

Brand India In The Last Half A Decade

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ABSTRACT

All gets brands now and a nation is no exception. Kerala with a view to promote tourism came with a very successful campaign “ God’s own country” and earned a good tourism revenue. As a nation, Singapore gets a sizeable revenue from foreign tourists and as a brand Singapore known for safety, cleanliness and good infrastructure. The brand that drives USA are: A dreamers destination, R&D capital of the world, Marketing practice Mecca and world famous universities. As the President is central force to American governance model, the president brand power hinges on brand USA. Conversely a bad State Head like Saddam Hussain by his mis adventure of invading to Kuwait killed the nation in economic terms and brand terms. The symbiosis between brand nation head and brand nation is closely interwoven and worth exploring it .

Key Words: Brand Relationship , Brand sensuality, Brand experience

1. INTRODUCTION

A nation as a brand when popular, desire to see it raises. It is this reason Singapore a tiny land attracts more tourist than any other nation in Asia and no one is below the poverty line there . Safety is yet another reason tourist flocks the country and carry pleasant memory when back home. In the case of USA, it is seen as a land of opportunity and the best brain from all over the world go there to maximize their potential. So, branding evaluation of a nation is needed for course correction and it stems from the head of the state. Benjamin Netanyahu the PM of Israel now in the seat for the fifth time as their people think he only can combat Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) threat. The small piece of land they proudly call it a nation and take on the might of Arab world and their war readiness, a case study to learn by all defense heads. For some country it evolves and some shapes it. Again, branding a nation is not bottom up but top down. The head of the state with a vision; rule the country for people welfare, health, education and peace with the neighbors. Afghanistan fundamentalist keep the nation few centuries back and Pakistan is declared by the President of America as a “Terror nation” and people loathe to visit the place for business or even tourism. Until recently India too seen as a nation of “snake Charmers” but not anymore. We launched our own GPS, we sell arms and ammunition for defense purpose, we export rice and wheat to poor nation as aid even. The visibility of India after Modi took office has gone many folds. World listen to him; neighbor country seeks our help for nation building and India is a force to reckon with Modi in the driver seat. Sweet talks are mere rhetoric and does not please people. Economy must progress. The New York Times paper on July 3, 2019 in its editorial “ Two Cheers for a Lackluster Economy” squarely blame the

President and end it by saying “*What comes next may well be worse*”. That is US leadership now with an average GDP growth a piffling 2.5% annually.

LITERATURE SURVEY

In the book Principles of Marketing (Philip Kotler/Gary Armstrong) a brand is defined as a "name, term, sign symbol (or a combination of these) that identifies the maker or seller of the product". (<https://www.marketing.net>). Cine celebrities; these days use stylist to make sure that he or she as a brand gets favorably identified. When done; the brand is liked by some, adored by some and even worshiped by some. Product brands like Coke or Apple pours huge amount of money for a favorable image in the market so that it pulls the users to use it. In politics too a leader has to build a very positive image before public so that he or she is rallied behind for the cause he or she undertakes. The Honorable Prime Minister (PM) of India Sri. Narendra Modi now in his second term as PM returned to ruling again as the cause of “Developing India” is seen as successful by the electorate. The recently held Parliamentary victory is unprecedented in the history of India due to no other party other than Congress successively ruled India. Sri. Modi not only broke the record but with a landslide. Hence, we can draw a conclusion that in the eyes of people Sri. Modi is a favorable brand.

When it comes to a nation, USA is a very powerful brand. It is generally known as a land for “Dreamers”. There are many such dreamers from India live in USA with fairly realizing their dreams. Sathya Nadella, Microsoft head, CEO Sunder Pichai of Google and Indra Nooyi who had a long tenure as CEO of Pepsi to name a few. This Nation as a brand is the world’s largest economy as on today and holds highest number of Patents with it. Some are calling naturally as “Thought Capital” of the world. It has other features too. Its economy has low inflation for decades and under Trump leadership as President has “Full Employment”. And thus, a nation can build a brand around it going by USA popularity and PM Modi through “Development” has been building already well known “Brand India”. What the world admires about India is that it is the world’s largest democracy with 1.3 billion people. Its unity in diversity is a thing of admiration by many nations. India only showed “Zero” to all and Yoga to many nationalities. In the early days of civilization, India and China were running neck to neck in terms of global trade and GDP growth. Amongst the BRIC nations, it is ahead of Brazil and Russia, and little behind China. Country like Japan is recommending for India, a permanent seat in United Nations (UN) and it is a standing testimony to its brand power.

