PRODUCT PLACEMENT & ITS EFFECT ON CUSTOMERS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SOUTH INDIAN MOVIES

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ABSTRACT

Product placement or brand placement can be seen in a number of media vehicles including Television Serials, Chat shows popular movies etc., which is an advertising format presenting a product through the media for attracting mass customers. The study discusses the influence and impact of product placement in south Indian cinema. In this study, we discuss the different brand placement strategies adopted in movies for promotional purposes in south India and discuss the effectiveness of this type of communications and concentrating on the viewer’s recall on the brand and its impact on improving brand image. The study is basically to understand the consumer buying behavior. The study assess product placement in south Indian movies by selecting Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu films in to consideration on the basis of its popularity and the diversity in the types of placements and was analysed using a questionnaire and a survey was conducted among a sample of 100 respondents. From the study it was observed that, The importance of movies on masses is evident in south India especially in Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu. Consumers feel that the advertisements should be entertaining and the same should be conjoined with the storyline in order to convey the brand message in the best possible way.

KEYWORDS: Brand Placement, Consumer behaviour, Marketing, Product placement, South Indian cinema.

INTRODUCTION

Advertising products through a film was primarily known as product placement and this kind of exercise is known in variety of names such as “brand placement”, brand integration, brand entertainment, in-film advertising and recently as brand cameo or embedded marketing. From the past researches, it has been identified that product placement effects the repute and impression of the company and not in sales. Product placement is not limited to movies and can extend to television, radios, song lyrics, video games, song lyrics, music videos and plays etc. (Wasko,
Phillips and Purdie 1993). In product placement, either the product or the logo is shown or flashed of the concerned product or some of its features may be highlighted.

Marketing has been an integral part of business and companies are in search for innovative ideas by considering the changing interests of the consumers, where product placement through movies has been identified as a better way to reach to the target audience to influence them. It seems that this culture had started in early 19th century.

Product placement in movies is a well-known concept in Hollywood and Bollywood, though this exercise is still a developing one in south Indian cinema consisting of Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu film industries. Influence of celebrities in establishing a brand is a commonly used trend which was evident even in yester years.

Movies are noticeable medium for entertainment in India, commonly the south Indian cinema is a specialty of lot of things such as colourful outfits, interesting destinations and singing and dancing sequences (Dwyer & Patel, 2002). The movies does not alone focus the Indian audience, but nonresident Indians.

The movies communicate many a things to the audience such as grooming, fashion and also about latest trends.

The spectators of the south Indian cinema would be considering the movie as a make-believe fact and will be emotionally occupied by the actors and the incidents of the movie especially on dressing, behaving etc. Product placement in south Indian cinema was started in early 2000 in the form of in-film advertisement where the HLL’s iconic brand “Bru” was sponsoring film promotions. Similarly it also promoted a telugu movie “Prematho Ra” along with a contest in the product package to attract the mass.

In 2012, Emami, the Kolkata base FMCG company had effectively used this strategy in the movie “3” in one of the song sequence along with Audi, Aircel etc, where it was the first initiative by emami in Tamil cinema industry. The placement of the product was done in one famous song sequence “Kolaveri di, where it was choreographed in front of an emami stall where there is a lot of crowd buying Navaratna oil, a product of emami. Product placement has been a trademark of emami’s marketing strategy over the years especially in south India, which is evident from the fact that they hold 65% of market share for the product endorsed by young south Indian actors in each state. Apart from this, the song also places brands such as Air Asia, Airel etc. (See figure 1) The brand had done similar sort of exercise in other regional languages as well. Another tamil movie “Vaazhthukulam”, features at least 3-4 brands including Havell’s Interior accessories, Timond watches and Mark Diamonds.

Now a day’s the product placement is a million dollar business satisfying the film producers for reducing production cost and also to market well. This type of advertising was started in India by Leo Entertainment by Leo Burnets. The advertising agency could understand the behavior of the movie and identify areas or sequences for product placement by making suitable changes on situations, if required. Thus in film advertisements are significant parts of marketing budgets for corporates.
Brand placement can be done in many different ways where it can naturally happen or can be a planned one or can be one that is well organized in the movie for a financial benefit. Having said that “Each frame of a film has got an opportunity for branding”, as it is being identified as the most effective form of advertisement when it is a part of the movie’s content. Brand placement in cinemas had gained a push all over the world.

It seems that the major reason for marketers to take product placement in to account as an effective communication tactic because, viewing a movie is an activity which requires high involvement compared to other media vehicles. It acts an open, Influential and peaceful way for promoting the brand. Product placement is a routine exercise for brand communication, which is appearing as an important tool for marketing communication.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE- IMPORTANCE OF BRAND PLACEMENT

According to Scala and Maynard(2006), product placement is a marketing plan which will be used by an advertiser to place his product/products in a movie. The companies will generally be interested in placing its brand rather than a particular product in movies. For example, when coca cola advertises, it emphasizes that as a brand and not as any other soft drink. Generally the south indian films portrays the culture of the state, products and practices endorsed by the regional stars or iconic brands who can have an impact on the movie goers. The rapid growth of urban middle class has led to an increase in multiplex theatres in the country and subsequently increased the audience strength moving to theatres. Compared to Hollywood and Bollywood movies, the brands can get longer visibility in regional films. The popular brand placement studies measure the degree of efficiency of product placements on the basis of the remembrance of the brand.

A study conducted in USA in the year 1993 reveals that participants between the age group 18-34 were significantly positive with respect to brand placement and the preference for such placements were positive than that of other types of television advertisements. The benefits of product placement is given below(Figure-1).

PRODUCT PLACEMENT- BENEFITS

Source: Author research

FIGURE-1
The authors of this research paper haven’t found any evidence of work that has been carried out on product placement in south Indian cinema.

