advertising tactics to entice people to visit the destinations to generate reasonable revenues.

The **future directions** of the study could be any of the following

- a. A study could be conducted in three or four different cities from where majority of the targeted audiences are spotted and a comparative analysis
- b. A dedicated study can be done on the millennials to observe their touring preferences and suggest ways and means to make the maximum out of the most lucrative target segment of the day
- c. A separate analysis can be conducted to find out exactly what fascinates the senior citizens as far as the tourism destinations are concerned. This would result in assured revenues as the elders are more unlikely to change opinions and stick to their decisions

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