We are already seeing the inter play of brands in the corporate sector. In automobile, Lexus is a powerful brand and one of the largest selling luxury cars. It comes from Toyota stable and Toyota itself a leader in passenger car segment globally. Toyota built its brand by its leadership in quality, lean manufacturing and Just-in-Time (JIT) inventory management. So, Toyota brand supports Lexus brand and Lexus brand success support Toyota. We can call this as brand synergy. Similarly, brand synergy is possible between the head of the state and the nation. In a

way it works both ways destroying a brand or improving the brand. Iraq has the world's second largest oil reserve after Saudi Arabia but under Saddam Hussain leadership made a misadventure of invading Kuwait and earned the wrath of the world and its stockpile of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) forced a regime change by USA and its allies. On the other extreme, Barak Obama as a brand earned Noble Peace Prize and brand USA was literally saved from Sub-Prime crises. His relentless work on Climate summit earned him as the champion of Ecology and so he was in White House for two terms.

The same is happening now for India with Modi as PM. Two surgical strikes in retaliation of Pakistan's misadventure with India, one expert feels, it added the element of charisma to Modi and added few million votes in the last election. For Brand India, the defense capabilities added another dimension to its brand equity. Overall, the duo brands hiked aspects like brand equity, brand loyalty and we shall see all that surround a brand. Ted Levitt (1960) says that packaging, service are all secondary and what matters is *value* that it offers. Controlling fiscal deficit and thereby controlling inflation is no mean feat at all. In all his time, India never breached inflation beyond 7% wherein India was known for double digit inflation in the past. Geoffrey Randall (2004) holds a view that a brand is in continuous relationship with its people and Modi in the first term, never went on leave even on a single day. Even on Diwali Modi goes to Border to shore up the spirit of defense personnel.

Consumer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) is not only help Toyota and Lexus; it helps the nation and its State Head. Aaker (1991, p. 15) defines brand equity as a "set of categories of brand assets (liabilities) linked to a brand's name or symbol that add to (subtract from) the value provided by a product or a service". What is the brand asset of India? All believe in democracy unlike Pakistan where in the last 7 decades, three fourth period it was under Army rule. The secularism ethos makes India having the largest Muslim population next to Thailand. In fact, in Pakistan, other than Muslims, there are no property rights for the religion people. But in India The President of India was Dr. Abdul Kalam; a Muslim, Giani Zail Singh; a Sheikh and Prathiba Patil; a woman, whereas well women empowered USA till date never had a woman as its President. Kapferer (1997) also extended it by way of brand image, perceived quality and familiarity. The sole campaigner for the 2019 election for National Democratic Alliance (NDA) was Modi, and he travelled by the length and breadth of the nation covering more than 3 Lakhs kilometers since NDA believed only his Brand image can come to their rescue. The bang was so daunting, Congress President Sri. Rahul tendered his resignation for the debacle.

The quality of Modi's rule is the impeccable integrity. Till date as a Chief Minister of Gujarat or PM of India, there is not even an allegation of corruption and he risked on demonetization to root out unaccounted money that played a havoc on Indian economy. None as PM dared to do this till date in India and this decisive action made tax collection at an unprecedented level. His motto itself "More governance, less Government" and it happened in terms of arresting Public Distribution System (PDS) leak and Cooking Gas subsidy leak by opening a zero balance bank

account for millions of Indians. Banking penetration never was this level earlier. Raggio and Leone, (2007) argues that when a brand is favored, it changes users' action. Poll result of close to 51% vote having gone to Modi is a standing testimony to it. Consumer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) does brand connect. Raggio and Leone (2007) says that brand association or brand connect is one driver of CBBE. The road protest for the head of the state ouster that we see in Venezuela is the case of failure of brand connect. Inflation is in three digits there and many try to migrate to Europe to escape poverty.