**PRODUCT PLACEMENT- THE HISTORY**

It is important to assimilate the brand with the plot of the movie to make the audience feel that the product has got congruence with the plot and the same should also be absorbed with the character of the movie or otherwise the whole exercise may turn out to be useless. As far as the plot of the movie is stronger, the impact of the placement would also be strong enough.

Brand placements are to be exploited for the development of brand knowledge and brand memory effect between the consumers.

**PRODUCT PLACEMENT- THE DIFFERENT POSSIBILITIES**

Mainly it has been classified in to three categories

1) **ACTIVE /INDIRECT PLACEMENT**

   In this method, the character of the movie in a situation would be openly agreeing that he/she is using a particular brand. For Example, in a Malyalam movie “Nerariyan CBI” the iconic brand, Mamootty says that he is a customer of Tata Indicom, now docomo(See figure 3 and 4)

2) **SPOKEN PLACEMENT**

   In this type, the star/main character of the movie would recommend the product to his peer/friends. For example in “Nerariyan CBI” the iconic brand, Mamootty recommends his co-actor Jagathy Sreekumar to Purchase Kalyan Jewellery(See figure 5 and 6)

3) **USAGE PLACEMENT**

   In this method, the star/ character of the movie in some situation or the other would be seen as using/consuming the product. For example, in the movie “Diamond Necklace” the star seems using the diamond necklace from “Joy Alukkas” in the entire movie(see figure 7).

4) **PASSIVE / VISUAL PRODUCT PLACEMENT**

   In this type, the product, logo or the service can be perceived for a few minutes or seconds in the movie and it may not have any relationship with the plot of the movie. For example, in tamil movie, Mounam pesiyathe released in the year 2000, endorses brands such as Coca-cola,Airtel etc. (See figure 8 and 9 and 10).

The basic idea behind product placement is to utilize the emotional values through transferring the image of the end user to the consumer.
RESEARCH DESIGN

The paper analyses the key characteristics of product placement with special reference to South Indian films and its effectiveness as a tool used for brand recall. Different types of product placements have been analyzed and sought opinion of the respondents on the basis of a set of parameters.

The research design for the study includes a rigorous review of literature with scholarly observations and investigation of other collected information’s through reliable secondary resources. A survey was conducted among a sample of 100 respondents with the help of a questionnaire.

Most of the respondents recalled the brands advertised in the movies, which shows the acceptance of product placement among south Indian audience. This is in fact a growing practice in south India and receives positive response both from the audience and producers of the movie.

FINDINGS

In covariance analysis, it was identified that most of the people had same perception for the statements. The perception of both men and women were almost the same on the statements provided and had a positive attitude towards brand placement.

While considering education almost all the students including graduates, post graduates and professionals were having the same attitude towards product placement, which was positive with a negligible variation.

The consumer evaluation towards product placement and brand image was directly proportional and the brand’s image was not significant in evaluation. Thus any brand that is appropriately positioned can attract the customer attention.

The population believes product placement as the better form for advertising rather than traditional methods as it frustrates the consumer especially if the story line is out of context.

Ways of using the product in movies are major factors for the people as it attracts them to use what their favorite iconic brand had used.

All most all the respondents were having a positive attitude to try out a product after seeing it in a movie.

Assimilated and clear brand placement proved to have greet brand recall and well-known brands are more recalled.

Brand that is more visible in advertisement and marketing campaigns proven to have more recall. While enquiring, most of the consumers were associating brands with particular movies based on the actor in the movie. For example, many recalled the brand in the movie “vettaiyadu vilayadu “placed Samsung Motto, where the hero of the movie uses a Samsung Motto with a ringtone
each time pronouncing the brand. Many suggested brand placement in movies as a better alternative to traditional advertising

CONCLUSION

In this modern and mass advertising world, brands are constantly trying to bring out newer methods to reach out to their target audience. Innovative ways of delivery can only lead them to success. The importance of movies on masses was evident in south India especially in Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu. Consumers feel that the advertisements should be entertaining and the same should be conjoined with the storyline in order to convey the brand message in the best possible way.

The publicity of a movie in south India especially in Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh is huge, which gives the brands a prospect to influence the customers with the association.

FIGURE-2

FIGURE-3

FIGURE-4

FIGURE-5
FIGURE-6

FIGURE-7

FIGURE-8

FIGURE-9

FIGURE-10
### TABLE: 1: GENDER DISTRIBUTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author research

### TABLE: 2: AGE GROUP AND EDUCATION

<table>
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<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 20 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Post-Graduation</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 and above</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author research

### TABLE: 3: CONFIDENT STATEMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Out of 100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitute</td>
<td>Product placements are good substitutes for traditional advt</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recall</td>
<td>The usage of product by an iconic brand makes it more likely to remember the brand</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Usage</td>
<td>Started using a product after seeing it in the movie</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Felt trying out a brand after seeing the same in movie</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Influence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate placement</td>
<td>In order to increase the companies repute. Sun feast by ITC shown is kodeeswaran shown in Viajy Tv, where the brand is also endorsed by the anchor of the program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generic Placement</td>
<td>The product characteristics are explained without using the brand name. In “Ningalkum aakam Kodeeswaran” TV show shown in Asianet using “Airtel” to make phone calls for phone a friend.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Placement</td>
<td>Presenting an institution. The movie “Baba Kalyani” shows The Federal Bank in a particular seen.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idea Placement</td>
<td>Including opinion or fact in a particular plot. Discussing about the movie “Spirit” in a TV show is an indirect placement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation Placement</td>
<td>Introduction of a new product in a movie. Tata DoCoMo introduced Nanban recharge through the movie “Nanban”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author research

REFERENCE


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