THE CONCEPTS BEHIND CBBE

There is a need to be enlightened about the above as the study is exploratory in nature. Its dimensions are given under with the briefings. The CBBE is used in brand management extensively for brand recall and brand associative value. BMW associative value is "Arrived in life" and for Tesla "I care climate change". For Modi the value is "We are for development, we are for corrupt free India".

BRAND PERSONALITY

Brand users like they see traits in human beings, see same way in brands too (Aaker, 1997; Plummer, 1984-85; Rook, 1985). What personality all-wheel drive GEEP display? Ruggedness. TVS Scooty- feminine look, Rolls-Royce – for the connoisseur. Similarly, what is India's brand personality? Diverse culture, developing economy and stable democracy. What is Modi's brand personality? Charismatic, high integrity and risk taking. The poll result tells how charismatic he is and the surgical strike on Pakistan occupied Kashmir (POK)- tell how risk taking he is. Experts think that a strong brand personality increases consumer preference and usage (Sirgy, 1982), as well as levels of trust and loyalty (Fournier, 1998). Leadership following is like addiction to cigarette. Users do not shift loyalty even if alternative is given free. Modi having CM post for many years is the proof of strong loyalty to it.

BRAND RELATIONSHIP

It is the logical extension of the love of a brand's personality. (Fournier, 1998; Grönroos, 2007). At a micro level love blooms by liking a personality first and building relationship next. Modi's relationship is all encompassing. Having seen the plight of triple Talak, he went against it to save women; a task none undertaken for fear of vote bank loss. He openly admitted that "Yes. I am the friend of business community" because they only help export and keep trade imbalance under check. The Mudra loan scheme aimed at poor, created millions of people as micro entrepreneurs. While every state looks at liquor selling as a source of revenue, Gujarat still a liquor free state. A good brand is perceived as a behavioural entity that adds meanings to consumers' lives (Ligas and Cotte, 1999) and facilitates multifaceted holistic relationships in which brand experiences play an important role (Schmitt, 1999) in binding consumers together. Blind following of a

leader is not coming easy and good leader quality is emotional connectivity with them as one among them rather

BRAND EXPERIENCE

Experience spur emotions in either way. Skiing, sky diving are products that give users exciting experience and they cash it. Leader is no different. if he fails to excite, he has to exit. Brakus et al. (2009) defines it as “*subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioural responses evoked by brand- related stimuli that are part of a brand’s design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments*”. A brand leadership that Google search engine enjoy comes from users’ excitement and so they act as its mule to take the brand to others. An experience results from an interactive process (Gentile et al., 2007). Word -of -Mouth (WOM) dynamics is the same that helps block buster movies as people go tell all about it. Eateries too prosper by WOM only. When experience excites, it lives long in people memory. (de Chernatony, 1993, Verhoef et al., 2009). Brakus et al. (2009), which show that brand experience has a positive behavioural impact on consumer satisfaction, loyalty and brand associations, through brand personality. Brand value can be created indirectly even if consumers do not become brand buyers (Merz et al., 2009). Voters of one-party vote another happens by this and for Modiji this time it worked well, else half of India would not have voted for him and it is more than Modi.1 percentage.

BRAND SENSUALITY

According to Krishna (2011), the appeal of a product or service can be increased either by creating new one sensation or by emphasizing or drawing attention to existing sensations. Brand Singapore has this in terms of cleanliness and Brand Swiss with ice scape. India sensuality lies in this being the birthplace of Buddha, the epic center of Ramayana, and non-violence philosophy origin. The temples of India baffles as to how such monsters were created when many had a mere “Gathering Economy”. Our philosophy of life is a big differentiation than any other society. Our Heritage is a matter of pride to the whole world. One research suggests that consumer evaluations tend to be more positive when sensory dimensions are congruent and naturally reinforcing. Spangenberg et al. (2005). For nation as a brand, cleanliness, courtesy, safety, happiness index all matters and India has a long way go. Our air quality needs much to be desired and safety level far below than other developing nations.

CONCLUSION

The saying in marketing is “ People don’t buy products, they only buy brands”. Coke is the most valued brand and the largest selling cola in the world. Pepsi has been fighting to unseat Coke albeit unsuccessfully. Strong brand uses the pull factor and weak even a push comes to shove, are key associations represent India Inc.,

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